

**Leisure and pleasure in London society, 1760-1820: an
agent-centred approach**

Short abstract

Leisure and pleasure in London society, 1760-1820: an agent-centred approach

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DPhil in history

Trinity term 2009

The historiography of leisure has focused on class conflict, commercialization, and the arts. In the latter two areas historians have attempted to make statements about consumers, but as historians of consumption have demonstrated, examining the consumer from the perspective of producers is insufficient. This thesis demonstrates what the developing methodologies used to examine practice and consumption reveal about leisure and recreation. Exploration of forty-five diaries kept in London between 1757 and 1820 makes it possible to consider different aspects of choice with reference to recreation. This dissertation analyses how simple determinants of choice such as time, location, and cost shaped behaviour before moving on to the more complex and fuzzy concepts of social position, the role of domesticity, and taste.

Choice is central to understanding what amusement was in Georgian society, therefore it is necessary to consider both people's scope for choice, and the forces shaping those choices. Following an introductory section, chapters two to four examine choice by looking at simple factors. London was by far England's largest city, but the distribution of establishments and patterns of mobility affected different segments of society in complex ways. In addition, leisure routines and the ability to spend money on recreation differed between socioeconomic groups who had different amounts of time and money to use. Affinities within social groups appear, but diaries also illuminate the importance of individual variations. Chapter four signals a shift in the analysis by looking at determinants of choice like feeling obliged, wanting to please friends or family, or the impact of social networks on reactions to activities. Chapters five to eight examine interpersonal relationships and the function of recreation in eighteenth-century society and raise questions about how we combine agency and structure in our models of society. This account challenges claims that group identities were the only identities available to

Georgians and that individual variations were downplayed before the nineteenth century. Rather, individuals existed in networks that had to be negotiated and maintained.

Long abstract

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The historiography of leisure has focused on class conflict, commercialization, and the arts. In the latter two areas historians have attempted to make statements about consumers, but as historians of consumption have demonstrated, examining the consumer from the perspective of producers is insufficient. This thesis reveals what developing historical and sociological methodologies used to examine practice and consumption reveal when they are used to examine leisure and recreation in the past. Exploration of forty-five diaries kept in London between 1757 and 1820 makes it possible to consider different aspects of choice with reference to recreation. This thesis analyses how simple determinants of choice such as time, location, and cost shaped behaviour before moving on to the more abstract concepts of social position, domesticity, and taste in later chapters.

Choice is central to understanding what amusement was in Georgian society, and this thesis examines the extent of scope for choice, and the forces shaping how people exercised choice. This account revises our understanding of the relationship between group and individual identities, by demonstrating the previously unacknowledged importance of individual variations. Individuality was not something that became important only in the nineteenth century. Rather, individuals both adhered to ideals within their networks and presented themselves as entertaining companions for recreation.

Chapter 1 reviews the existing historiography of leisure for this period and argues that a more systematic attempt to introduce the agent into an analysis of recreation offers a basis for clarifying our understandings of leisure and introducing personal taste as a relevant factor. My perspective and methodologies draw heavily on sociological approaches to modern leisure which emphasize the importance of variations in taste

within socioeconomic groups and the importance of social networks in shaping activities chosen. Through an examination of the meanings of words used to refer to activities undertaken in free time, I argue that “leisure” was time away from work, though it was time that could be used to fulfil obligations as well as to pursue freely chosen forms of gratification. A selection of terms for activities undertaken within leisure time, such as “recreation,” “amusement,” “diversion,” and “pleasure,” more specifically designated activities undertaken freely for enjoyment. The remainder of the thesis examines these activities, though it repeatedly problematises the ability of individuals to undertake activities freely. To uncover the opportunities for pleasure and the constraints placed on individuals’ time I turn to diary evidence for insight into daily routines. Diaries allow for a systematic agent-centred perspective, though admittedly only for the gentry, nobility, and people at the top of the middling sort such as merchants, lawyers, and doctors. Diaries served several functions that must be taken into account, including serving as memory aids, social and financial accounting devices, opportunities for remote socialising with friends, self-monitoring and control, and self-presentation.

Chapter 2 reveals the different amounts of time available for leisure and recreation and variations in the flexibility of that time for people at all levels of society in London. People were limited in their pleasures by the amount of time they needed to spend working or fulfilling their family obligations, and the flexibility of their time. These considerations are closely linked to socioeconomic status and life-stage. With less time for leisure, working Londoners (from labourers to propertied merchants) had restricted scope for choice. Londoners who did not have to work for a living pursued routines that were structured, but that often involved more extensive preparation for activities and later hours of rising and going to bed.

Chapter 3 maps individual itineraries to show that, though merchants and working Londoners had less time and money than the gentry and nobility, they moved more widely around the metropolis in search of pleasure. This resulted from the inter-related developments of transportation, the distribution of leisure amenities, and the willingness of infrequent visitors to the theatres or pleasure gardens to travel long distance for special occasions. The slow speed of coaches and sedan chairs meant that the physical expansion of London disproportionately limited the wealthiest Londoners who tended to

ride rather than walk. Sub-metropolitan regional lifestyles for propertied society within London created an uneven distribution of recreational spaces catering to unevenly distributed markets. London's topography, transportation, and the distribution of leisure amenities created mental maps that served to reinforce the perceived divisions within London's geography and society.

Chapter 4 explores the patterns of attendance at commercial recreational spaces plotted in chapter 3 through a detailed examination of account books. The patterns in spending that emerge reinforce the earlier findings that the gentry and nobility attended commercial spaces far more frequently than the middling sort and labouring Londoners. The account books show that even for the wealthiest merchants spending on recreation was limited. The patterns of spending and attendance analysed suggest the need for a more nuanced account of the market for recreational activities. Rather than conceiving of a market that was either open to a broad section of London society or largely closed to all except the wealthiest Londoners, this chapter presents different sorts of venues appealing to different sorts of publics. Some venues depended on both frequent visits from the social elite and infrequent visits from a large number of working Londoners, others provided primarily for a broad group of non-elite patrons, and a third group of venues attracted niche audiences at varying levels of society. Examining patterns of attendance also force us to re-examine the motivations behind choices of activities. Novelty and exclusivity were important attractors, but they were not in themselves enough to draw people in. Downplaying exclusivity means that price structures can be viewed as reflecting the cost of putting on an event, rather than entrepreneurs' desire to provide the audience with social status.

Chapter 5 signals a shift in the analysis by looking at how social networks, status, and domesticity could act as determinants of choice. In particular this chapter looks at social networks and the ways that social bonds shaped choices about diversion. Drawing on terms and concepts from social-network theory, I look at the different sorts of social connections presented in diaries and argue that most recreation was undertaken with people of similar social status. Though important exceptions existed in the context of club life, most recreational companions were also business connections and/or relatives. Gender, age, life-stage, and personal preferences determined the extent to which

recreational partners overlapped with family/business connections. Because recreation solidified family, business, and patronage bonds, the boundaries between pleasure and duty often blurred. A careful examination of the terms used to describe how activities were arranged reveals that activities that were obligatory nevertheless might still have been fun. The relationship between social networks and choice shows that an individual was bound to the group and had to behave in ways that were conducive to group unity. Yet at the same time duty might be pleasurable in itself. Enjoyable activities could be undertaken at the behest of someone else.

Chapter 6 examines the nature of interaction within the domestic sphere. Here the domestic sphere is understood as including all living spaces, and not just the agent's own home. This chapter contributes to the ongoing re-assessment of "separate spheres" by demonstrating the importance of domestic-sphere sociability (in this sense) to propertied society and by looking at how sociability was conducted within the home. Diarists and letter writers demonstrate awareness of propriety, but they also reveal that residents and visitors were not always contained within clearly demarcated areas. Rather spaces had many uses and boundaries between different types of space within the home shifted to permit mobility and interaction with different sorts of people. This examination of interpersonal interactions within the home also suggests that while politeness could encourage sociability and smooth disputes, polite inclusiveness did not characterise all facets of domestic life. Diarists seeking moments of solitude or privacy provide an opportunity to further consider the ideas of public and private in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 7 looks to letters and descriptions of events to reveal the language used to ascribe value to social events. Though the propertied did not continually suffer from crushing boredom as some scholars have suggested, there is evidence they did seek out moderate amounts of novelty and fatigue. Pleasure was achieved through the experience of physical and social brilliance, characteristics of people and events that were mutually reinforcing in the minds of observers. The positive attributes desired in pleasurable gatherings reflect values that sections of propertied society would have shared, but reveal that the precise meanings of words and valued attributes of parties varied between individuals. Descriptions written by women are particularly common suggesting that hostesses paid greater attention to other events than did men. This further suggests that

domestic hosting was an aspect of life where women in particular could demonstrate their awareness of good taste. This chapter returns to the issue of social obligations by arguing that despite people's inability to avoid certain social commitments, expressing taste after the fact offered opportunities for exhibiting proper judgment of aesthetics and sociability.

Although it is hard to extend an agent-centred methodology to non-diary keeping groups, chapter 8 broadens the perspective to them to examine the ways that the constraints on action in propertied society resulted of its particular social and economic attributes and the ways those constraints operated within society as a whole. Trial records show that trading and plebeian patterns of recreation differed from those found in propertied society. The prominence of the pub in the lives of men and women of the lower 75% of the population marked a point of difference further exaggerated by the differences between pubs in terms of clienteles. Clienteles were largely self-selecting, thereby avoiding conflict over proper behaviour in many public spaces. Despite the lack of social mixing to be found in pubs, an examination of the shared spaces of parks and theatres shows that people of different sorts did mix easily, in part because of shared assumptions about behaviour and the ability of people at all levels of society to ignore outsiders in their midst.

Chapter 9 begins by returning to the problems of definition. Because of the demands placed on individuals by social obligations and other constraints, it is difficult to see free choice as a precondition for recreation. Rather pleasure was often achieved as people discharged obligations, though all obligations were not pleasurable. By looking at what people found pleasant, rather than at what they freely chose, we find people enjoying their activities despite the impact of duty and obligation on those choices. The boundaries between obligation and recreation dissolve when considered in this way. I then review some particularly important findings on politeness, gender relations, and domesticity before I argue for the ways that recreation offers new insight into the relationships between activities, networks, and social classes. I propose that individuals in propertied society fell into one of three groups. By looking at social networks within those subgroups we can account for subcultures and individual variations. Recreation was not a strong force for social cohesion, but at the same time recreational cultures were not sites of antagonism as historians working from emulative or social control models

have argued. Many of the divisions within society in relation to amusement resulted from patterns of choice. By re-examining different sorts of activities from the perspective of the agent we are able to enhance our understanding of the factors shaping individual choice. We find that agents were often somewhat individual. Even as their interests overlapped with those of other people in their network they exhibited original characteristics that made them entertaining or amusing. Finally, I examine the utility of my method. In particular I draw attention to the differences between my account and the histories of recreation based on different sorts of sources, particularly print. I conclude by suggesting that we need to be attuned to different registers of change in historical processes. In this case the available activities and printed debates about how they should be used and whether they were beneficial increased in this period. However these developments were not matched by changes in the ways people made decisions about what to do.

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Abbreviations

ASR = *American Sociological Review*
BLARS = Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service
EHR = *Economic History Review*
HJ = *Historical Journal*
HLQ = *Huntington Library Quarterly*
HR = *Historical Research*
HWJ = *History Workshop Journal*
JBS = *Journal of British Studies*
JDH = *Journal of Design History*
JLR= *Journal of Leisure Research*
JSH = *Journal of Social History*
JUH= *Journal of Urban History*
LS = *Leisure Studies*
OBP = Old Bailey Proceedings
P&P = *Past & Present*
SH = *Social History*
TRHS = *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
UH = *Urban History*

Acknowledgements

This project has created the usual networks of obligation. I hope they found their participation more pleasurable than onerous. Joanna Innes provided support, recommendations, guidance, and always-constructive criticism. She embodies the best that Oxford has to offer and this thesis has benefited immeasurably from her critical eye. Dena Goodman and Fran Blouin at Michigan also discussed the project, provided letters of recommendation and offered encouragement. Peter Borsay, Ian Archer, Perry Gauci, and Tim Hitchcock also provided support. Perry Gauci, Kathryn Gleadle, Hannah Greig, and Susan Whyman offered advice about letter collections and sources. Ian Barrett, Arthur Burns, Brian Cowan, Tim Hitchcock, Julian Hoppit, David Mitchell, David Ormrod, Nuala Zahedieh, Jon Stobart, Patrick Wallis, and Paul Warde, made useful comments and asked helpful questions about seminar and conference papers.

Among the graduate community Victoria Gardner, Nick Wrightson, Stuart Minson, Huw David, Stephen Hague, and Ben Bankhurst stand out for their willingness to discuss and collaborate.

Employees at the Bodleian Upper Reading Room, the London Metropolitan Archives, the National Archives (but not the security guards), the British Library (but not the little bald and bearded superintendent of the manuscripts reading room), the Huntington Library, the Friends' House Library and various other libraries and record offices were helpful and professional.

Keble College, the History Faculty at Oxford, the Institute of HR, the Huntington Library, and the Royal Historical Society gave money that allowed me to complete this dissertation. The Sackler Library and the Keble Development Office employed me. What both jobs lacked in salary they made up for in good cheer.

Nick Wrightson, Tom Simonitsch, Laurence Gale, Jon McDonagh, Luke Stockdale, Ben Bankhurst, and David Gelber provided me with beds, couches, or floors and offered generous hospitality during my visits to London for research.

My parents provided never ending support and (exhaustible) funding. I'm sure they look forward to the completion of this project more than I do. My grandmother provided me with my Protestant work ethic (may such a thing exist afterall).

And finally Pamela Hoggarth put up with my special brand of moodiness. I suspect that she will never read any of this thesis, but I hope my culinary skills went some way towards reckoning our accounts.

Littlemore
April 1st, 2009

1. Problems, concepts, and sources

Sociologists have shown that how we spend our time is part of how we present ourselves to others. Recreation is an important component of individuals' quest to fashion their identity. Rather than simply being the unimportant time away from (i.e. preparing for) work, recreation involves decisions critical for placing oneself in relation to others in a social group. We are known by our careers, but we are often also recognized by our leisure activities and how we pass our time away from work. Of course we are not able to choose our activities freely. Among other things money, location, and social position effect what we can do; our choices reflect our interests and our strategies for negotiating constraints. But sociologists studying leisure have also demonstrated that we cannot essentialize any of these factors. Though wealth and status are important for determining who can access expensive or highbrow activities, they do not help predict taste in activities that are widely available.¹ Scholars of the eighteenth century have not problematized recreation in this way. Some histories of leisure have operated from the assumption that choices did not open to leisure seekers until the middle of the nineteenth century.² The historiography presents us with the pleasures of the elite, the amusements of the middling, and the pastimes of the populace. Some scholars have tried to show that recreational interests were widely shared or that the social elite possessed a passion for slumming, but in both these versions of events the argument relates to an entire social group rather than allowing for variations within groups.³ Emma Griffin has criticized studies of the working class—the social group that has been most carefully studied with variance in mind—for looking for variations within social groups, thereby obscuring the social contexts and structures of power that shaped culture.⁴ Griffin argues that social conflict is an element of recreation that must be incorporated into any analysis. There is no question that the opportunities open to the wealthy or

¹ John Wilson, 'Sociology of Leisure', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 6 (1980), 26-7, Tally Katz-Gerro and Yossi Shavit, 'The Stratification of Leisure and Taste: Classes and Lifestyles in Israel', *European Sociological Review*, 14 (1998), 369-86.

² Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London, 1978), 4-5.

³ J. M. Golby and A. W. Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England 1750-1900* (Stroud, 1999), V. A. C. Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London, 2006).

⁴ Emma Griffin, 'Popular Culture in Industrializing England', *HJ*, 45/3 (2002), 619-35.

socially powerful were often unavailable to the bulk of the population, but at the same time there is reason to doubt that the bulk of recreations led to social conflict as Griffin also suggests or that constrain was any less prevalent in the lives of the social elite. Recreation is not most relevant when it demonstrates structures of power.

In eighteenth-century historiography, studies of choice and taste developed relatively late. Histories focusing on art, architecture, music, and aesthetics are not new, but over the last two decades, as the Georgian consumer became the focus, a new angle on taste emerged. Thorsten Veblen's arguments for the importance of conspicuous consumption as evidence of social and cultural power have, until recently, guided examinations of cultural consumption.⁵ According to Veblen's model, an individual achieves status by demonstrating that he (in Veblen's account status seems to accrue to males only) has surplus time or money. People lower down the social scale follow those at the top and try to demonstrate that they too have surplus time and money. Veblen's model works best in societies where social mobility is (perceived as) widespread. Eighteenth-century commentators expressed anxiety about social distinctions that might be blurred through consumption of clothes and durable goods.⁶

Veblen's argument that top-down emulation drove patterns of consumption and behaviour has now been revised in favor of models that show how goods were consumed with different objectives in mind in different socioeconomic classes. This change in outlook is tied to the increasing influence of several works of French sociology, most notably the work of Pierre Bourdieu. In his seminal work *Distinction*, Bourdieu argued that taste could mark out people of particular social backgrounds who had acquired their taste in particular ways, rather than simply denigrating or marginalizing people without proper taste.⁷ Thus people who were raised in a particular cultural milieu appreciated cultural goods in ways that people who grew up in other milieus could not. Good taste properly acquired offered people cultural capital, another key concept from Bourdieu's work. Because cultural capital accrues to people from particular backgrounds, it offers

⁵ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (London, 1949).

⁶ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982), 54-6.

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984). Simon Gunn, 'Translating Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the English Middle Class in Historical Perspective', *British Journal of Sociology*, 56/1 (2005), 49-64.

status to people who have access to particular types of knowledge. Bourdieu's model limits the scope for social mobility. At the same time that Bourdieu's model of status became popular, historians began to argue that social boundaries in Georgian England were much less permeable than previously thought.⁸ Upon further review it became clear that in the eighteenth century status-enhancing goods were difficult to acquire and did not always have the impact the consumer intended. Social mobility through emulation therefore went out of favor, even though scholars continued to demonstrate how status within subgroups remained tied to acts of consumption.⁹

Bourdieu's ideas of social and cultural capital have pushed social scientists to look at the way leisure activities provide more than just relaxation. Scholars analyzing how people obtain status through their social connections found the concept of social capital useful. Thus, scholars have been interested in the ways that labour and leisure overlap in daily life. Job-related obligations slip into leisure time in a variety of ways, from corporate-subsidized gym memberships that turn working out into an unpaid workplace obligation to employees who fail to take all of their vacation days because they want to appear dedicated.¹⁰ Historians are now examining how leisure could involve extraordinary effort in service of cultural and social ideals.¹¹ The concept of social capital has also offered insight into the ways different sorts of social networks overlap. Leisure networks reinforce and are in turn reinforced by work and kin networks.¹² Sociologists have seen concern for cultural and social status as a key motivator.

⁸ Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite?: England, 1540-1880* (Oxford & New York, 1984), W. D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain since the Industrial Revolution* (London, 2006).

⁹ Hannah Greig, 'The Beau Monde and Fashionable Life in Eighteenth-Century London, C. 1688-1800' (University of London Ph.D. Thesis 2003).

¹⁰ Amanda Waring, 'Health Club Use and 'Lifestyle': Exploring the Boundaries between Work and Leisure', *LS*, 27/3 (2008), 295-309, D.J. Walmsley, 'The Work-Life Balance: Geographical Perspectives on Lifestyle, Leisure, Stuff and the Future Presidential Address to the Institute of Australian Geographers' Conference, Hobart, July 2008', *Geographical Research*, 46/3 (2008), 245-54, Douglas Kleiber et al., 'Having More by Doing Less: The Paradox of Leisure Constraints in Later Life', *JLR*, 40/3 (2008), 343-59, Julie Hardwick, 'Sex and the (Seventeenth-Century) City: A Research Note Towards a Long History of Leisure', *LS*, 27/4 (2008), 459-66.

¹¹ Melanie Dawson, *Laboring to Play: Home Entertainment and the Spectacle of Middle-Class Cultural Life, 1850-1920* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2005), Cindy Sondik Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York, 1999), Mimi Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 32/4 (1999), 415-45.

¹² Omar Lizardo, 'How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks', *ASR*, 71 (2006), 778-807, Alan Warde, Gindo Tampubolon, and Mike Savage, 'Recreation, Informal Social Networks and Social Capital', *JLR*, 37/4 (2005), 402-25, Alan Warde and Gindo Tampubolon, 'Social Capital, Networks and Leisure

Distinct from Bourdieu's ideas about social and cultural capital is his concept of *habitus*, a concept that attempts to show how people respond to structures in their daily lives.¹³ *Habitus* supplies people with the tools to develop practices that are useful and give meaning to the objects and situations encountered every day. The strategies that people in the eighteenth century developed for dealing with structural constraints are the focus of this thesis. Like cultural capital, *habitus* as Bourdieu conceptualized it does not allow for social change. Rather, practices emerge out of objects and situations that were themselves created in response to *habitus*. Structures and practices are thus self-sustaining and unchanging. Bourdieu's model and the related model proposed by William Sewell offer a starting point for understanding how individuals responded to the structures around them.¹⁴ The conclusion will return to examine the idea of *habitus* in light of arguments about structures and agency in the intervening chapters.

Bourdieu's work on social and cultural capital has inspired historians other than myself. The link between concerns over status and actual behaviour has been extensively discussed in recent years in studies of shopping and leisure in eighteenth-century England. Shopping for fashionable goods has received more attention than most recreational activities, thereby leaving the impression that identity was primarily formed through the acquisition of goods.¹⁵

The relationship between recreational activities, social power, and economic position must be carefully considered if we are to assess whether taste existed at the level of the subculture and individual. Scholars have pointed to the constraining power of prevailing taste on behaviour and choice. The pursuit of cultural capital and social prestige has been elevated in importance as a motive to the point that recreational activities are no longer imagined to have been pleasurable. Simon McVeigh reduced the

Consumption', *The Sociological Review*, 50/2 (2002), 155-80, Troy Glover and John Hemingway, 'Locating Leisure in the Social Capital Literature', *JLR*, 31/4 (2005), 387-401, Katz-Gerro and Shavit, 'The Stratification of Leisure and Taste: Classes and Lifestyles in Israel', Tony Blackshaw and Jonathan Long, 'A Critical Examination of the Advantages of Investigating Community and Leisure from a Social Network Perspective', *LS*, 17 (1998), 233-48

¹³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977).

¹⁴ William Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago & London, 2005).

¹⁵ Jon Stobart, Andrew Hann, and Victoria Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption: Leisure and Shopping in the English Town, c. 1680-1830* (London, 2007), Leonard Schwarz and Jon Stobart, 'Leisure, Luxury and Urban Specialization in the Eighteenth Century', *UH*, 35 (2008), 216-36, Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London, 2006), Jon Stobart, 'Leisure and Shopping in the Small Towns of Georgian England', *JUH*, 31/4 (2005), 479-503.

involvement in concert series to a pursuit of social prestige as concertgoers sought increasingly exclusive gatherings.¹⁶ Anthony Fletcher has similarly emphasized the absence of pleasure for young women in fulfilling social duties on their way to marriage.¹⁷ But it would be a mistake to consider people bound within particular social or cultural groupings that precluded enjoyment or expressions of difference. Turning a more careful eye to the ways in which activities succeeded or failed to be pleasurable offers glimpses of eighteenth-century life from the users' perspectives. A user's perspective allows us to evaluate how activities reflected the participants' social milieu. We can see how an individual's desire for social and cultural capital—even as it reduced the scope for uninhibited choice—could increase pleasure.

Work on consumption in the eighteenth century revealing how goods obtained meanings that were not associated with social prestige has tempered the power of social and cultural capital. Since the release of *Consumption and the World of Goods* scholars have developed our understanding of the issues surrounding consumption. My approaches to individuals' strategies for navigating the leisure choices they faced owe much to the agent-centred frameworks for analyzing consumption and taste that have emerged over the past twenty years. In particular John Styles and Amanda Vickery have offered insight into the ways both propertied and impoverished people acquired goods. In *The Gentleman's Daughter* Vickery examines the ways goods were obtained, the changing patterns of consumption over the lifecycle, and the meanings individuals ascribed to their possessions.¹⁸ Using the papers of Elizabeth Shackleton, a resident of Lancashire who relied on friends and relatives in London to obtain specific items and materials for her home, Vickery elucidates aspects of the decision-making process. Investigating decision-making processes in this way provides insight into the values that people articulated on a daily basis and used to buy both significant and banal goods. We see objects selected for design, colour, durability, or personal reasons.

¹⁶ Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge, 1993).

¹⁷ Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven & London, 2008), 259-80.

¹⁸ Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, 1998). Helen Berry, 'Prudent Luxury: The Metropolitan Tastes of Judith Baker, Durham Gentlewoman', in Rosemary Sweet and Penelope Lane (eds.), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England: "On the Town"* (Aldershot, 2003).

An individual's taste cannot be examined just by looking at what he/she bought or used, however. In their introduction to *Gender, Taste and Material Culture*, Vickery and Styles question how we judge or measure taste. They point out that factors related to social position and life station circumscribed taste.¹⁹ What was proper or desirable for an unmarried, twenty-something male was probably not what a fifty-year old father and civic leader ought to be buying. Similarly gender-ideology played helped to determine what people should select. Vickery and Styles also question how taste could be expressed in situations when individuals had no choice. As they point out, a servant might make occasional, big purchases that expressed her taste while most of the goods she used on a daily basis were acquired on her behalf by her mistress.²⁰ Styles and Vickery point out that even though social milieu constrained people in less obvious ways than historians have assumed, individual financial situations, family backgrounds, and personal willingness to adhere to social and moral expectations meant that social constraints were individually variable and relate to upbringing and individual preferences in complex ways. Structural constraints like these also limited what people could do with their leisure time.

Recreation is and was different from the consumable goods studied by historians of consumption. However, like durable goods, activities meant different things to different people and offered different attractions to people of different socioeconomic positions.

Work on consumption prefigures my approach to leisure and amusement. Historians of material culture, art, music, and reading have turned to the records of individual patterns of buying and use.²¹ This work on consumption often highlights individual practice in order to contrast case studies with guidelines set out in advice

¹⁹ John Styles and Amanda Vickery, 'Introduction', in John Styles and Amanda Vickery (eds.), *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven & London, 2006), 16-7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

²¹ David Mitchell, 'Sir Godfrey Copley as Patron and Consumer, 1685-1705' and Julia Armstrong-Totten, 'The Rise and Fall of a British Connoisseur: The Career of Michael Bryan (1757-1821), Picture Dealer Extraordinaire', in Jeremy Warren and Adriana Turpin (eds.), *Auctions, Agents and Dealers: The Mechanisms of the Art Market 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2007), Claire Walsh, 'Shops, Shopping, and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-Century England', in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture*, John Brewer, 'Reconstructing the Reader: Prescriptions, Texts and Strategies in Anna Larpent's Reading', in James Raven, Naomi Tadmor, and Helen Small (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996).

literature or the available opportunities. This interest in individual perspectives and the ways that individuals developed practices to negotiate constraints has not extended to studies of historical leisure. Rather most work on leisure has remained trapped in institutional or regional perspectives. Emma Griffin has deviated from the institution and region to try to invigorate leisure history by reintroducing social conflict, but her agenda has largely served to combine resurrected issues of social control with an appreciation of space. One agent-centred approach to leisure is Jon Stobart, Andrew Hahn, and Victoria Morgan's *Spaces of Consumption*. In *Spaces of Consumption* the authors declare their intention to look at built spaces used for shopping and leisure from the perspective of practice rather than the uses intended by architects and builders. Yet *Spaces of Consumption* fails to rethink urban boundaries and sheds little light on decision-making processes. Relationships between prescription and practice in eighteenth-century life have been thoroughly examined over the past fifteen years, but the relationship between regulation, obligation and pleasure has gone unexplored. Despite the growing interest in the history of emotions, pleasure and enjoyment have received little attention.²² By looking at patterns of use it is possible not only to answer questions about leisure and urban spaces, but we can also look into what constituted leisure for different sorts of people and answer questions about the impact of social networks on behaviour and the relationship between the individual and the group.

The confluence of socioeconomic situation and individual choice is the focus for this dissertation. Historians have struggled to understand variations within sections of society because evidence of practice can be hard to find in the surviving sources. I overcome this difficulty by exploiting diaries, an under-used set of documents that present a description of recreation. Diaries provide evidence of the outcomes of a group of Londoners' decisions about how to spend their time. Historians have gathered a great

²² Susan Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household', in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900* (Basingstoke, 2008); Peter Burke, 'Is There a Cultural History of the Emotions?', Penelope Gouk and Helen Hills, 'Towards Histories of Emotions', and Graham Richards, 'Emotions into Words--or Words into Emotions?' in Penelope Gouk and Helen Hills (eds.), *Representing Emotions: New Connections in the Histories of Art, Music and Medicine* (Aldershot, 2005); Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy* (Cambridge, 1986); Linda Pollock, 'Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England', *HJ*, 47/3 (2004), 567-90; William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001); Michael Roper, 'Slipping out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *HJ*, 59/1 (2005), 57-72; Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying About Emotions in History', *American Historical Review* 107 (2002).

deal of information about living standards and employment, but the practices of individual agents in the metropolis remain unexplored. Particular historical agents who left rich records of their behaviours (e.g. James Boswell) have been examined for the insights they offer into mental processes, but rich anecdotes are less useful for understanding daily routines.²³ Evidence of quotidian behaviour provides an opportunity to consider decision-making and the ways that taste exhibited itself in everyday life. Leisure decisions and recreational activities have been under-valued as indicators of taste and identity.

This way of organizing the analysis escapes from limitations of eighteenth century systems of social description and provides other ways of understanding behaviour. Approaches to social structure have generally adopted the categories that existed at the time and then sought out the characteristics of those groups, thereby obscuring the complexity of human behaviour. An agent-centred perspective rethinks group attributes in order to understand better individual relationships and trajectories as they exist in practice.²⁴

Eighteenth-century social categories do not hamper studies of leisure only. Studies of social groups, particularly the middling sort/middle class, have encountered difficulty in comprehending the diversity of people who might have been “middling”.²⁵ Scholars have found that an individual’s social position varied depending on the sources and criteria used. Historians have struggled to understand both how individuals related to larger social groups and how an individual’s view of him or herself related to the ways the community perceived them. By looking at behavioural patterns we can find affinities between individuals that are not evident in eighteenth-century categories of social description. This allows us to reassess the rise of the middle class by delineating group identities using criteria that are neither straightforwardly economic nor moral. We can

²³ Boswell has been widely used. For instance Philip Carter, 'James Boswell's Manliness', in Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (London, 1999), Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, Patricia Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago & London, 2003).

²⁴ This echoes Arthur Goldhammer’s translation of Maurizio Gribaudi and Alain Blum, 'Des Catégories Aux Liens Individuels: L'analyse De L'espace Social', *Annales*, 45 (1990), 1365-402, Maurizio Gribaudi and Alain Blum, 'The Statistical Analysis of Social Space', in Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Histories: French Constructions of the Past* (New York, 1995), 600.

²⁵ Henry French, 'The Search for The "Middle Sort of People" In England, 1600-1800', *HJ*, 43 (2000), 277-93.

understand how status defined by friends, coworkers and companions compared with status defined by economic and professional standing.

The difficulties encountered by historians hoping to understand social structure echo problems encountered in examinations of identity. The failure of classes and broad social groups to explain the varieties of criteria used to categorize individuals has caused historians to turn to “identities”, a term that refers to socioeconomic status as well as gender, moral standing, political power, and other markers. However historians are still trying to work out how the different markers of identity related to each other and how an individual’s view of their own identity related to the ways others categorized them. Jonathan Barry and Henry French present some of the varieties of identity that existed.²⁶ Because the word “identity” referred in this period to an individual’s membership in a group, historians have argued that identity was thought of as group membership only.²⁷ These identities were often formed as a result of power dynamics based on political, social, religious, economic, legal, sexual and racial differences. Individuals established their identity, the argument goes, by attaching themselves to a group and by behaving in ways that were thought to reflect that group’s behaviour. Though Dror Wahrman has argued that at least some facets of identity were not considered durable, other historians have demonstrated that moral condition and gender roles were essential characteristics for determining status in a community.²⁸ We still need to work out how an individual’s identities related to each other and whether the confluence of numerous group identities could give a person an identity in the modern sense of a set of attributes that correspond to one person only.

Some facets of individual identity can be examined in the context of recreation. Gender identities come into particular focus. A variety of forms of appropriate masculine and feminine behaviours are thought to have shaped behaviour as men and women attempted to adhere to the strictures that, we are told, determined whether they would be accepted into social groups. Following the lead of Amanda Vickery, scholars have

²⁶ Henry French and Jonathan Barry, 'Identity and Agency in English Society, 1500-1800' - Introduction', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds.), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004).

²⁷ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven & London, 2006), Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, 1983).

²⁸ See chapters by Muldrew, Hindle, and Shepard in *Identity and Agency in England*.

looked at the ways women negotiated the restrictions placed upon them and have shown that women had far more room for manoeuvre than advice manuals might suggest.²⁹ Analysis of male conduct lags behind in this area. Though putting behaviour in dialogue with prescription is not the primary objective of this thesis, the evidence of practice assembled here does offer images of male behaviour that contrast with the hyper-manly ideals described in the works of Stone or Fletcher.³⁰ Both the refined and sensible politeness considered by Philip Carter and the controlled and diligent activity described by Margaret Hunt will find illustration and some refinement in the pages that follow.³¹

In this thesis it is evidence of behaviour in public settings and within the home that does the most to clarify how gender identities were constituted. While historians have considered some particular spaces as hubs of certain social identities, particularly coffeehouses and the opera, these were only a small part of the recreational world of the Georgian Londoner. The home is the most important leisure space neglected by historians. As I demonstrate in chapter 6, activities in domestic settings (i.e. one's own home and the homes of friends, family, and associates) consumed the greatest portion of people's time. The massive historiography examining domestic settings has focused on three related issues. First, where were the boundaries between public and private and how was privacy created?³² Second, how did gender ideologies map on to ideas of public and private?³³ Finally, scholars have tried to work out what the decorations and

²⁹ Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?: A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *HJ*, 36 (1993), 383-414, Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*.

³⁰ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977), Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven & London, 1995).

³¹ Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society: Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley & London, 1996).

³² Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, 2005), Robert St. George, 'Reading Spaces in Eighteenth-Century New England', in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture*.

³³ G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992), Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1995), Karen Harvey, 'Barbarity in a Teacup? Punch, Domesticity and Gender in the Eighteenth Century', *JDH*, 21/3 (2008), 205-21, Janet Howarth, 'Gender, Domesticity, and Sexual Politics', in Henry Matthew (ed.), *The Nineteenth Century: The British Isles: 1815-1901* (Oxford, 2000), Margaret Hunt, 'Wife Beating, Domesticity and Women's Independence in Eighteenth-Century London', *Gender & History*, 4/1 (1992), 10-33, Linda Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *Journal of American History*, 75/1 (1988), 9-39, Lawrence Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions About Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), 97-109, Karen Lipsedge, "'Enter into

possessions found in houses tell us about gender, cultural and social capital, and the growth of consumption.³⁴ The emphasis on decoration and display grows out of the first two areas of historiographical specialization, particularly the awareness of the home's social and often public role. Appreciating the importance of sociability in the domestic sphere adds nuance to our understandings of public and privacy and the relationship between the family and the outside world. Domestic space could be put to many uses and careful attention to those uses provides a better set of tools for understanding privacy and moral prescription. Domestic recreation recorded by the diarists examined here advances our knowledge of uses of the home and attitudes to domesticity as they varied between different sub-sections of propertied society. The home was a place where recreation created social and cultural capital as hosts and hostesses demonstrated good taste and social connections.

Looking at the domestic sphere provides an opportunity to suggest revisions to our understanding of politeness. By treating politeness as a form of performance, we gain insight into how polite ideals affected behaviour and the extent to which they permeated society. Historians have seen the pursuit of politeness as an exercise shaping most aspects of gentry and noble life and a considerable force in shaping the behaviour of merchants and professionals.³⁵ They have seen politeness shaping deportment, patterns of sociability and lifestyle, and consumption. The term polite suggested attention to form,

Thy Closet": Women, Closet Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel', in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture*, Jennifer Melville, 'The Use and Organisation of Domestic Space in Late Seventeenth-Century London' (University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 1999), Naomi Tadmor, "'In the Even My Wife Read to Me": Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading*, Ingrid Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge, 2002), John Tosh, 'The Old Adam and the New Man: Emerging Themes in the History of English Masculinities, 1750-1850', in *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family and empire* (Harlow, 2005), Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?'

³⁴ Cohen, *Household Gods*, Charlotte Grant, "'One's Self, and One's House, One's Furniture": From Object to Interior in British Fiction, 1720-1900' and Hannah Greig, 'Eighteenth-Century English Interiors in Image and Text', in Jeremy Aynsley and Charlotte Grant (eds.), *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance* (London, 2006), Peter Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London* (New Haven & London, 2004), Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour* (Cambridge & New York, 2001), Carole Shammas, 'The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America', *JSH*, 14/1 (1980), 3-24, Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior, 1620-1920* (London, 2000), Philippa Tristram, *Living Space in Fact and Fiction* (London, 1989), Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850* (Aldershot, 2007).

³⁵ Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *HJ*, 45/4 (2002), 882-8.

sociability, improvement, worldliness, and gentility.³⁶ However the widespread use of the term entailed both variations in the behaviour it referred to and opposition to its hegemony. Lawrence Klein has drawn attention to the ways middling people could have accessed politeness through conduct manuals.³⁷ Rather than simply attempting to adopt a gentry lifestyle, the middling sorts could use their knowledge of polite ideals in selected situations. Partly in opposition to this Helen Berry has argued that we need to be more attentive both to people's attempts to contest politeness and the ways that impolite forms could provide cultural capital. Studying sociability in recreational contexts provides an opportunity to see politeness employed in varying ways in a variety of settings. Politeness was widespread, but by no means always shaped the behaviour of propertied society.

In general, I question the extent of changes in the organization of society, women's roles, the social role of the home, and politeness as they relate to individuals' scope for choice. For instance the apparent shift in the press from condemnation to acceptance of a public role for women seems exaggerated when we look at patterns of practice across the period. Dror Wahrman describes the years around 1780 as a period of gender panic, something that Gillian Russell endorses in her analysis of the emergent public role for women between 1760 and 1770.³⁸ Vic Gatrell has suggested a later change in gender relations, arguing that the reign of George III saw the final years of a period of pitiless and bodily humor that was submerged under Victorian sentiment and prudery around 1820.³⁹ Changes in the relationship of women to public culture, alterations in attitudes towards masculinity and the family, and a supposed growth of concern for physical privacy have all been advocated for the decades I have chosen to study, but these changes are not obvious in diaries and egodocuments.

Physically the town was certainly changing. Historians have argued for a variety of alterations in London's appearance and usability. Much has been made of the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness for Plebes: Consumption and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century England', in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London & New York, 1995).

³⁸ Dror Wahrman, 'Percy's Prologue: From Gender Play to Gender Panic in Eighteenth-Century England', *P&P*, 159 (1998), 113-60, Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge, 2007).

³⁹ Gatrell, *City of Laughter*.

improvements in paving and street lighting, particularly as evidence of the spirit of improvement during the final decades of the century. The metropolis continued to grow in size as well as in amenities, leading some scholars to suggest that metropolitan identity was fragmenting.⁴⁰ At the same time Peter Guillery has suggested that the metropolis was becoming more homogeneous, at least when it came to housing.⁴¹ The number and variety of leisure offerings expanded as new types of attractions opened and more branches of familiar activities emerged.⁴² The “commercialization of leisure” has been seen as a force that expanded the variety of leisure activities accessible to the poor or middling and opened up previously restricted pastimes between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴³ The period selected might be expected to reveal considerable changes in the options for recreation and the ways people approached those options.

Yet the conclusions I reveal here suggest that changes to the metropolis had at best a limited effect on people’s behaviours. The mental changes that people have revealed through detailed examinations of print appear to have had little impact on patterns of behaviour as revealed in diaries. Features of Victorian life such as emphasis on time at home are already evident in the Georgian period. At the same time patterns of life that have been associated with the early eighteenth century remain prominent, for instance regular use of coffee houses, social mixing in theatres, and easy access to green spaces on the edges of town. Diaries suggest important differences between individual behaviour and the preoccupations of the print culture that some scholars have mined so heavily. I do not see any overwhelming significance in the start and end dates of this dissertation. Indeed they are largely expedient. They allow for a large, but not unwieldy sample of diaries covering a relatively short stretch of time. The arguments made here

⁴⁰ Peter Clark, 'The Multi-Centred Metropolis: The Social and Cultural Landscapes of London, 1600-1840', in Peter Clark and Raymond Gillespie (eds.), *Two Capitals: London and Dublin 1500-1840* (Oxford & London, 2001), David Green, *From Artisans to Paupers: Economic Change and Poverty in London, 1790-1870* (Aldershot & Brookfield, Vt, 1995), 140-96.

⁴¹ Guillery, *The Small House*, 296.

⁴² Lawrence Stone, 'Leisure in Eighteenth Century England', in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.), *Il Tempo Libero, Economia E Società (Loisirs, Tiempo Libre, Freizeit), Secc. Xiii-Xviii: Atti Della 'Ventiseiesima Settimana Di Studi' 18-23 Aprile 1994* (Firenze, 1995).

⁴³ Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (Basingstoke, 2006), McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *Birth of a Consumer Society*, Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York & London, 1998).

will provide a counterpoint to many of the claims that have been made for the importance of this period to the development of modernity.

The remainder of this introduction considers the problem of defining leisure by looking at the meanings of eighteenth-century terminology and how it appears in records of people's daily lives. Examining the terminology also requires a brief examination of the comments on leisure and recreation found in didactic literature. I then discuss the source material for many of my conclusions: a set of forty-five diaries written in London over a sixty-three year period. After commenting on the range and variety of diarists and diaries I go on to think about the uses and shortcomings of diaries as sources for historical study.

The language of leisure

Historians have argued over whether people in the past recognized leisure as a category of time or activity. Following on from EP Thompson's groundbreaking "Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism," it has widely been assumed that the advent of factory production changed the way people thought about time.⁴⁴ To an extent this is certainly true. Changing working hours shifted the amount and timing of leisure available to labourers. But scholars have shown that pre-industrial labour was not as free and easy as Thompson assumed. Jacques Le Goff and David Landes both pointed out that by the fourteenth century many towns possessed clocks and workers had already begun to have conflicts over the regulation of working hours.⁴⁵ Furthermore, alternative strategies for distributing time may have been in play, and there is evidence that even less regulated workers in the past may have been more dedicated to their work than Thompson assumes.⁴⁶ Arguing against the leisure preference that has been assumed for

⁴⁴ EP Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *P&P*, 38 (1967), 56-97.

⁴⁵ David Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA. & London, 1983) 74-7, Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work & Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago & London, 1980) 44-51.

⁴⁶ Douglas Reid, 'Wedding Days and the Evolution of Leisure Time in the Workshops and Factories of Industrial England, 1701-1961', in Ian Blanchard (ed.), *Labour and Leisure in Historical Perspective, Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries: Papers Presented at Session B-3a of the Eleventh International History Congress, Milan, 12th-17th September 1994* (Stuttgart, 1994), Douglas Reid, 'Weddings, Weekdays, Work and Leisure in Urban England 1791-1911: The Decline of Saint Monday Revisited', *P&P*, 153 (1996), 135-63, Douglas Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876', *P&P*, 71 (1976), 76-101, Gary Cross, *A Quest for Time: The Reduction of Work in Britain and France, 1840-1940* (Berkeley, 1989), Mark Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835*

workers, Jan de Vries has argued that increasing acquisitiveness led workers to shun leisure in favor of extra hours of labour to increase their incomes.⁴⁷ In addition, Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift point out that there were other channels for developing senses of time besides work.⁴⁸ Indeed the regularity and discipline of the gentry and nobility exhibited in diaries suggests that a life of leisure was often highly sensitive to time.

Both arguments about workers' lack of time discipline inferred attitudes from modes of production and the presence and absence of clocks. Peter Burke looked for different sorts of evidence of attitudes to time. In particular, he countered the argument that understandings of time depended on labour by arguing that understandings of leisure hinged upon not merely on having time available, but on the existence of appropriate language too. In Burke's view the early modern world witnessed the invention of leisure.⁴⁹ Burke's article responds to investigations of time in nineteenth and twentieth century society that assume the modern concept of leisure came when people began to organise their time into "leisure, weekends, and vacations" rather than into "festivals" and "informal and irregular breaks from work."⁵⁰ Burke argues that in the absence of a modern concept of leisure people in medieval and early modern Europe had no category into which they could lump these activities.⁵¹ Therefore the significance of activities was different. Burke shows the symbolic importance of games played by the populace and the social capital built up by the social elites by successfully participating in games of skill such as fencing or hunting. According to Burke, something like modern leisure did emerge in the late fifteenth century as an analogous word, pastime, came into use and led, in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, to the emergence of a "European 'leisure system'" well before the industrial revolution.⁵² Burke is certainly correct in his argument that leisure was a part of life before the industrial revolution, though his belief

(Cambridge, 1988), David Landes and Mark Harrison, 'The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds 1790-1835', *P&P*, 116 (1987), 192-205.

⁴⁷ Jan De Vries, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution', *The Journal of Economic History*, 54/2 (1994), 257.

⁴⁸ Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift, 'Reworking E. P. Thompson's 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism'', *Time & Society*, 5/3 (1996), 282-4.

⁴⁹ Peter Burke, 'The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe', *P&P*, 146 (1995), 136-50. Joan-Lluís Marfany, 'The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe' and Peter Burke, 'The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe: Reply', *P&P*, 156 (1997), 174-97.

⁵⁰ Burke, 'Invention of Leisure', 137.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 137-8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 149.

in the importance of vocabulary as the primary evidence of a concept of leisure can be challenged and is difficult to apply, not least because our understanding of the language use of the majority of the population is so limited for the period he discusses.

I do not intend to critique Burke's account of the appearance of leisure over a long period and across a large geographical area. The arguments offered in this thesis are compatible with this. But his linguistic approach does suggest analytical tools for thinking about discretionary time. Burke rightly points out that "leisure" is a word whose meaning has changed over the past two hundred years.⁵³ In Georgian England "leisure" was an opportunity to do something, but not necessarily a pleasurable activity. Leisure was "not work", though the significance of time that was not work remains unclear. Trying to analyze Georgian society in terms of a simple binary of work/leisure creates more problems than it solves. At the lowest level a work/leisure opposition deprives us of the language to describe a variety of activities. What, for instance, do we mean by work? Is it something one is paid to do? In that case, women present a challenge.⁵⁴ They might not work for money, but they were not free to spend their time however they liked. Likewise men had duties beyond their paid employment. We might go to the opposite extreme and declare that everything that is not recreation is work. Housework, family responsibilities, and other obligations would therefore be lumped in with work for money. But this is unsatisfactory as well, as it obscures the variety of obligatory activities that conflicted with paid labour but had different implications for time and individual identity. A solution to this problem is achieved by following Burke's lead by finding vocabulary that provides a better set of terms for conceptualizing and analyzing eighteenth-century behaviour.

Just as Peter Burke found in the continental context, "leisure" in eighteenth-century England leisure was an opportunity; it was the freedom to choose. Leisure was separate from time spent on business or paid labour, but it often involved serious activity. Examples of "leisure" as time spent doing favors for others are legion. For instance, in a letter to his daughter Polly, John Wilkes wrote "I hope the great hurry of business is now

⁵³ Ibid., 139-40.

⁵⁴ Glennie and Thrift, 'Reworking E. P. Thompson's', 281.

over, and that I shall get leisure to look after my own more immediate affairs.”⁵⁵ This use of “leisure” refers to his activities overseeing the household and looking after his daughter. This example also reminds us of the variety of activities that might be considered “business”. Here Wilkes has in mind his duties as an Alderman. These were duties that could not be put off as his household matters could. Leisure could be devoted to the public good as well. Elizabeth Montagu reported that she “exhorted” William Melmoth “to give his leisure hours to the publick” once he had recovered from an illness.⁵⁶ As a man who did not hold a political or civic office Melmoth was not under any obligation to spend his time in that way, but Montagu hoped he would devote his leisure towards serving the public in a productive if not pleasurable fashion. The issue of choice is an important one. One way of distinguishing a leisure-time obligation from work or business is to examine how much flexibility an individual had in deciding when to carry out a task.

Diarists who said they were engaged in business revealed that they were male and suggested that they were middling or above. By using “work” to describe their activities an individual positioned him or herself within society. Male diarists who were paid for their labours were more likely to describe their activities as work than men who were never paid. Job Knight, a clerk and draftsman for an upholstery firm, described his activities or his products as work about once a week. As one moves up the social ladder the word becomes less common in diaries. Boswell, for instance, described himself as working only a handful of times in his *London Diary* and Canning rarely “worked.” It was far more common for these men to refer specifically to what they did, rather than use a catchall term such as work or business.

Work also had gendered connotations. Women’s “work” was a primary leisure (discretionary) activity that was nonetheless an obligation for many. Referring to needle crafts as “work” was not an ironic description of an activity that was pleasurable.⁵⁷ This instance provides evidence of a crucial feature of the work/leisure divide: it was strongly

⁵⁵ British Library, Add MSS 30879, John Wilkes, 'Correspondence', f. 137.

⁵⁶ Huntington Library, Montagu papers, Box 38, MO 3042.

⁵⁷ The use of “work” as a term for recreational activities among subaltern groups has appeared in several times and regions. Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London, 1992), 199-203, Carolyn Cooper, *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* (New York, 2004), 92-4, Kai Fikentscher, *"You Better Work!": Underground Dance Music in New York City* (Hanover, NH, 2000).

gendered in its usage. For men, leisure in the household was not sullied by work. For women a primary leisure activity was that “work”: specifically needlework that might be purely decorative, but could also be routine maintenance of clothing belonging to other members of the household. Like men, women at leisure were not necessarily at play. Women of propertied society were left with fewer terms to denote non-recreational activities than men of similar social status who might engage in “work” or “business”. A man’s public duties had a language all their own.

Looking at one woman’s use of “work” reveals how terminology could be ambiguous. In some instances Elizabeth Inchbald, an actress and author who did work for money, clearly meant needlework, for instance on the 24th of January, 1781, when she “worked at [her] red shoes”.⁵⁸ In other instances her language is suggestive of needlework. She worked in front of her visitors, e.g. her brother on January 25th, or together with them, as she did with her sister and Nanny in February and March.⁵⁹ Most suggestive is her tendency to separate her theatrical activities from work within the same sentence. On 28 December 1780 Inchbald “wrote for [her] farce and worked” and on 1 April of the following year she was “at [her] parts and worked.”⁶⁰ Here “work” is clearly not play, but it is also not what Inchbald was paid to do (though she did seem to “work” on her costumes for performances). Inchbald was prevented from describing her theatrical labours as work or business by the gendered connotations of the word.

Leisure was commonly the freedom to undertake activities. As we have already seen, those activities were often obligations that simply had more flexibility than work or business. To an extent this helps to clarify the problems of women’s leisure: they were at leisure, but their days were consumed with household duties. Leisure must not be equated with pleasure. Diarist rarely refer to activities as duties, though advice literature and comments on community obligations suggest that many of the activities recorded were indeed undertaken out of a sense of duty.⁶¹ Women’s letters suggest a variety of senses of duty usually situated in a relationship between persons (or a person and God).⁶²

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Inchbald, *The Diaries of Elizabeth Inchbald*, vol 1. (London, 2007), 217.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 217, 223, 229, 231.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 223, 229, 231, 303, 335. Also read and worked on 219, 223, and 228.

⁶¹ Keith Wrightson, 'Mutualities and Obligations: Changing Social Relationships in Early Modern England', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 139 (2006), 157-94.

⁶² Mary Coke, *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, ed. James Home (Edinburgh, 1889), II:339,

In the letters and diaries of Mary Coke, duty was generally paid to a more senior person, though performing that duty might bring pleasure if one was graciously received.⁶³

Other words were used to refer to activities freely undertaken for enjoyment, activities that were not duties, work, or business. These include diversion, amusement, recreation, entertainment, pleasure, and play. Diversion, amusement, recreation, and pleasure were largely used interchangeably in the eighteenth century, but they each had slightly different connotations. All referred to enjoyable activities. In his dictionary Johnson attempted to pick apart the implications of each word. His definition of “diversion” is particularly useful in this regard. He deemed it “Sport; something that unbends the mind by turning it off from care. *Diversion* seems to be something lighter than *amusement*, and less forcible than *pleasure*.”⁶⁴ Johnson’s speculative tone demonstrates the ambiguities in usage and the difficulty of tying down the implications of one word or another. He tries for a second time to pin down the differences when he defines “to amuse,” but again prevaricates. To amuse was “1. to entertain with tranquility; to fill with thoughts that engage the mind, without distracting it. To *divert* implies something more lively, and to *please*, something more important. It is therefore frequently taken in a sense bordering on contempt.”⁶⁵ Johnson creates a sort of hierarchy in terms of acceptability. Pleasure resides at the top, then diversion with its levity and liveliness, and finally amusement. But all of these words are used in a variety of ways.

A word that Johnson did not mention is recreation. His definition of recreation demonstrates that it ought to be placed amongst diversion, pleasure, and amusement in the leisure lexicon. He says recreation is “1. Relief after toil or pain; amusement in sorrow or distress. 2. Refreshment; amusement; diversion.”⁶⁶ This entry implies positive connotations for recreation. Note that none of these definitions refer to paid labour, rather amusements, diversions, pleasures, and recreations relieve the mind from care and offer enjoyment. They refer to a quality of time that is more enjoyable than mere leisure. Johnson’s fourth and fifth definitions for pleasure are important here as well: “4. What

364, Elizabeth Montagu, *The Letters of Mrs. E. Montagu, with Some of the Letters of Her Correspondence* (London, 1809), 374. “Duty” could mask many different and sometimes contradictory motives. Bourdieu, *Outline*, 50.

⁶³ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, II:18.

⁶⁴ Samuel Johnson, 'A Dictionary of the English Language' (London, 1777).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the will dictates. 5. Choice; arbitrary will.” We will see that arbitrary is too strong a word for the pleasures of most of the population, but the types of activities this dissertation examines are leisure activities that might or might be pleasurable depending on circumstances or personal preferences. Determining motivation is a tricky business and it is necessary to question each activity before declaring it to be pleasurable. Before pursuing these issues further, it is worth examining word use in more detail with reference to literary texts and the Proceedings of the Old Bailey, a source for accessing the voice of the people in Georgian England.⁶⁷

“Pleasure” and “pleasing” activities are a useful starting point for an extended examination of the language of activities that were enjoyed and undertaken for enjoyment. In the preface to the collection of essays she edited with Roy Porter, *Pleasure in the eighteenth century*, Mary Mulvey Roberts addressed some of the difficulties involved in defining terms such as pleasure as they were used in the eighteenth century.⁶⁸ In particular, the chapters in *Pleasure in the eighteenth century* demonstrate the error of assuming that “pleasure” was something simple and immediate, enjoyed without the concerns that burden modern pleasure-seekers. Perhaps more interestingly we must consider the possibility that, as Roy Porter wrote, the eighteenth century was the age when “pleasure came into its own.” Official objections to pleasure (particularly from the church) declined in the eighteenth century.⁶⁹ Despite the official rehabilitation of pleasure, there has been little attention to feelings of pleasure and how they relate to prescriptions for pleasurable living. It is possible to find evidence that people found ways to be titillated in repressive societies and people may have responded with pleasure even though the activities themselves took on a more subdued air. Karin Wurst’s book *Fabricating Pleasure*, for instance, argues that pleasure was available in Germany in the

⁶⁷ The sessions papers are not perfect in this regard, however. See Magnus Huber, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings, 1674-1834: Evaluating and Annotating a Corpus of 18th- and 19th-Century Spoken English', in Anneli Meurman-Solin and Arja Nurmi (eds.), *Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English 1: Annotating Variation and Change* (Helsinki, 2007), Robert Shoemaker, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings and the Representation of Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century London', *JBS*, 47/3 (2008), 559-80.

⁶⁸ Mary Mulvey Roberts, 'Preface', in Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (eds.), *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1996).

⁶⁹ Roy Porter, 'Enlightenment and Pleasure', *Ibid.*, 1-4.

late eighteenth century despite repressive middle-class ideologies as people learned to find satisfaction in the imagination and in frustrated desires.⁷⁰

Other words in the leisure lexicon could carry strong normative meanings. “Amusement” generally appears in the context of silly or childish pranks or with an improving sense. For instance, the phrase “instruction and amusement” appears regularly in publications meant for children. Amusement could also be educational for adults, as we see from the transcript of a court case from 1775. A group of clerks were given access to their master's books “to read...for their amusement”.⁷¹ Here amusement suggests self-improvement in the context of adult activity. Similarly, amusements could “keep [a child] out of the street, from bad company”.⁷² But they could also describe activities that resulted from undirected time. Without a long-term purpose, an activity was “merely for amusement.”⁷³ Amusement could encompass destructive behaviour as well. Instances of amusements involving slander or destruction of property appear. One Old Bailey case contains a reference to “a malicious kind of amusement”; in some instances amusement could be anything but serious and improving.⁷⁴

In the Old Bailey Proceedings we find “diversion” and “amusement” being used interchangeably, sometimes even in the same sentence.⁷⁵ Like amusement, diversion was an antonym for business. Caroline Powys referred to life as a series of turns between business and diversion on the first page of her diary.⁷⁶ It is uncommon to find women of leisure describing their activities as business and Powys probably uses “business” in a general way rather than to refer to specific activities. Diversion could be destructive as well. In the trial of William Platten for murder we find one of the witnesses being asked “Do you know whether it was done in play or earnest?”¹ He responded “It might be out of diversion or fun. It is usual to throw things at one another on the river.” Throwing objects at other workers was done for fun, for diversion, but not with malicious intent.

⁷⁰ Karin Wurst, *Fabricating Pleasure: Fashion, Entertainment, and Cultural Consumption in Germany, 1780-1830* (Detroit, 2005).

⁷¹ OBP, David Mayne, Theft: Grand Larceny, 11th January 1775 (t17750111-61).

⁷² OBP, William Jenkins, Otherwise Jennings, Theft: Animal Theft, 4th June, 1783 (t17830604-3).

⁷³ OBP, Abraham Danson, Breaking Peace: Riot, 28th June 1780 (t17800628-128).

⁷⁴ OBP, Charles Riley, Thomas Butler, John Lacey, Samuel Williamson, Theft: Grand Larceny, 25th October 1786 (t17861025-118).

⁷⁵ OBP, Ralph Cutler, Sexual Offences: Rape, 10th September 1777 (t17770910-21).

⁷⁶ British Library, Add MSS 42160, Catherine Powys, 'Annual Journal', f. 1.

“Recreation” has attracted scholarly attention for its importance in both the early modern and Victorian periods. In the eighteenth century it appears to have been less frequently used. In the eighteenth century, recreation could be either productive or frivolous: “mere recreation” contrasts with “recreation for the industrious”. Rational recreation would come into its own in the nineteenth century as a buzz phrase for reformers who hoped to see people using their free time in a productive and improving way. In earlier periods some saw recreation as necessary too. Elaine McKay has used egodocuments to consider the meaning, function, and importance of recreation, refreshment, diversion, sport, entertainment, exercise, pastime, leisure, and play between 1500 and 1700.⁷⁷ She has argued that it is important to recognize the different meanings of words in the language of leisure: recreation was linked with refreshment and both were important for rejuvenation and re-creation.⁷⁸ Recreation was consequently necessary and useful, unlike idly spent leisure time.⁷⁹ These changing normative values associated with this vocabulary indicate shifts in the perceived function of leisure time activities.

Rational amusement or recreation continued to be deemed refreshing throughout this period. Even censorious writers who attacked the lengths people would go to for pleasure admitted that some amount of “manly exercise or rational amusement” was “essentially necessary” for health and to give people fresh inclination to return to business.⁸⁰ This notion that diversion should “unbend” the mind, but must not take on too great an importance, was widespread in advice literature.⁸¹ The medical community agreed: for people with nervous dispositions or physical ailments, exercise and the consumption of drinks and foods regarded as healthful was an essential part of the cure. But even for people with healthy dispositions exercise was imperative to good health lest their solids become flaccid and they succumb to problems of digestion, excretion, and nerves.⁸² For good digestion and excretion or calm nerves, the recommended diversions

⁷⁷ Elaine McKay, 'for Refreshment and Preserving Health': The Definition and Function of Recreation in Early Modern England', *HR*, 81/211 (2008), 52-74.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-8 and 63.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁸⁰ Addison, *Interesting Anecdotes, Memoirs, Allegories, Essays, and Poetical Fragments Tending to Amuse the Fancy, and Inculcate Morality* (London, 1797), 177.

⁸¹ Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady or, a Course of Female Education* (London, 1760), 117.

⁸² William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine or, a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines* (Edinburgh, 1772), 100-7.

were universally physical. People needed sedentary amusement for good mental health. The mind needed recreation in the form of relaxing (but improving) amusement and the body demanded diversion in the form of exercise.

Sport and play were used interchangeably, usually in the context of active pursuits or games. James Solloway, prosecuting Thomas Wisely for theft at the Old Bailey in 1761 said that Wisely had “brought in a pack of cards and asked me if I would sport, I said I never play at cards, I never play’d a game at cards in my life.”⁸³ Here we see sport and play sharing a single meaning. Sport could also be a “diversion of the field” as Johnson put it. Both terms also could mean mocking or contemptuous mirth.⁸⁴ As could “fun” a noun Johnson describes as a “low cant word” that could refer to sport, high merriment, and frolicksome delight. In the Old Bailey Sessions papers “fun” could stand for supposedly innocuous misbehaviour, for instance petty theft when the defendant claimed he intended to return the goods, as well as careless or irresponsible activity. Even though I have shown that all of these terms exhibit some variations in their usage, there is a hint of a continuum of respectability. Pleasure, recreation, amusement or diversion appear as the most consistently respectable terms, a quality that declines through play, sport, and finally fun. Despite these variations in usage and the normative baggage carried by some, it is essential to recognize that all denote not just something done at leisure, but more specifically something done “not as a task, but for a pleasure.”⁸⁵

Identifying recreation

Recreation went on within a society where people were aware of appropriate uses of their time, but society’s prescriptions for the proper use of time did not pre-determine people’s activities or reactions. This dissertation examines the relationship between individual will and structures to elucidate how diversions relate to other uses of leisure. In all contexts other concerns mediated between personal preferences and actual behaviour. To understand choices it is necessary to think about what people did during their non-business hours and the ways that the activities that filled those hours might fall into or outside the definition of recreation as pleasurable activities undertaken freely.

⁸³ OBP, Thomas Wisely, Theft: Theft from a Specified Place, 21st October 1761 (t17611021-21).

⁸⁴ Johnson, 'A Dictionary of the English Language'.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Most notably, family or business obligations limited the extent to which leisure time could be devoted to pleasure or diversion.

Even if recreational activities were activities that reflected a measure of individual choice, two people choosing the same activity may not have done so for the same reasons. Two activities serve as useful case studies for problematizing recreational uses of leisure: churchgoing and attendance at coffeehouses. Churchgoing was a widely undertaken public leisure-time activity, but the state of mind of individual church-goers is difficult to determine. For some it was a matter of sincere religious devotion. Anna Larpent, who devoted a considerable amount of time to religious observance, commented one Sunday that she “Received the Sacrament with pleasure.”⁸⁶ Religion may have brought people pleasure, but it may at some time have been undertaken from a sense of duty. For many, attending church was a religious obligation, even if not an obligation along the same lines as child-minding, washing clothes, or other household duties.

Churchgoing could be a duty and a pleasure. Different varieties of churchgoing suggest different strategies for discharging this obligation. For instance, James Boswell attended churches throughout the metropolis as a form of tourism. Boswell aspired to religious devotion, but does not appear to have been particularly religious despite his regular churchgoing. William Dodd and other famous preachers drew crowds for exhibitions of oratory that had a different appeal from other forms of religious observance. Celebrity preachers and beautiful or historic churches offered a pleasant context for people to discharge obligations.

Churchgoing also provided opportunities for exhibition or community participation. Alongside helping people achieve an internal state of contentment, church could give people the chance to fulfill social desires. In his work on plebeian dress John Styles’ argues that people wore their finest clothes at fairs and festivals and at church, suggesting an uneasy, but interesting alliance between two very different varieties of leisure activity.⁸⁷ Others, such as Lady Mary Coke, attended church as part of a regular routine, thereby leaving her attitude toward religion unclear. Her attendance at church tied in with attendance in the closet at St. James’ Palace before the service and the

⁸⁶ Huntington Library, HM 31201 v.1, Anna Larpent, 'Diary', f. 49.

⁸⁷ John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven & London, 2007) chapters 1 & 18.

drawing room afterwards. She read the Bible on Sunday evenings, but in times of stress she mentions reading and taking walks without suggesting that she was using religious reading or meditation to ease her pain.

Coffeehouses combined business with pleasure in a single space. A merchant or underwriter (to cite occupations of some of the diarists) might enjoy his coffee while absorbing important news or making business arrangements. Reading the newspaper, an important activity undertaken in coffeehouses, could combine business with pleasure as shipping news was interspersed with curious events from around the metropolis or goings-on at the theatres in town. Some diarists attended particular coffeehouses for work and separate ones for play, but not all diarists reveal such a divide and it remains unclear whether this separation of work and pleasure was something that most businessmen achieved.

Business and pleasure combined in many spaces across the metropolis. Diversion was not incompatible with the acquisition of social, cultural, political, or economic capital. As chapter 5 shows, business contacts often became companions for pleasure, helping to reinforce bonds and almost certainly making business a component of some recreation. Ingrid Tague, Elaine Chalus, and Jennifer Hall-Witt have all found pleasure and politics overlapping in elite households and at entertainments such as the opera.⁸⁸ Discussing politics could itself be a diversion among people who were not political players themselves. George Macaulay's diary records numerous conversations about national politics with non-office-holding friends.⁸⁹ Drawing stark boundaries between pleasure and business would be a mistake at all levels of society. However we must be cautious about doing too much lumping. Modern psychologists have suggested that while we see pleasure and business combined in several different ways and in different contexts, we should not lump them all together but rather be attentive to the contexts in which different sorts of business and pleasure might mix.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Tague, *Women of Quality*, 183 and passim, Elaine Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late Eighteenth-Century England', *HJ*, 43/3 (2000), 669-98, Jennifer Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780-1880* (Durham & Hanover, 2007).

⁸⁹ British Library, Add 25038, George Macaulay, 'Journal'. Selections of this journal have been published as a George Macaulay, *The War Diary of a London Scot, Alderman G.M. Macaulay, 1796-7*, ed. William Cook Mackenzie (Paisley, 1916).

⁹⁰ D. E. Berlyne, 'Laughter, Humor, and Play', in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Reading, MA. & London, 1968), 815.

The ways business and pleasure combined differed between social groups. At the same time activities might be more or less pleasurable depending on the social level of the participants. The *Belle assemblée; or Court and fashionable magazine* in 1818 made this clear in an article entitled “The Listener” by comparing the pleasure obtained from particular activities by the “lower classes” with that of “the higher classes of society.”⁹¹ The author thought that the lower classes derived more enjoyment from their activities because they were able to “abandon themselves, without scruple and without restraint, to...frank and animated pleasure” whereas the upper classes partook of activities because they were fashionable and with an eye to showing off. The author takes dance as an example. In a particularly tortured sentence, he wrote, "dancing, with those people who make it a study, where it is used as a pastime more for vanity than pleasure, is, to the joyous inhabitants of a country village, a real amusement." In other words, for the social elite dancing passed the time, but it was also a serious social performance. For their inferiors, it was fun. The author almost certainly exaggerates the frivolity of dancing for the poor and the seriousness of cutting a rug for the higher classes, but nevertheless helpfully highlights differences in the significance of activities depending on socioeconomic position.

Activities that some people did professionally might be diversions for others.⁹² For many, acting was a beloved diversion. Several members of the gentry and nobility set up theatres in their houses or rented theatres where they could perform for their friends.⁹³ Spouting clubs were held in taverns where amateurs could gather and perform for each other.⁹⁴ This vogue for acting did not mean that professional thespians did not feel they were at work. Actress Elizabeth Inchbald’s diary, for instance, demonstrates how physically taxing a performer’s life could be as she toured the provincial theatre circuits, and reinforces the observation that her rehearsal and performing time was work time.⁹⁵ When not in the piece, Inchbald did sometimes choose to visit as a spectator—she

⁹¹ 'The Listener', *Belle assemblée; or Court and fashionable magazine*, October 1818, 172.

⁹² See also Marla Miller, *The Needle's Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution* (Amherst, 2006).

⁹³ Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis: Some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700-1820* (London, 1978).

⁹⁴ Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 947/2144/1, 'Diary', David Worrall, *Theatrical Revolution: Drama, Censorship and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773-1832* (Oxford, 2006).

⁹⁵ Inchbald, *Diaries*.

no doubt enjoyed the theatre—but her time spent rehearsing and her comments on her interactions with patrons and managers indicate that this was work.

Just as the functions of recreational activities varied across the social scale, so did they as a result of the patterns of residence and seasonal variations in behaviour. For seasonal residents of London, the pleasures of the countryside contrasted sharply with the amusements of the metropolis. In the countryside people participated in visiting and attended functions patronized by the local gentry and elites. For people who maintained a residence in London, life in the countryside was a thing apart. Rural life was almost by definition unfashionable, but people expressed pleasure in aspects of rural living, particularly sociability, outdoor activity, art, and architecture.⁹⁶ The division between country and city is most evident in terms of the contrasting lifestyles of the gentry and nobility in these two settings and many of the London recreations were defined by their contrast with country living.

Differences in status or gender are easy to point out, but local or personal dispositions affected enjoyment too. A moment of stress or sadness might prevent a freely undertaken activity from being a pleasure. The day after having an argument with her sister Agnes, Mary Berry complained that it “was the first beautiful spring day we have had. I walked out a good deal, but Agnes had so thoroughly overcome me that I could enjoy nothing.”⁹⁷ Berry is explicit about her frame of mind, but many other diarists were not so clear about their reactions. Normally walking was a joy for Berry, but not in this instance. This quotation forces us to question the importance of intent. Though Berry did not enjoy her walk, she had gone out with the intention of enjoyment. Diversions did not always turn out to be pleasing even if they were undertaken with an eye to relieving the mind.

Leisure has not proved much easier to categorize in the context of twentieth and twenty-first century life. Modern sociologists of leisure have struggled with the overlaps between work and play, or with the impact children have on male and female experiences

⁹⁶ Tague, *Women of Quality*, 141. James Collett-White, 'My Choice: A Poem Written in 1751 by Mary Orlebar', *Bedfordshire Historical Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Patricia Bell*, 72 (1993), 129-41, Huntington Library, Stowe Collection, STG Box 6, Anna Eliza Grenville, 'Letters to Her', Box 6 (6) from Isabella FitzRoy, February 20 and 26 1811.

⁹⁷ British Library, Add MS 37732, Mary Berry, 'Diary', f. 17.

of leisure within the family.⁹⁸ In modern studies leisure is defined in one of three ways: as a category of time, as a set of activities, or as an attitude of mind that might be achieved in a variety of settings.⁹⁹ It is much easier to explore people's attitudes of mind in the modern context when the people under examination can be directly questioned than it is by examining documents written centuries ago.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, it is important to attempt to recover attitudes, particularly when we are dealing with the leisured classes and women who apparently have a great deal of leisure time, but nevertheless had to occupy themselves in part with obligations. The overlaps between work and play are best handled by thinking of leisure as the freedom to pursue activities. Even though some of these might be obligatory, any might offer pleasure.¹⁰¹

Leisure advice

There is no scope here to dig deeply into the relationship between prescriptive literature and choice. Advice manuals laid out a variety of recommendations about the role that recreation ought to play in the lives of men and women. Pleasure was seen as an important part of mental and physical health, but too much leisure and pleasure could make people idle or immoral.

For the people at the top of society pleasure was thought to be an important part of staying physically healthy. This is evident in the frequency of trips for health to the seaside, to wells such as Bath or Tunbridge, or even to Europe for milder winters. Certain amounts of moderate exercise were also deemed valuable and as we will see rides in carriages and walks in the park were widespread exercise activities. One guidebook to successful living, *The Young Gentleman and Lady Instructed*, includes a chapter on the importance of exercise and recreation and another to the value of recreation to health.¹⁰² Mental development also benefited from recreation. John Locke made much of the need

⁹⁸ Wilson, 'Sociology of Leisure', Waring, 'Health Club Use', Susan Shaw, 'Dereifying Family Leisure: An Examination of Women's and Men's Everyday Experiences and Perceptions of Family Time', *Leisure sciences*, 14/3 (1992), 271-86.

⁹⁹ J. Towner, *An Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World 1540-1940* (Chichester, 1996), 3-4, Allan Patmore, *Recreation and Resources: Leisure Patterns and Leisure Places* (Oxford, 1983), 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, Richards, 'Emotions into Words', Gouk and Hills, 'Towards Histories of Emotions', Burke, 'Is There a Cultural History', Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household'.

¹⁰¹ Walmsley, 'Work-Life Balance'.

¹⁰² *The Young Gentleman and Lady Instructed* (London, 1747).

for children to have time to play and for learning to be like a diversion to them.¹⁰³ John Gregory argued similarly that the key to raising intelligent, healthy children was to allow them to follow their pleasure while providing moral guidance.¹⁰⁴

At the same time that advice literature encouraged men and women to pursue recreation for their health, it also advised readers that the wrong sorts of activities were dangerous. This point was often framed in terms of dangers to modesty. As Ingrid Tague has demonstrated, authors of advice literature masked their role as advice givers by suggesting that women's modesty would instinctively induce them to behave in the ways the authors prescribed.¹⁰⁵ Among the proscribed activities were those that might lead women into sexually unchaste behaviour including novel reading, theatre and pleasure garden attendance, gaming, and masquerades.¹⁰⁶ Even for men proper sorts of reading were prescribed, as Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son show, but for men the threat was more to seriousness of mind than to purity of morals. In the case of women, activities that threatened to make them unfeminine (such as over-consumption of tea or alcohol, or, again, gaming) were warned against also. The perceived threats to a woman's virtue and potential to be a good wife evoked strong language from the pundits. Gregory discouraged women from undertaking group activities lest they destroy their capacity to enjoy the solitude that he associated with the life of a wife.¹⁰⁷

For men and women of propertied society it was important not to be indolent, but prolonged energy and effort were seen as un-English as well. Paul Langford has argued that industriousness was most commonly associated with "drone-like drudgery" rather than efficient and dedicated labour.¹⁰⁸ Rather it was a work hard, play hard philosophy that Langford identifies as typical of the English people. Commentators saw the cessation of work as necessary for proper judgment in adults. As Edmund Burke declared in the context of elaborating the differences between France and England,

¹⁰³ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London, 1745), 90, 149, 302 and passim.

¹⁰⁴ John Gregory, *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with Those of the Animal World* (London, 1777), preface.

¹⁰⁵ Tague, *Women of Quality*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 55-67.

¹⁰⁷ John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London, 1792), 87.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2000), 29-36.

“They who always labour can have no true judgment.”¹⁰⁹ Working too hard or working hard in the wrong manner were serious dangers.

The impact of the discourses of industry and idleness on actual behaviour is difficult to work out. Only Anna Larpent and James Boswell suggest that anxiety about the proper use of time led them to spend their time in particular ways and neither refers to specific advice literature that would have given them that anxiety. Diaries revealed anxiety about indolence rarely, and never expressed concern that they worked too hard. Other issues did cause diarists concerns that they wrote down. Matters of etiquette bothered Boswell. Elizabeth Tyrrell and John Thornton fretted about the health of their children. Behaviours may have been driven by anxieties about proper use of time without ever warranting explicit comment. Many women spent time doing needlework and some of the men kept themselves active in politics and business. Diarists do not provide evidence that concern to demonstrate industriousness was widespread, though advice literature and other printed matter may have created a society where people who vigorously pursued work and other obligations were looked on favorably.

The diarists

Forty-five diaries kept by men and women between 1757 and 1820 are the primary source material for my examination of recreation and leisure. These are not the only diaries and journals written by Londoners during the period, but I limited myself to diaries that were kept every day (or nearly every day) over a period of at least six weeks.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, these daily records must offer insights into daily activity and not just be reflections on thoughts or contemporary news. The majority of the diaries were identified using Heather Creaton's *Unpublished London Diaries* and William Matthew's compilation of British diaries. The latter book contains diaries that have been published

¹⁰⁹ Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke. Vol. 8, the French Revolution 1790-1794*, eds Leslie Mitchell and William Todd (Oxford, 1989), 334, Langford, *Englishness Identified*, 35. However see also David Wykes, "'The Sabbaths ... Spent before in Idleness & the Neglect of the Word': The Godly and the Use of Time in Their Daily Religion", in Robert Swanson (ed.), *The Use and Abuse of Time in Christian History* (Woodbridge, 2002). Sarah Jordan, *The Anxieties of Idleness: Idleness in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture* (Lewisburg, PA., 2003).

¹¹⁰ The shortest diary is that of Catherine Mackintosh, kept for just six weeks. Several others were kept for less than one year.

and which are therefore not included in Creaton’s work.¹¹¹ In the course of research, other published and unpublished diaries have come to light from references in other secondary sources, library catalogues and Access2Archives, and personal conversations.¹¹²

At their most useful, the diarists recorded detailed accounts of their time-use from rising in the morning until bed at night, mentioning not simply what they did, but when they did it and with whom. Such thoroughness is, unsurprisingly, rare and when it does appear it rarely continued for more than a few days. Times quickly got abbreviated with phrases like “as usual”. Times of rising and going to bed appear most commonly, with meals being the next most likely events to have had their times recorded. Though times were not always recorded, many of the sampled diarists demonstrated fastidiousness about recording the activities they pursued each day. It is important to question whether such detailed lists of activities were complete—some diarists were better at covering up what they left out than others.¹¹³ A few diaries are so thorough that it is difficult to see where other activities might have fit in, but most leave obvious gaps in their schedules that were occupied with unknown deeds.

Table 1 The following table gives information about the diarists studied. Diarists are grouped by gender, and within each gender group chronologically.

Name	Birth-Death	Period covered by diary	Age	Occupation/social status	Residence
John Eliot ¹¹⁴	1734-1802	1757	22	Underwriter	Bartholomew Close, Smithfield
Thomas Birch ¹¹⁵	23 Nov 1705 - 19 Jan 1766	1760-2	55-7	Vicar	St. George’s Court, Clerkenwell
William Bray ¹¹⁶	1736 – 21 Dec	1760-1820	24-84	Lawyer, Antiquary	Unknown, possibly near

¹¹¹ Heather Creaton, *Unpublished London Diaries: A Checklist of Unpublished Diaries by Londoners and Visitors with a Select Bibliography of Published Diaries* (London, 2003), William Matthews, *British Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of British Diaries Written between 1442 and 1942* (Berkeley, 1950).

¹¹² Access to Archives: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/>.

¹¹³ For more on the “completeness” of diaries see Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago & London, 1996) 34.

¹¹⁴ London Metropolitan Archives, Howard and Eliot families, ACC/1017/0944, John Eliot, 'Diary', Eliot Howard, *The Eliot Papers* (Gloucester, 1893).

¹¹⁵ Probate 11/915 British Library, Add MSS 4478C, Thomas Birch, 'Diary', David Miller, 'Birch, Thomas (1705–1766)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

	1832				the Inns of Court
Thomas Bridge ¹¹⁷	c.1740-c.1811	1761-1809	~21-69	Merchant	21 Bread Street, London; St. Mary Stratford Bow, Middlesex
Stephen Monteage ¹¹⁸	20 June 1710 - 1767	1762-4	42-4	Excise Officer	Red Cross Street, Cripplegate
James Boswell ¹¹⁹	29 Oct 1740 – 19 May 1795	1762-95	21-64	Author and Scottish laird	Downing Street, Westminster; Lincoln's Inn
Henry Brydges, 2 nd Duke of Chandos ¹²⁰	17 January 1708 – 28 November 1771	1763-71	54-61	Peer	St. James, Westminster
John Thornton ¹²¹	1 April 1720 – 7 Nov 1790	1768, 1779	48, 59	Merchant	Clapham
John Wilkes ¹²²	17 Oct 1725 – 26 Dec 1797	1770-1797	45-72	Politician	Princes Court, Princes Street, Westminster
Samuel Curwen ¹²³	1715-1802	1780-4	64-7	American emigrant	22 Castle Street, Falcon Square and Furnival's Inn, Holborn
Jacob Hagen ¹²⁴	c.1735-1818	1780-90	~45-55	(stave) Merchant	Mill Street, Southwark; Peckham
William Hugh	1772-1851	1788-90	16-18	Son of a	High Street, Marylebone

¹¹⁶ Surrey History Centre, Bray family of Shere, G 85/1/1-76, William Bray, 'Diary', Julian Pooley, 'Bray, William (1735/6–1832)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008).

¹¹⁷ National Archives, C 90/13-4, Thomas Bridge, 'Diary', Thomas Bridge, *To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty: The Humble Memorial of Thomas Bridge of Bread-Street, London, Merchant* (London, 1781). See also *The Times*, Friday, Jul 22, 1785; pg. 1; Issue 178; Oct 11, 1786; pg. 4; Issue 552; and Saturday, Mar 24, 1787; pg. 1; Issue 707. The advertisements mention that he would hand-sign each label, something that he records doing in his diary.

¹¹⁸ Guildhall Library, MS 205/7-9, Stephen [II] Monteage, 'Diary'. Guildhall Library has lumped the diaries of Stephen Monteage with those of his father, also called Stephen. The finding aid for further volumes of the father's diary held in British Library clarifies the issue. See also Guildhall Library, MS 205/1-6, Stephen [I] Monteage, 'Diary', British Library, Add 75501-10, Stephen [I] Monteage, 'Diary'.

¹¹⁹ See especially James Boswell, *Boswell: The Applause of the Jury, 1782-1785*, eds Irma Lustig and Frederick Pottle (London, 1982), James Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal, 1762-1763*, ed. Frederick Pottle (London, 1950), James Boswell, *Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, 1778-1782*, eds Joseph Reed and Frederick Pottle (New York, 1977), James Boswell, *Boswell in Extremes, 1776-1778*, eds Charles MacWeis and Frederick Pottle (London, 1971). For a brief biography of Boswell see Gordon Turnbull, 'Boswell, James (1740–1795)' (2006).

¹²⁰ Huntington Library, Brydges family papers, ST 108, Henry Brydges Chandos, Duke Of, 'Diary'.

¹²¹ Edwin Welch, 'Thornton, John (1720–1790)' (2004), London Metropolitan Archives, ACC/2360, John Thornton, 'Diary'.

¹²² British Library, Add MS 30866, John Wilkes, 'Journal', John Sainsbury, *John Wilkes: The Lives of a Libertine* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT, 2006).

¹²³ Samuel Curwen, *The Journal of Samuel Curwen, Loyalist*, ed. Andrew Oliver, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA., 1972).

¹²⁴ Probate 11/1605; Bodleian Library, MS.Eng.misc.c.250, Jacob Hagen, 'Diary/Account Book'.

Burgess ¹²⁵				banker/banker	
Elijah Goff ¹²⁶	c.1740-1799	1788-99	48-59	Merchant	St. George-in-the-East
George, 2 nd Earl Spencer ¹²⁷	1 September 1758 – 10 November 1834	1788-1806	30-48	Nobleman/politician	St. James's Place, Westminster
James Brydges, 3 rd Duke of Chandos ¹²⁸	27 December 1731 – 29 September 1789	1788	56	Peer	St. James, Westminster
William Godwin ¹²⁹	3 March 1756 – 7 April 1836	1788-1836	32-80	Author, Philosopher	Chalton Street, Somers Town; The Polygon; Skinner Street, Finsbury;
George Canning ¹³⁰	11 April 1770 – 8 Aug 1827	1792-4	22-4	Politician	Paper Buildings, Lincoln's Inn
Thomas Pelham ¹³¹	1756-1826	1793-4	38-9	Irish MP	Stratton Street, Westminster
Joseph Farington ¹³²	21 Nov 1747 – 30 Dec 1821	1793-1821	45-74	Artist	76 Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury
George Macaulay ¹³³	8 March 1750-5 March 1803	1796-7	46-7	Alderman, Merchant	Bridge Street, Blackfriars
Charles Smith ¹³⁴	c.1770	1802-20	~32-50	Militia officer	Woolwich
William Newman ¹³⁵	1771-1835	1808-20	37-49	Teacher, lecturer, pastor	Bow & Stepney
John Hobhouse, Baron Broughton ¹³⁶	27 June 1786 – 3 June 1869	1810-2	24-6	Aristocrat	Westminster
James Ward ¹³⁷	23 October	1817-1820	48-50	Artist	Westminster

¹²⁵ London Metropolitan Archives, F/9/WHB 1-3, Burgess, William Hugh, Journal.

¹²⁶ Probate 11/1325; Tower Hamlets Local Study Library, P/GOF Elijah Goff, 'Diary'.

¹²⁷ British Library, Althorp papers, Add 76316-28, George Spencer, diary.

¹²⁸ Huntington Library, Stowe, ST 109 v.1-4, James Brydges Chandos, Duke of, 'Diary'.

¹²⁹ Bodleian Library, Abinger Collection, MS Film 72 & 73, William Godwin, 'Diary', Mark Philp, 'Godwin, William (1756–1836)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

¹³⁰ George Canning, *The Letter-Journal of George Canning, 1793-1795*, ed. Peter Jupp (London, 1991) 3.

¹³¹ D. R. Fisher, 'Pelham, Thomas, Second Earl of Chichester (1756–1826)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008). British Library, Add MSS 33629-31, Thomas Pelham, 2nd Earl of Chichester, 'Diary'.

¹³² Probate 11/1655; Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, eds Kenneth Garlick et al., 16 vols. (New Haven & London, 1978), Evelyn Newby, 'Farington, Joseph (1747–1821)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

¹³³ Macaulay, 'Journal', Macaulay, *The War Diary*.

¹³⁴ Greenwich Local History Centre, G13B34, Charles Smith, 'Diary'.

¹³⁵ Probate 11/1858. Regent's Park College Library, William Newman, 'Diary'.

¹³⁶ Peter Cochran, 'Hobhouse, John Cam, Baron Broughton (1786–1869)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008). British Library, Add MS 56530, John Hobhouse, Baron Broughton, 'Diary'.

	1769 – 16 November 1859				
Charles de Coetlogon ¹³⁸	c.1779-1836	1818-1820	~39-41	Author and MP	St. George Hanover Square
Job Knight ¹³⁹	1789-1819	1818	29	Upholsterer	Ave Maria Lane, St. Paul's Churchyard
Hon. Frances Evelyn Boscawen ¹⁴⁰	23 July 1719 – 26 Feb 1805	1763	44	Gentry	South Audley Street, Westminster
Lady Mary Coke ¹⁴¹	6 Feb 1727 – 30 Sep 1811	1766-74	39-47	Nobility	Aubrey House, Kensington & Berkeley Square
Anna Larpent ¹⁴²	4 April 1758 – 4 March 1832	1773-1820	15-72	Gentry	Upper Grosvenor Street (1782-90), Newman Street (1790-9), and Charlotte Street (1799- 1804) all Westminster; Putney (from 1804)
Elizabeth Francis ¹⁴³	c.1744-1806	1774-80	~30-36	Gentry	Unclear, probably St. James, Westminster
Elizabeth Inchbald ¹⁴⁴	15 Oct 1753 – 1 Aug 1821	1780	27-8	Actress and writer	Westminster, possibly Soho
Eliza Chute ¹⁴⁵	c.1775 - 1842	1790 & 1797	~15	Gentry	George Street, Westminster
Mary Anne Eden (later Lady Brougham) ¹⁴⁶	October 1785 – 12 January 1865	1798-1820	14-35	Gentry	Wimbledon; Hill Street, Westminster
Joanna Bonham Carter (nee Smith) ¹⁴⁷	1791-1884	1802	11	Gentry	Westminster
Catherine	4 May 1765 –	1801	36	Gentry	Unclear, but probably

¹³⁷ Royal Academy, 784.D, Ward, James, Journal.

¹³⁸ Probate 11/1860; London Metropolitan Archives, ACC 268/1-7, Charles De Coetlogon, 'Diary'.

¹³⁹ Probate 11/1613; Friends House Library, Vol. S 485, Knight, Job, diary.

¹⁴⁰ Probate 11/1421; Bodleian Library, MS Eng.Misc.f.71, Hon. Frances Evelyn Boscawen, 'Diary', Elizabeth Eger, 'Boscawen'.

¹⁴¹ Probate 11/1526; Jill Rubenstein, 'Coke, Lady Mary (1727–1811)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), Coke, *Letters and Journals*.

¹⁴² Larpent, 'Diary', Huntington Library, HM 31201, Anna Larpent, 'Diary', Lisa Cody, 'Larpent, Anna Margareta (1758–1832)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008).

¹⁴³ British Library, Francis papers, MSS.Eur.E.22. Elizabeth Francis, 'Letter Journal'.

¹⁴⁴ Probate 11/1647; Inchbald, *Diaries*.

¹⁴⁵ Probate 11/1982; Hampshire Record Office, 23M93/70/1/1 and 5 Elizabeth Chute, 'Diary'.

¹⁴⁶ UCL Special Collections, Brougham Papers, Marianne Brougham, Lady, 'Diary'.

¹⁴⁷ Hampshire Record Office, 94M72/F49, Joanna Smith, 'Diary'.

Mackintosh ¹⁴⁸	6 May 1830				Bloomsbury
Anna Grenville, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos ¹⁴⁹	22 October 1779 – 16 May 1836	1807-1820	27-41	Noblewoman	Grosvenor Street, Westminster
Mary Berry ¹⁵⁰	1763-1852	1807-20	44-57	Author/editor, gentry	North Audley Street, Westminster
Elizabeth Tyrrell ¹⁵¹	c.1765-1835	1808-11	~43-5	Gentry/merchant's wife	Queen Street, Cheapside and Kew
Lady Charlotte (nee Jenkinson) Grimston ¹⁵²	c. 1783-1863	1810-4	27-31	Nobility	Grosvenor Square, Westminster
Emma Austen-Leigh (nee Smith) ¹⁵³	1801-76	1815-20	14-19	Gentry	Portland Place, Westminster
Elizabeth Tyrrell (II) ¹⁵⁴	1802-	1818	16	Gentry/merchant	Queen Street, Cheapside and Kew
Jane Johnston ¹⁵⁵	c.1760-1840	1819-20	59-60	Gentry	Wimpole Street, Westminster

As the professions and statuses specified suggest, the sample is primarily propertied, but does represent a wide variety of types of people within propertied society. The diaries fall into two broad social groups: those that record gentry/noble and those that record middling (especially merchant) lives. They include thirteen kept by women of gentry or noble status between 1763 and 1820: Hon. Frances Boscawen, Lady Mary Coke, Elizabeth Francis, Joanna Smith, Mary Anne Eden (later Lady Brougham), Eliza Chute, Emma Smith, Mary Berry, Jane Johnston, Lady Anna Eliza Grenville (later Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos), Charlotte Grimston, Anna Larpent, and Catherine Mackintosh. Six upper class males left diaries that were examined for this study: James Boswell; John Hobhouse, Baron Broughton; George, 2nd Earl Spencer; James Brydges, 2nd Duke of Chandos; Henry Brydges, 3rd Duke of Chandos; Thomas Pelham, Earl

¹⁴⁸ Probate 11/1853; British Library, Mackintosh Papers, Add MS 52450, Catherine Mackintosh, 'Diary'.

¹⁴⁹ Huntington Library, Stowe Collection, ST 110, Grenville, Anna Eliza diaries.

¹⁵⁰ Charles Kent and Pat Rogers, 'Berry, Mary (1763–1852)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), Berry, 'Diary'.

¹⁵¹ Guildhall, MS 14951/1-2, Tyrrell, Elizabeth [I], Diary.

¹⁵² Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Library, D/EV F78, Charlotte Grimston, 'Diary'.

¹⁵³ Hampshire Record Office, 23M93/87/1/1, Emma Austen-Leigh, 'Diary'.

¹⁵⁴ Guildhall, MS 14951/3, Tyrrell, Elizabeth [II], Diary.

¹⁵⁵ Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Library, DE/HL 16196, Jane Johnston, 'Diary'.

Chichester. In addition, John Wilkes, George Canning and Charles de Coetlogon were not titled, but followed a lifestyle similar to the first six.

The boundary between the noble/gentry group and that of the middling group below is blurred. The sample includes merchants and professional men of several sorts. There are merchants: Thomas Bridge, John Thornton, Samuel Curwen, Jacob Hagen, Elijah Goff, and George Macaulay. There are insurance men and bankers, for instance John Eliot and, in later life, William Burgess. James Ware was a medical doctor and William Bray a lawyer; Thomas Birch was a rector with a living in absentia; William Newman was a Baptist minister. New artistic professions are represented by philosopher and novelist William Godwin and Royal Academicians Joseph Farington and James Ward. Stephen Monteage in the Excise Office and Charles Smith who served in the militia represent the fiscal-military state.

Mercantile and working women contribute just three diaries to the sample and two of the diarists are mother and daughter. Elizabeth Tyrrell and her daughter Elizabeth Tyrrell (hereafter Elizabeth [II] Tyrrell) both kept diaries at some stage in their lives. Elizabeth Tyrrell's husband, Timothy, was the City Remembrancer and earned money through business and investment. Elizabeth Inchbald worked for a living actress and author.¹⁵⁶ At this stage in her life Inchbald was comfortable, but nowhere near as wealthy as she would be once her literary reputation was established. She is by far the least wealthy woman in this sample.

There is one male diarist who falls far below the others in terms of wealth. The 1818 diary by Job Knight offers insights into the lifestyle of the lower middling sort. Knight, a Quaker originally from Essex, worked as a draftsman, dogsbody, and bill collector for an upholstery and appraisal company run by James Toplis in St. Paul's Churchyard.¹⁵⁷ Knight's position at the bottom of the diarist pile, both socially and economically, highlights the elite status of the diarist sample. Knight died the year after his diary was written, but the fact that he left a will suggests that his early death was not a surprise. His estate was valued at a comfortable £720 8s 2d for the purposes of death

¹⁵⁶ Jane Spencer, 'Inchbald, Elizabeth (1753–1821)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁵⁷ *The Post Office London Directory for 1820* ([London, 1820]).

duties.¹⁵⁸ Chapter 8 attempts to broaden the scope of the findings, but for the rest of the thesis the conclusions are confined to an economically elite group of people.

The diarists came from a variety of religious backgrounds that certainly shaped their behaviours and perspectives. They include Quakers (John Eliot, Jacob Hagen, and Job Knight), a Baptist preacher (William Newman), heterodox Anglicans (Charles de Coetlogon whose father was a noted Anglican minister with Methodist leanings, but who regularly attended Catholic services himself, and John Thornton of the Evangelical ‘Clapham Sect’), and numerous apparently mainstream Anglicans (e.g. Thomas Birch and Mary Coke). Anglicans are perhaps slightly under-represented in the sample, but the diarists are not overwhelmingly dissenting.

The diarists were a variety of different ages when they kept their diaries. No obvious pattern appears that would suggest most people began their diaries at a particular age. Elizabeth [II] Tyrrell may have picked up diary-keeping from her mother. As Table 1 shows, there were other child diarists too. Several of the diarists continued to record entries into old age, some made notes just weeks before their deaths. People in their thirties and forties are best represented.

Placing individual diarists within the social structure is a complicated matter. Common interests cross social boundaries and wealth and status have a convoluted relationship. Many members of the social elite were on shaky financial ground, while merchants of comfortable means were nonetheless socially marginal. The lifestyles revealed by an agent-centred approach shed some light on how we might re-organise these diverse axes into a more coherent understanding of the social order (see chapters 5 and 9). Over the course of this dissertation, however, it will become clear that, while the merchant lifestyle differed considerably from the lifestyle of the gentry and nobility, merchants had a greater affinity with the gentry than they did with the trading people. The tendency of propertied society to produce diaries that survive itself represents behavioural differences between propertied society and tradespeople or labourers (including attitudes towards record creation and retention among their heirs).¹⁵⁹ The

¹⁵⁸ National Archives, Prerogative Court of Canterbury and Country Courts, IR 27/170, Inland Revenue, 'Wills', register 1, f. 155.

¹⁵⁹ For some exceptions see Hannah Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *SH*, 33/1 (2008), 12-35. The limited social range of

evidence examined here supports a division between propertied society (encompassing merchants, men in high status professions such as the law or banking, and landed gentry and nobles) and the shop-keeping middling sort, tradespeople, and artisans.

The diaries

Diaries remain a varied and often flawed source. In order to make the most of diaries it is necessary to consider diarists' objectives in keeping diaries and the ways in which their form can make them misleading for researchers, particularly with reference to completeness. Using diaries to ask questions typical of sociology, as I have in this thesis, requires caution. Unlike modern researchers who are able to use detailed sociological data, we are looking at a limited selection of evidence that was not collected with the questions that I am asking in mind.

Despite various historians' attempts to make diaries a single category of egodocument, they were heterogeneous in content and form. Few features are common to all diaries. Here I have studied diaries that others have considered unpromising or arid. Within my sample there is an impressive variety in the form and content. Some diaries resemble account books and list expenses and income alongside minimal remarks about daily activities. Many others list little apart from business activities or meetings with friends and acquaintances. Some diaries appear to have been composed on or even throughout the day; others suggest or admit that they were composed later. Diaries could be written for close friends or family, or with no obvious audience other than the keeper.

Mark Dawson rightly argues that we should not become overly fixated on the diarist's motivation at the expense of understanding the context of the diary. In many instances the motivation of the diarist is irrecoverable and a wrong guess as to why a diary was kept can impede our understanding of a diary's inclusions and exclusions.¹⁶⁰ A particularly salient or unusual feature of a diary must not be taken as the objective of diary keeping.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, Dawson is less clear about how motive can be separated from context. People comment on context in that they discuss aspects of their lives that relate to their place in society. Diaries can be used to recreate a setting and to

diaries is reflected in Hunt, *Middling Sort*.

¹⁶⁰ Mark Dawson, 'Histories and Texts: Refiguring the Diary of Samuel Pepys', *HJ*, 43/2 (2000), 407-12.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 410-2.

understand choices made in response to that setting. But the context behind diary keeping also contributes to the diarist's motivations. Further attention to the context of diary keeping offers a way to improve our understanding of the motives behind diaries and allows for further insights into the sorts of things that diarists might have recorded.

Analyses of diaries are oftent unconvincing in their attempts to improve our understanding of the context of diary keeping.¹⁶² Questions of why people kept diaries are not satisfactorily resolved simply by looking at the mission statements some diaries carry at their beginning. Harriet Blodgett's work on female diaries is a notable example of scholarship that draws attention to the rarity of candor in diaries as evidence of the absence of privacy in female lives without letting that conclusion shake her underpinning assumption that diaries gave women a private place to struggle with constraints.

I want to situate diaries within their context in three ways: first in relation to other information we have about diarists' lives and routines, secondly in relation to diarists' other writings when they have survived, and finally in relation to Georgian practices of diary keeping and ideas about memory.

Who keeps a diary anyway? And how did diaries end up in places where scholars could access them? Question about typicality and reliability inevitably arise with reference to historical arguments based on diary evidence. It may be perverse to look at diaries to find the recreational occupations of people who spent their leisure time keeping diaries. But not all diaries were kept for pleasure, they were used for communicating information to others, establishing and maintaining social networks, monitoring behaviour, and recording information for later reference. Many different types of people had reasons to keep diaries. Potential diary keepers may have been constrained because they lacked necessarily resources. Diarists, of course, had to have time to devote to writing and a modest sum of money to devote to writing supplies. Writing ability obviously had to be part of the skills package. To be able to look at the diaries today someone in the past must have deemed them worth saving: this further privileges people

¹⁶² Sherman, *Telling Time*, Robert Fothergill, *Private Chronicles; a Study of English Diaries* (London & New York, 1974), Harriet Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days: Englishwomen's Private Diaries* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1988), Arianne Baggerman, 'Autobiography and Family Memory in the Nineteenth Century', in Rudolf Dekker (ed.), *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context since the Middle Ages* (Hilverum, 2002), Andy Alaszewski, *Using Diaries for Social Research* (London, 2006).

with space, social or political importance, or a strong sense of family heritage.¹⁶³ The final step is from the private sector to publicly accessible repositories. The collections available to researchers are limited to what libraries and archives received as donations or deemed sufficiently valuable to purchase. So the diarists represented here were propertied, in part because they possessed the technologies and resources to create diaries and in part because they produced diaries that were more likely to be preserved by heirs or institutions. The individual proclivities that led people to write diaries remain unclear, though being egocentric or part of a milieu that kept diaries probably helped.¹⁶⁴

Though the majority of people probably were not diarists, diarists were still situated within social groups where other elements of their behaviours and routines were typical. There are, of course, no truly representative individuals. It is impossible to tell the extent to which diarists represented or deviated from statistical norms. A sample of forty-five diarists means that composite pictures will have an unclear relationship to 'average' behaviour in large subsections of society. Some checks are available. We can compare patterns that emerge from diaries with other sources, in order to gain insight into the peculiarities of the diarist sample and the oddities of diaries as sources. Despite these difficulties, diaries remain a worthy source. First of all, the evidence gleaned from these diaries is not to be found via other means. Secondly, scholars examining the eighteenth century rarely reference such a large sample of diaries in any sort of systematic fashion (in contrast to quotation picking). As I have already shown, not only do I consider well-known diaries like Boswell's or Coke's, but I have also dug out previously unused diaries (e.g. those in Woolwich, Winchester, or Hertford) or diaries that have been deemed too arid for study, for instance John Wilkes'.

Because there is so much variation in diaries, not all diaries can answer the same questions. For each chapter I have tried systematically to review all the diaries that offer evidence on that topic. So for each chapter the analysis will focus on a sample that is smaller than the total number of diaries. For some chapters, such as the chapter on social networks, almost all of the diaries were useful. For other chapters fewer diaries provided

¹⁶³ For instance Sandra Holton, *Quaker Women: Personal Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1780-1930* (London, 2007), 2-4.

¹⁶⁴ A recent article suggests that there might be as many diary keepers in the modern world as there are amateur pianists: 'Intimate Diaries and Banal Letters Live on in France's Library of Secrets', *The Independent*, 9 January 2009.

useful evidence. The chapter on spending is limited to seven diaries because good account-book evidence is even rarer than diary evidence. There are lots of things diaries cannot tell us. The questions asked and answered in this dissertation reflect what sorts of evidence about life in the past can be reasonably and consistently gleaned from diaries.

Historians have operated under mistaken assumptions about the nature of diaries and their typical features, in part because scholars have not developed methods of analyzing less literary diaries. Interest in diaries and other forms of self-writing has generally revolved around identity formation and social position, particularly with reference to women. As scholars have fixed their gaze on the diaries of people with literary ambitions such as Boswell, they have tended to react with disappointment to many other diaries. In her introduction to the biography of Martha Ballard, a midwife operating in a remote area of what is now Maine, Laurel Ulrich complained about being frustrated by the “unyielding” nature of the “dailiness” of Ballard’s diary.¹⁶⁵ Rather than receive illuminating detail or fascinating psychological insight, diaries more frequently were put to different uses. Rather than serve as an object for working out the kinks in the diarist’s psyche, a diary is commonly something more mundane. More broadly, historians’ unfulfilled expectations for diaries result from the handful of surviving diaries that provide extensive detail. To get the most out of other diaries, we have to develop different methodologies that arise out of more careful attention to the contexts in which diaries were written.

The extensive nature of Samuel Pepys’ diary entries and the suggestion of completeness offered by beginning with rising and concluding with going to bed is indicative of a larger problem.¹⁶⁶ Many diarists provide a similar appearance of completeness that is almost certainly misleading. George Canning’s diary includes many days like this one:

6 [February] Thursday. At home all the morning. Began correcting a copy of my speech for Debrett. House of Commons – No particular debate, but a variety of business wch. lasted till past 6 – so that I was too late to dine where I was engaged, with Frere, and went home to dinner with Charles Ellis. So did Jenkinson – and we found Geo. Ellis and Mr. Pelham. [Canning then describes Pelham]. We dined so

¹⁶⁵ Laurel Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York, 1990).

¹⁶⁶ Sherman, *Telling Time*, 34.

comfortably – and sat so long that it was necessary to sup before we parted. And then I came home to bed.

Canning's account offers a list of activities and locations as well as some suggestions about the timings and durations of activities. At the same time, the entry leaves a great deal to the imagination. Specific timings are only mentioned once and he reveals nothing about when he rose in the morning. Furthermore, activities not worth mentioning or suppressed for other reasons may or may not have taken up his time. Even the nature of the conversation and activities with the Ellises, Jenkinson, and Pelham is obscure; we do not know why dinner was comfortable or the reason(s) they sat so long.

Most other diarists are similarly frustrating in their silences. Elizabeth Francis, Anna Larpent, Catherine Mackintosh, and Elizabeth [I] Tyrrell provide some insight into home life, but even they leave several aspects of their lifestyle to the imagination. For instance all recorded some of the letters they wrote and at least a few of the books they read. All four give some hints at how they spent hours at home, yet most of their time at home remains unaccounted for, particularly with respect to household chores.¹⁶⁷ Francis, Larpent, Mackintosh, and Tyrrell allow the rhythms and routines of their lives to obscure the mundane details of daily life and small variations in those routines. The routine aspects of most diarists' lives were probably omitted unless the reason for keeping the diary was to record a particular, frequent activity, such as prayer or regular business meetings. The diarist who recorded the most detail about her activities, Elizabeth [II] Tyrrell, quickly exhausts her reader with her breathless, punctuation-free accounts of even the most mundane household events.

The diarists who created narratives from their activities, such as Canning, Boswell, or the four women just mentioned, do the most to disguise their omissions. A diary that lists only companions at club meetings or dinners is more obviously limited in its contents and generally leads historians to dismiss its utility more quickly. The lure of narrative and anecdote causes historians to overlook valuable evidence provided in other, less engaging forms.

The presentation of an individual's patterns were certainly shaped by the intended audience, but rarely do we have the opportunity to compare the way an individual

¹⁶⁷ For activities at home see Mackintosh, 'Diary', ff. 2, 6 & 7.

recorded their activities for differing audiences. The prolific James Boswell provides one example of a writer addressing two different audiences in successive journals. Before he began the *London Journal*, the first in a string of journals that he crafted with the explicit intent of offering them to his friends and descendants to read, Boswell kept a handful of more private journals that he partly wrote in cipher and never obviously revised for a wider readership.¹⁶⁸ These private journals were written in the late 1750s and early 60s while Boswell traveled around Scotland on the legal circuits. The early journals appear to have been an effort by Boswell to develop his style. The first journal (MS J 1 Box 37, Folders 921-2) in particular is written in a standard style. His vocabulary contains the common terms for polite behaviour (e.g. well bred, genteel [both p. 1], agreeable [pp. 2 & 4], “sensible & well behaved” [p. 4]) and it seems to have been his intention to record other people’s successes rather than criticize their performances.¹⁶⁹ In contrast both to later volumes of the private diary and to the diaries he began to keep in late 1762, the earliest two diaries lack the obvious bravado and self-doubt that mark later journals. Even in the late volumes of the private diary (especially Yale MS J1.3) sexual liaisons are recorded (sometimes euphemistically) without the rhetorical flourishes and self-celebration characteristic of the later period. The four early, private journals appear to have served as writing practice and as a space to record models of good behaviour. Later journals appear to have been more carefully revised, but also record more anxiety about personal failings. Later journals are also more attentive to the lives and anecdotes of Boswell’s friends, not because they offered guides to good living, but because he thought that they might someday be worthy of a biography.

The private journals present some of the multiple personae that Philip Carter has identified in Boswell’s published journals, though Boswell was not as explicit about his desire to put on different personalities as he was to be in his *London Journal*.¹⁷⁰ While most diarists probably engaged in frame-switching between different social settings, they

¹⁶⁸ The pre-*London Journal* volumes are Beineke Library, Yale MS J1.1, James Boswell, ‘Harvest 1761’, MS J1.2-3, and MS J 1 Box 37, Folders 921-2. I am grateful to Nick Wrightson for providing me with his transcriptions of the diaries including transliteration of the sections in cipher.

¹⁶⁹ For a further discussion of the vocabularies of politeness see chapter 7.

¹⁷⁰ Philip Carter, ‘Men About Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century Urban Society’, in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London, 1997), Carter, ‘James Boswell’s Manliness’, Carter, *Men and the Emergence*, 183-97.

were probably not as self-conscious about it as Boswell showed himself to be in his later diaries.¹⁷¹ Indeed, even though people presented themselves in different ways, their diaries organise their different behaviours into a consistent personality. Scholars of diaries have focused on the power of diaries to unify fractured elements of an individual's existence. It would be a mistake to exaggerate how unified most individuals are in terms of motivations and behaviours, but psychologists have also found that people cease to function effectively if they focus too heavily on contradictory aspects of their personalities.¹⁷² The diarists almost certainly behaved in different manners depending on context, but insofar as they offer interpretation and commentary their diaries present a unified individual moving through a variety of settings.

The differences between Boswell's diaries reveal changes in the form and content of self-writing that occurred when diarists wrote for different audiences. We can see this also in the diaries of Thomas Bridge and Anna Larpent, both of whom kept diaries over long periods. The changing content and style of the diaries over time frustratingly prevents easy comparison of routines. However changes in content and style also indicate psychic and behavioural changes that are less easily quantified but are just as important to understanding the lifecycle and changes to individuals' social roles.

The different manners of self-presentation within and between Boswell's diaries also point to the multiple contexts for diary keeping in the eighteenth century. Broadly, diaries fall into two categories: diaries kept for others and journals for self-monitoring. Letter diaries were kept with an immediate audience in mind and were often modeled on published precedents. Some schools and tutors may have taught pupils to keep diaries with parents or siblings in mind. The three Wynne girls all kept diaries with similar content and in a similar style.¹⁷³ The young age at which the girls began their diaries suggests that a tutor may have instigated their self-writing.¹⁷⁴ The survival of clusters of

¹⁷¹ I have adapted the phrase "frame switching" from psychology where it has been used to describe bicultural individuals' ability to adapt to their surroundings based on their understandings of the normative expectations of those around them. Ying-Yi Hong et al., 'Multicultural Minds: A Dynamic Constructivist Approach to Culture and Cognition', *American Psychologist*, 55/7 (2000), 709-20.

¹⁷² Amy Wink, *She Left Nothing in Particular: The Autobiographical Legacy of Nineteenth-Century Women's Diaries* (Knoxville, 2001) xxx-xxxi, Jane Flax, 'Re-Membering the Selves: Is the Repressed Gendered?', *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 26/1 (1987), 92-110 92-3.

¹⁷³ Elizabeth Wynne Fremantle, Eugenia Wynne Campbell, and Anne Jackson Fremantle, *The Wynne Diaries, 1789-1820* (Oxford, 1982).

¹⁷⁴ Blodgett, *Centuries*, 64.

friends or siblings who all kept diaries suggests that diary keeping was seen as a group activity or resulted from individuals imitating each other, as was almost certainly the case with the two Elizabeth Tyrrells. Less intimate groups could also encourage each other to keep diaries for potential public consumption. Boswell's diary may have served as a model for his friend William Johnston Temple and for Samuel Johnson who repeatedly tried to keep a diary (and repeatedly failed to keep it going).¹⁷⁵ With diaries being kept by several people in certain milieus it seems likely that diary keeping was not a private pastime, but an activity that was known to a social group even if they were not read or written in social settings.

The prominence of readers in some diaries makes it clear that the writer was not writing for posterity or for an anonymous observer. Lady Mary Coke's diary frequently addresses 'you', her sister Lady Strafford. Similarly Elizabeth Francis wrote her diary for her husband while he was in India and addresses him in the text. Coke, Francis, and others who kept diaries to be sent to friends or family explicitly refer to their readers' interest levels when they express fear of boring them. Canning addresses his aunt and uncle as "you" and discusses whether his readers were likely to know the people he met or not. Diaries of this kind contain different admissions and information than they would have done if they had been intended for no one in particular or if they had been meant for posterity (and therefore needed to present a guide to good behaviour). The quest by historians for the introspective diary that was created with the hope of having no readers other than the author is the search for a nonexistent prize.

Writing for friends may have blended easily into writing for posterity. Even Boswell, who directly addressed his friends, also hoped to deposit his writings in his ancestral home to be looked at in the future. Diaries written for others sought to impress readers with the author's personal powers (be they social connections, sexual prowess, self-restraint, or, as seems to have been the case with Boswell, interior conflict).

The second category of diary, a diary that did not have a particular audience other than the author in mind, generally tried to track at least one of five things: money, social contacts, events, knowledge, and/or oneself. These different interests appear to different

¹⁷⁵ William Johnston Temple, *Diaries of William Johnston Temple, 1780-1796*, ed. William Bettany (Oxford, 1929). Sherman, *Telling Time*, 188-96. Dawson, 'Histories and Texts', 415.

degrees in different diaries. Even some diaries written with others in mind were also meant to fulfill some other goal for the diarist. Boswell, for instance, used his diary as a memory aid that preserved knowledge (anecdotes about Johnson and his circle), self-regulation in his behaviour, and to record obligations to friends and social contacts. Boswell kept his diary with an eye to looking back on it at a later date and recorded his activities accordingly.

Other diarists similarly looked back at their diaries. Thomas Bridge's diary was a combined record of his activities and of his business deals and someone (probably Bridge) has gone through the diary ticking off debts paid. He seems to have passed over the text again striking off entire pages once all debts had been paid. Craig Muldrew has suggested that the division between keeping a diary and keeping an account book is a modern rather than an eighteenth-century separation.¹⁷⁶ These eighteenth and nineteenth century diaries support this claim. The overlap of financial and social position evident in diaries reflects the importance of reputation within a community. Alexandra Shepard and Margaret Hunt have both shown how social and moral behaviour could impact an individual or a family's access to credit. In societies where behaviour away from work impacted on access to the credit needed to sustain a family and a business, it is not surprising that social, cultural, and economic aspects of life would be tied together in record keeping.¹⁷⁷ The combination of accounts and social activities within both pre-printed diaries and homemade versions suggests a broad accounting function for many diaries that incorporated business, personal, and financial concerns. The social accounting that Dawson suggests might lie behind Pepys' diary is less obvious, as no diarists obviously went back through their diaries to keep track of visiting debts. Nevertheless the faithful lists of companions at meals and social events in, among others, the diaries of Wilkes, Bray, Birch, Godwin, and Farington, suggest that some value was placed in knowing who had been where. All of the accounting diaries provided opportunities for self-monitoring. Although they do not feature in this thesis because they do not record other activities in enough detail, religious journals and meditations

¹⁷⁶ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998), 61-4.

¹⁷⁷ Alexandra Shepard, 'Honesty, Worth and Gender in Early Modern England, 1560-1640' and Craig Muldrew, 'Class and Credit: Social Identity, Wealth and the Life Course in Early Modern England', in *Identity and Agency in England, Hunt, Middling Sort*.

continued to be common in this period. The possibility of returning to a record of past events provided a strong motivation for diary-keeping.

Journals and diaries regularly appeared in print in this period as the sources of insight into political or religious behaviours.¹⁷⁸ While few diarists explicitly admitted that their diaries should be used as evidence of their lives in the future by people other than themselves, some of their practices were shaped by the ways that published diaries were used. For some diarists, particularly Captain Edward Thompson and George Macaulay, this meant including long descriptions of political events, international affairs, and celebrities.¹⁷⁹ Anna Larpent and John Thornton, by contrast, left diaries that provided both religious meditation and moral instruction. Most diarists did not see their diaries as a place to record public events; rather, it is the intimate activities of daily and family life that make up most diaries.

Diaries only occasionally record national events, but other absences are also worth pointing out. Firstly the banal is often left out of diaries. Few diarists record drinking and many mention eating only in certain settings. Some diarists routinely describe their reactions to reading, but most leave it out of their records. For women needlework was a primary leisure activity, but only a couple diaries mention sewing with any regularity. Some diarists (e.g. Thomas Bridge) ignored even their families. Also unsurprising is the general absence of scandalous behaviour from most diaries. Boswell, of course, makes a big deal out of his manly sexuality, but he was atypical. Charles de Coetlogon seems to have visited a prostitute (or brothel) that he referred to as MW or XX. De Coetlogon had no problem mentioning an illegitimate child, but did not discuss his sexual encounters. Even the Duke of Norfolk, a notorious opponent of soap (allegedly his servants had to wait until he passed out drunk before they could bathe him), and a drunken associate of the Prince of Wales only makes vague references to drinking. His comments generally relate to who drank and who did not rather than drunken

¹⁷⁸ Mascuch describes a variety of egodocuments that were thought to act as guides, particularly Wesley's diary Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997). For political journals see comments in Sylvester Douglas Glenbervie, *The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas (Lord Glenbervie)*, ed. Francis Bickley (London, Boston & New York, 1928), 228.

¹⁷⁹ British Library, Add MS 46120, Edward Thompson, 'Diary', Edward Thompson, 'The Ms. Journal of Captain E. Thompson, R.N. 1783 to 1785', *Cornhill Magazine*, XVII/101 (1868), 610-40.

activities.¹⁸⁰ The absence of impolite behaviour from the diaries suggests modifications to Vic Gatrell's argument that the period covered by this dissertation was a period when people reveled in bodily and misogynistic humor. Gatrell either extrapolates widespread behaviours from an unrepresentative sample or, if a large portion of the population did behave in the way he believes they did, people preferred to throw a veil over their activities rather than to expose their drinking and fornicating.

Diaries were repositories for personal information and acted as memory aids for both the writer and future (possibly unknown) readers. The importance of individual experience as the raw material for diary entries suggests the importance of personal and family memory rather than collective memory for many diarists. At the same time they served a purpose beyond just reinforcing memory. The importance of lists in diaries as opposed to evocative descriptions of feelings or personal reactions suggests that their purpose was most commonly not psychic, but social or economic. While other sorts of information such as boundaries or anniversaries were preserved in town histories or community ceremonies, the diary served a different purpose.¹⁸¹ Even when they were written by several members of a social group, few diaries suggest in their form that they were intended to offer the materials for group memory

¹⁸⁰ Cumbria Record Office, DCH 1/1/1-9, Charles Howard, 11th Duke of Norfolk, 'Diary'.

¹⁸¹ Studies of popular custom are relatively common in early modern English history. See Adam Fox, 'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996), Nicola Whyte, 'Landscape, Memory and Custom: Parish Identities C. 1550-1700', *SH*, 32/2 (2007), 166-86, Phil Withington, 'Agency, Custom, and the English Corporate System', in *Identity and Agency in England*, Wood, 'Custom and the Social Organization of Writing in Early Modern England', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 9 (1999), 257-69.

2. Time use in London, 1757-1820

To understand how much time people could devote to leisure and recreation, it is first necessary to understand how people organised their time. As I suggested in the introduction, even the leisured classes were not totally free to pursue pleasure. Therefore this chapter examines how much time different sorts of people could spend on different activities. Historians have not devoted attention to patterns of time use at all levels of society. For once the labouring poor have been the primary group of study. Scholars have attempted to understand how much time people spent working and when working hours fell. In part this results from the debates about how workers conceived of time in pre-industrial and industrial Britain that I discussed in the introduction, attempts to gauge how national productivity might have changed as industrialisation progressed, and debates over how oppressive the factory system was. Hans-Joachim Voth has provided authoritative answers to some questions about how much time Londoners devoted to work and how the working day was broken up. Just as importantly, he has provided us with statistics that demonstrate how time-use may have changed as the industrial revolution progressed.¹ Unfortunately the down-to-the minute precision that historians have attempted to achieve for the working classes has not been pursued by people studying the gentry or middling sorts. On the contrary, our understanding of time-use among the upper quartile of the British population remains impressionistic.

This chapter steps into the void and attempts to construct a systematic picture of the time-use patterns of propertied society, to adjust current impressions about how people spent their time. Merchants have been almost universally represented as perpetual workers. The gentry and nobility have been seen as dissipated: often idle, they had far more time than they knew what to do with. Similarly merchants' wives, we are told, were limited in their activities by concerns about propriety that kept them at home, bored, if they remained uninvolved their husband's business. This chapter revises these assessments, though it does not entirely overturn them. Merchants found ways to make time for activities. They tweaked their workdays to allow for pleasure in ways that historians of the working classes might categorize as pre-industrial or undisciplined.

¹ Hans-Joachim Voth, *Time and Work in England 1750-1830* (Oxford, 2000).

Conversely, the landed classes adhered to more structured schedules than historians have recognized. It would be ludicrous to suggest that the gentry and nobility did not have more control over their time-use than anyone else in London society, but their schedules were less flexible than historians have made out. The amount of time people had for leisure was closely linked to socioeconomic status and life stage. The amounts of time available and the points of the day when time could be used affected people's relationships with recreational activity. With less time for leisure, working Londoners (from labourers to propertied merchants) restricted their scope for choice. Access to time was a primary constraint on people's freedom to choose their leisure pursuits.

Diaries and descriptions of schedules found in letters and—to a much lesser extent—print have allowed me to create a coherent picture of daily routines and activities. As I outlined in the introduction, there is good diary evidence for men and women of the gentry and nobility and mercantile men. There is limited evidence for merchants' wives and men and women of the lower end of the middling sort.

Groupings here will be determined by people's access to recreation. In some contexts this creates odd groupings as members of the nascent middle classes are lumped with their social betters, but by understanding how much discretion people had over their leisure time we can create social groupings that take into account approaches to time. This chapter presents three sets of routines: men and women of the gentry and nobility, men and women of the upper middling sorts (the well-paid professions and merchants), and men and women who were closer to the bottom of the middling sort. In each section a model routine and the changes in that routine due to life-stage are outlined before the possibilities for individual variation receive attention. In the conclusion I draw out how access to leisure altered the ways in which people of different levels of propertied society approached diversion. In later chapters these groups will be further refined and adjusted as more detail emerges about people's activities and the ways that social position and obligations shaped experiences of leisure.

The leisure elites?

Aristocratic and polite males have been looked at by historians with two contrasting features of their lifestyles in mind: parliamentary attendance and libertine

debauchery. Even those who regularly attended parliament have been presented as alternating between intense work and intense play. The younger Pitt has been offered as the stereotype of a hardworking upper-class male. He interrupted his labour only to drink himself to death. Even more pervasive in the historiography are images of drunken and debauched aristocrats. The circle of the Prince Regent has presented scholars with images and accounts of dissipated men, young and old.² Women have been regarded as more refined (though still tempted by the dice to be sure), but just as wasteful and frivolous. The nobility and gentry were not deprived of pleasure, but elite lives were more structured and in many cases less dissipated (at least when it came to keeping late hours) than we have come to expect. Structure came from social and political obligations that had to be discharged at particular times.

George Canning's *Letter-Journal* provides the most thorough account of an elite man's time-use. Canning's day began around 9.00, considerably later than that of working people. Boswell may have risen slightly earlier. The Scot rarely records doing anything early in the morning, but often he ate breakfast at other peoples' houses or hosted guests for the meal. Canning rose slightly later and generally missed breakfast. The politician spent his morning and early afternoon reading and writing in his rooms, only venturing out in the late morning once or twice a week.³ Around 14.00 Canning set out for Parliament, often stopping for a quick bite to eat along the way. While this was close to the dinner hour during the 1760s when Boswell wrote, by Canning's day dinner was not generally eaten until 17.00 or 18.00 (hours when the young Boswell would have been having tea). When parliamentary business did not run late, Canning's preferred diversions were a trip to a play or an opera in the evening before returning to an eating house in Carey Street for supper at around 23.00. The evening for polite men often involved long hours of convivial dining and socializing lasting from the early evening until after supper. John Hobhouse and Joseph Farington left particularly rich descriptions of these sorts of gatherings. Canning generally retired to bed between 24.00 and 1.00.

A notable feature of Canning's life was constant flipping between work and leisure. This transition sometimes involved moving between settings, but sometimes

² For instance Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 110-29 and throughout.

³ Canning, *Letter-Journal*, 81.

occurred within a single context. For elite men, work permeated many recreational activities and prevented individuals from turning off intellectually at any point in the day.⁴ Leisure hours were permeated by the need to present a particular image of intellectualism.⁵ Historians' obsession with defining the boundary between work and play in plebeian lives has left us ill equipped to grasp the precise amount of recreation in the lives of political and social elites and the ways that work and play intermingled throughout their days.

Historians have also been misleading about the activities of elite women. Biased sources are partly to blame for historians' misconceptions about women's lives. The caricatures of elite female lives written in the Georgian period present women rising at noon, dallying through the afternoon, heading into the night for long hours of deep play, only to be carried home in a sedan chair at dawn. We can find criticisms of the behaviour of women in satires, exposés, and didactic prints.⁶ Historians have been surprisingly willing to derive evidence of elite lifestyle from satirical images.

Satires and criticisms were not wholly unfounded, of course, but they exaggerated the lack of constraint on these individuals. Many women who participated in the rounds of polite society presented their routines as orderly, perhaps as a method of countering charges of decadence. While she resided with the Margravine of Ansbach at Hammersmith, just west of London, Anna Maria Porter wrote to Mrs. Hole to celebrate the regularity of the family's behaviour.⁷ "You shall judge of our way of living. We assemble at Breakfast always at nine o'clock, after which we separate till Dinner at five, the Margravine either works in her garden, or employs herself in business." She continued: "I retire to my little Study where I scribble my Romance[. T]he hours from five till Eleven when we go to bed, are spent in a delightful interchange of conversation and music, for cards never intrude here. Nothing can be more regular or more pleasing

⁴ Lord Kames' biography suggests that this was a feature of life in polite society. Alexander Woodhouselee and Henry Kames, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames* (London, 1814) 152-4.

⁵ Anthony La Vopa, 'Boswell, Work and Politeness', *Enlightenment seminar* (Oxford University, 2007).

⁶ Marguerite Gardiner, *Sketches and Fragments* (London, 1822), 52-71, Thomas Legg, *Low-Life: Or, One Half of the World, Knows Not How the Other Half Live, a Critical Account of the 24 Hours between Saturday-Night and Monday-Morning* (London, 1764).

⁷ The Margravine was not exactly renowned for stable, respectable living. Katherine Turner, 'Elizabeth, Margravine of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth (1750–1828)' (Oxford, 2005).

than this domestic scheme.”⁸ Anna Larpent presented similar regularity and productivity in her diary. She related to her reader that she would rise “at about half past 7. pray. work (useful plain work) till 9 when we breakfast. dine at 5. drink tea about 8 - go to bed about 11.”⁹ Larpent’s claims to productive (but unpaid) time use are further reinforced by her frequent references to needlework in her diary. The women laid out the regularity of their lifestyles to impress upon readers that they did not waste time and (at least in Larpent’s case) to encourage her readers (i.e. her children or grandchildren) to do the same. Men’s schedules have to be cobbled together from offhand comments over the course of months. It may be that we are able to know more about elite women’s lifestyles than we do about men’s because men felt no need to defend their time-use and so were less systematic in their record keeping. Less defensive descriptions of a woman’s time-use also presented an image of regularity. In her poem contrasting urban life with rural routines, Mary Orlebar described a daily schedule that would have been familiar to Larpent or Porter: rise at 8.00, breakfast at 9.00, reading & writing (two hours), church, visiting, a walk for health, then more books, dressing, dinner at 14.00, evenings with friends or a play, concert, or ball. If Mary was at home without company, supper occurred at 21.00, followed by reading for an hour or two, then rest.¹⁰

Prosaic lifestyles can be reconstructed from women’s letters and diaries too. An aggregate picture of Lady Mary Coke’s lifestyle emerges from her journals. Her routines are, unsurprisingly, similar in many respects to those of men of similar rank. Writing in the 1760s, Lady Mary rose around 9.00 and breakfasted shortly thereafter. Rarely going out before 11.00 or 12.00, Lady Mary spent the pre-dinner hours engaged in social visits, walks and other recreation, or shopping. Similarly busy, Catherine Mackintosh squeezed visits, walks, music lessons, and modest amounts of childcare into her mornings. Mackintosh rose slightly later than Coke, generally around 9.00. Other women tended to spend the morning out. Frances Boscawen was particularly likely to shop in the morning and Eliza Chute regularly recorded being “out” in the morning. The hours before dinner may have been occupied with less formal activities. This was when shopping occurred

⁸ Huntington Library, Porter Papers, Box 54 Porter Family, 'Oversize Manuscripts - Documents & Correspondence', POR 225.

⁹ Larpent, 'Diary', I:29.

¹⁰ Collett-White, 'My Choice', 136-8.

and when music and language lessons took place. After dinner, people donned more formal clothing and socializing may have been regulated with a stricter set of rules. When Lady Mary Coke remained at home, her time before dinner was occupied with reading, writing letters or journals, and paying bills or managing the household. Preferring to dine at home, She normally dined at 16.00. When she dined at home, the hour or ninety minutes after dinner were often spent dressing for the evening. If she dined abroad, Lady Mary often remained through the afternoon and evening at the home where she had dined, frequently departing between 19.00 and 20.00. If she had dined at home, she generally set out to make evening calls and attend assemblies around 19.00. Commonly returning home between 22.00 and 24.00, she went to bed at about 24.00, though entertainments sometimes lasted until 2.00 or 3.00.

For fashionable society at least, residence in the capital and the routines it involved were not usually permanent. From at least the early Stuart period residence in London followed a pattern that was tied to the schedule of parliamentary sessions.¹¹ The season, the period when the *beau monde* resided in London in the greatest numbers, lasted from early January until George III's birthday on the 4th of June. The season gradually drifted later in the year, so that by the end of the period it only got going in February and petered out in late June or early July.¹² Most of the gentry and nobility relocated to the provinces during the summer and autumn months, though a reduced schedule of visiting persisted through the summer for those left behind.¹³ The activity of the legislature may have served as an early encouragement to the gentry and nobility, particularly following the Restoration, but the appeal of the season quickly became more extensive and served to shape the availability of amenities, thereby reinforcing the draw of the season.

¹¹ F. J. Fisher, 'The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *TRHS*, 4th ser., 30 (1948), 37-50, Stone, 'The Residential Development'.

¹² Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society Etiquette and the Season* (London, 1986). Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman 1689-1798: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford 1990* (Oxford, 1991), 140-5. . See also Hansard 1803-2005, 'Commons Sittings in the 1810s' (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1810s>), Hansard 1803-2005, 'Commons Sittings in the 1800s' (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1800s>).

¹³ Thomas Moore, *The Journal of Thomas Moore*, ed. Wilfred Dowden (Newark & London, 1983) I:196, Coke, *Letters and Journals*, II:31.

The availability of the most fashionable entertainments and the presence of numerous members of the gentry and nobility made the season busy for residents at the top of the social ladder. Activities after dinner were more likely to last until midnight or after during the season. For instance, between the first week of January and the first week of May 1763, Frances Boscawen went to six plays, three operas, three oratorios, Mrs. J Pitt's assembly, Lady Northampton's Assembly, Lady Northumberland's Assembly, Hale's Assembly, Mrs Walker's Assembly, an event at Carlisle House, Mrs. Harding's Assembly, Ranelagh (twice), the [British?] Museum, and for several walks in the parks, along with attending church, less formal visiting, and meals. Polite men also found themselves busy enjoying plays, operas, and oratorios, not to mention polite sociability and club or society gatherings.¹⁴

Throughout the year the routines of polite men and women varied slightly depending on the day of the week, though not nearly as much as those of people who worked and therefore had only one day, usually Sunday, free from labour. Sundays among the political elites in particular were still days when obligations mixed with pleasures because of church-going and assemblies. There were other rhythms to the polite week. A sense of duty and fashion laid out the appropriate activities for each day. A routine based around a collection of recreations became predictable during the season, though the degree of adherence to fashionable schedules varied based on one's milieu and personal preferences. Lady Mary Coke, for instance, rarely strayed from the circuit of activities prescribed for the *bon ton* until she decided to withdraw from society in the early 1770s. In the 1760s she went to the opera on Tuesdays and Saturdays and to the theatre a couple of times each month.¹⁵ Each week she also attended Lady Harrington's on Sunday evening. This routine was partly determined by what was available: the opera only performed on Tuesday and Saturday and few fashionable public spaces were open on Sundays. Frances Boscawen's journal shows theatre-going spread evenly over Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday while she went to assemblies every night except

¹⁴ Leo Hughes, *A Study of the Eighteenth-Century London Audience* (Austin, 1971), 156-9, Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*.

¹⁵ Coke, *Letters and Journals*. Her routine is similar to her friend Horace Walpole's as recorded in a 1764 letter to George Montagu. Horace Walpole and George Montagu, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with George Montagu*, eds W. S. Lewis and Ralph Sharp Brown, 2 vols. (New Haven & London, 1941), 138.

Sunday and Monday.¹⁶ In relation to the theatre, this corresponds with what Leo Hughes argued in his book on theatre patrons in the eighteenth century: that there were not strong patterns in terms of days preferred for theatre going, rather the audience depended on a combination of factors that included the night of the week, but also the play, and the time of year. Charles de Coetlogon enjoyed both the opera and the theatre and often went to the theatre on Tuesdays and Saturdays in preference to the opera—perhaps as an attempt to avoid crowds and get better seats than would be available on other days. The unpredictable daily schedule of parliament had a considerable impact for both men and women. Canning often bemoaned arriving at the House to discover no business would take place that day or missing dinner due to an interminable session. Of course men who routinely attended parliament would be at the mercy of the sessions when it came to deciding social schedules. But women were also impacted as parliamentary events affected gamblers at card parties and the audience at the theatre. In Lady Mary Coke's diary games at a polite gathering might come to a standstill while the gamblers listened to news arriving from parliament.¹⁷

At different stages in the lifecycle the children of the gentry and nobility were able to achieve more or less variety in their time use. Males and, to a lesser extent, females were often sent away for schooling from a young age. At school their lives were highly structured. John Marsh wrote about his education at Greenwich that

nothing co'd exceed the regularity with which everything was always conducted; the school hours being from 6 in the summer & 7. in the winter 'till 9. when we breakfasted. From 10. 'till 12. when we came out, dined at 1. & were in school again from 2 'till 5. except on Thursdays, when we came out at 4. but had then a repetition to learn against the next morning & also except Saturdays when we had always a half a holiday. We had also holidays every saints or state day & a month & 3 or 4 odd days vacation at Whitsuntide & Christmas.¹⁸

Young people were kept in line through close control of their time, but upon leaving school this pattern reversed for most men of elite status. The universities and Inns of Court offered some structure through meals and, to a lesser extent, classes, but young

¹⁶ Hughes, *Drama's Patrons*.

¹⁷ Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics', 676.

¹⁸ John Marsh, *The John Marsh Journals: The Life and Times of a Gentleman Composer (1752-1828)*, ed. Brian Robins (Stuyvesant, N.Y., 1998), 25.

men were able to exercise more discretion before obligations began to creep back into life by their early twenties.

Boswell and Canning provide evidence of the lifestyle of a man in this stage. Both were aged 21 or 22 and unmarried when they began their diaries. Both had to fight to balance obligations, self-advancement, and diversion. Canning is most candid about this tension, admitting that too often he went to the opera or playhouse instead of going to aristocratic gatherings where he could mingle with the political power brokers.¹⁹ Likewise Boswell filled his diary from his second stint in London with promises to live frugally and grow devout in his old age—pledges that seem more like wishful thinking than thoughtful goals.²⁰ Despite their various commitments (Boswell was on a short financial leash and was supposed to be obtaining a commission; Canning wouldn't stray far from Parliament), both lived fairly flexible lives. Boswell's father supplied him with the money he needed for his drinking and dining and James could therefore spend his time in London relatively freely. Canning had no involvement with paid work and though he had political commitments, he had plenty of free time in which to schedule his reading and writing. Only his appearances in Parliament and invitations to private gatherings were inflexible in their timing.

As responsibilities became more established and children appeared, flexibility declined. Earl Spencer's patterns were still relatively free, but his diary expresses the rhythm of his life with large daily dinners and often guests for supper. There is routine, though no sense of settling down to a quiet life. Some men of the political elite retained much of the boisterousness of their younger recreations. The diary of Charles Howard, 11th Duke of Norfolk provides an example of a busy, socially active aristocrat in his middle and later years.²¹ Even into his sixties, Howard maintained a full social schedule and traveled extensively. His diary records dinners and parties, complete with notes about the drinking and who abstained. If anything James Boswell became less stable in his later years, though his antics seem less elaborate. He continued to engage in club life, long nights of drinking with literary friends, and affairs with (often married) women.²²

¹⁹ Canning, *Letter-Journal*, 49.

²⁰ Boswell, *London Journal*, 45-6 and passim.

²¹ Howard, 'Diary'.

²² Turnbull, 'Boswell'.

According to Boswell's friend William Johnston Temple, Boswell did not improve with age.²³ The effect of children on Boswell's time-use remains unclear. Because his visits to London were periodic rather than permanent, his time in Scotland may have been family-oriented in contrast to literary and social activity in London. The degree of drinking and revelry usually declined as polite men aged and their routines stabilized, but they continued to enjoy much the same forms of recreational life as they had in their younger days.

Aristocratic mothers' lives changed more noticeably, particularly due to their role in socializing their daughters. Aristocratic women never had the drunken and boisterous aspect to their recreation that men had, but their younger years were marked with late nights at balls and parties as they participated in the marriage market and elite sociability. Lady Mary Coke continued that lifestyle into her forties and fifties; with no children to bring up, she had fewer responsibilities around the house than many of her friends. Caroline Powys, on the other hand, hammered home in her diary both declining physical capabilities and growing constraints on her time resulting from motherhood. By the time her daughter reached her teens, Caroline was busy ensuring that her girl had the opportunities to meet appropriate potential suitors.²⁴ Furthermore, Powys' diary points to the declining ability to withstand the wear and tear of late-night activity. At age forty-eight while recuperating from a serious illness she wrote: "I was scarcely enough recovered to partake of the Spring Diversions of London, as indeed they are now all so late it must be a very strong constitution that can.... My favourite Ranelagh I ventured to but once, as tis not polite to enter the Rotunda till eleven at the soonest."²⁵ As the hours for diversion became later, older people were increasingly isolated from fashionable recreation. Caroline could no longer keep up a routine of late-night socializing as she had in her younger days.

Broadly, the diaries point to a flexibility among the social elite to express their own preferences in organising time greater than that we will find among merchants or

²³ Temple, *Diaries*, 41.

²⁴ See also Frances Calvert, *An Irish Beauty of the Regency, Compiled From "Mes Souvenirs,"--the Unpublished Journals of the Hon. Mrs. Calvert 1789-1822*, ed. Alice Blake (London, 1911) 155-6, 159.

²⁵ Powys, 'Annual Journal', ff. 93-4. Another writer complained that she was unable to keep up because the hours had gotten later. Sarah Lennox et al., *The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox, 1745-1826*, eds Countess of Ilchester and Lord Stavor (London, 1901), II:291.

working Londoners. Canning, for instance, alludes to his own habit of rising later than many of his colleagues who perhaps did not stay out until the early hours as frequently as Canning did.²⁶ Canning may have exaggerated his own distinctiveness, as Lady Mary Coke's journal and Katherine Mackintosh's diary suggest that his schedule was typical of the aristocratic and parliamentary classes and John Hobhouse's writings indicate that Canning may even have been restrained for a member of his social group. Clearly there is a great challenge for anyone who wishes to define what was typical for a broad swathe of Londoners at any particular time. Nevertheless, Canning's belief that he was particularly lazy reminds us that he had the opportunity to be moderately lazy without endangering his income or standing. This was not something most residents of Georgian London could say.

Merchants, not adventurers

In contrast to the members of the gentry and nobility whose lives have been presented as decadent and disorganised, merchants, their wives, and to a lesser extent members of the professions have been viewed as models of regularity and abstinence. The routines associated with merchants' daily visits to the Exchange (and the order that apparently existed at that venue) contrast with the irregular routines of Parliament.²⁷ Diaries support Perry Gauci's belief in the importance attached to daily attendance at the Exchange and his general scheme that saw traders "rising early," spending "the morning in scrutinizing accounts, and giving orders to their clerks, book-keepers and other staff" before walking the City and heading to the coffeehouse to catch up on news. Gauci argues that merchants then went to the Exchange, dined, returned to the 'Change, then dashed off to the coffeehouse or tavern, before finally going home to write letters or entertain associates.²⁸ This might represent an ideal day for a merchant as he ticked off all the possible boxes. As Gauci admits, there were variations and diaries suggest that few days would have been quite like the one Gauci outlines. In particular it was not common for merchants to attend both sessions at the Exchange. Business was only permitted at the Exchange for two hours a day: an hour at 12.00 and an hour at 16.00.

²⁶ Canning, *Letter-Journal*, 81.

²⁷ Perry Gauci, *Emporium of the World: The Merchants of London, 1660-1800* (London, 2007), 43-4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 60-1.

Diarists appear to have adhered to the one-hour window, though it remains unclear how the Exchange was cleared at its end. Furthermore, a mercantile lifestyle still contained room for maneuver even if daily work meant that life was far more regimented than it was for people who lived off annuities or land. Merchants' wives' routines have been less carefully attended to, perhaps in part because they left fewer records than their husbands did.

Members of different professions have received different levels of attention. David Lemmings' work on barristers is as attentive to daily routines as Gauci's is for merchants. Barristers worked up to six days a week and generally laboured from 9.00 until 14.00. Proceedings that could not be interrupted might keep barristers in Westminster Hall until 16.00 or even into the evening.²⁹ This routine generally left the afternoon free, though the chamberwork that Lemmings also highlights as a key feature of a barrister's life may have meant afternoons were spent at a desk.³⁰ Though the level of "professionalism" exhibited by members of the professions remains open to question, the need to make a living structured daily life for barristers as well as doctors and members of other professions. Neither Gauci nor Lemmings is interested in leisure in particular, but both offer at least basic insight into the amount of time available for amusement.

Turning to the diaries we can see that the schedules suggested by Gauci and Lemmings are generally accurate, but the scope for choice evident in diaries adds an important dimension to our understanding of mercantile and professional time use. The demands of business meant that most merchants rose early and worked a full day before going to bed between 22.00 and midnight. Thomas Bridge provides the outline of a busy day in his entry for 31 August 1762: "Rose at 6.00. Wrote. Breakfasted. Wrote. Went to Change. Came home. Dined. Wrote. Drank Tea. Wrote. Supped & went to bed."³¹ Bridge's writing probably entailed doing accounts and keeping up with business correspondence rather than writing purely personal letters or scribbling for amusement. Other merchants visited the Exchange for the after-dinner session, for instance Hagen and

²⁹ David Lemmings, *Professors of the Law: Barristers and English Legal Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2000), 43-4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 40-3 and 149-202.

³¹ Bridge, 'Diary'.

Goff. Young underwriter John Eliot followed a similar schedule that provides more precise timings for events. Eliot rose each day at 7.00 and read for an hour before breakfast. After breakfast Eliot wrote “in [his] books,” meaning he kept his business accounts and letter-books up to date. Around 11.00 he went out of the house on business errands or to one of the coffeehouses near the Exchange to do business. Dining at 14.00, Eliot carried out more business in the afternoon and stopped for coffee at 17.00. In the evening he read or went to Lloyd’s Coffee House to underwrite insurance policies before going home to supper at about 20.00. The regularity of the routines of people who worked for money suggests that it was not just the regularity of the Exchange that ordered the lives of the middling sort, but also the demands of keeping a successful business.

These model routines support the impression historians have of merchants and other City-types having been constantly at work. Many merchants spent time in the evening doing work, though most business was conducted between breakfast and dinner. Mealtimes seem to have been dictated by convenience rather than a fashionable dinner hour. Several middling men left their work for dinner and did not return, though dinner might be pushed back if work was demanding. Stephen Monteage generally left work at the Excise Office at dinnertime and did not return. William Burgess generally left his work to return home to dinner and never returned in the evening. A merchant’s routines were somewhat flexible vis-à-vis time, but they could also demonstrate discretion in terms of place. Jacob Hagen, Thomas Bridge, and John Thornton divided their work between venues. Sometimes they remained at home, sometimes they went to their warehouse or counting house, and other days to coffeehouses and the Exchange. Routine and regularity were not necessarily dictated by a set of consistently observed working hours, rather they exhibited flexibility in timings and locations.

Not all members of the professions had the ability to leave off work at dinner. Some were limited in their time for diversion by family and charity obligations. Others suffered from inescapable work, despite being financially secure. As the sister of Dr. John Fothergill, one of the wealthiest (and busiest) doctors of the period, wrote to a friend, her brother had no time for recreations, despite his strong interest in a number of

pursuits.³² Though their schedules retained a flexibility that was foreign to their social inferiors, the merchants and the middling sort worked hard for their money.

The un-diverted lives of such merchants as Thomas Bridge or Jacob Hagen may reflect a lifestyle common to their social group, but age and health also contributed. For instance, Bridge worked most intensely as a young man as he attempted to secure for himself a niche in the market and the goods he desired. Eliot was restricted by his business activities and his obligations to his grandfather, aunts, and uncles, but he was able to reschedule business to convenient hours, allowing him to go out riding on pleasant afternoons. Eliot and Bridge negotiated their new adult roles and enjoyed the relative flexibility of unmarried life. Both worked hard, presumably with financial gain as their objective.

At an older age Hagen was occupied with religious obligations as well as family duties. Paradoxically older men with established positions had less flexibility in their schedules for diversion, but also more time free from work than younger men. Though older men did not need to work as hard to maintain their financial status, they were burdened with greater community and family obligations. Jacob Hagen, for instance, worked five days each week but attended Quaker meetings almost as many days. He had time to sit on the boards for various charities including the Meeting for Sufferings each Friday, Trustees of Michael Yoakley's estate, and Guy's and Thomas' Hospitals and have tea with friends or relatives several days each week thanks to his comfortable financial and business situations. Yet Hagen's activities were predictable—he rarely deviated from his routine of meetings religious, charitable, and business-related and business at the Exchange. His diversions were perhaps not a dramatic contrast with his younger years. If Eliot represents the patterns that would have been familiar to a young Jacob Hagen then Hagen's adult diversion options reflect only a slight decrease in variety (i.e. fewer rides in the countryside) of previous activity.

Margaret Hunt has argued that the fear of financial failure in the unstable and risky world of business helped ensure that members of middling families behaved in a sober and responsible manner, occupying time with work, family responsibility, and

³² Friends' House, Port 23.31, Ann Fothergill, 'Letter to Priscilla Knight', and Port 38.93, John Fothergill to unknown.

home-based amusement.³³ Merchants did live a regular existence, but in my sample there is no evidence of discussions of business failure, comments that Hunt says were a “frequent” feature of “diaries, autobiographies, and letters”.³⁴ Hunt is certainly correct that the behaviours of the middle classes resulted from a combination of self-interest, family obligation, and beliefs about morality, but it is difficult to see bankruptcy as the bogey Hunt suggests it was. Other scholars have suggested that because bankruptcy was so widespread it was not a shocking embarrassment so much as an unsavory, but inevitable part of business life.³⁵ Perhaps merchant lives were regular out of a desire for success rather than a fear of failure. The changes in routines over the lifecycle suggest not that young people refused to obey their elders’ advice, but rather differences in the social roles men and women played at different life-stages that offered different scope for choice.

The routine of William Burgess suggests that younger men might have been offered a longer leash as they eased into the business world.³⁶ Burgess’ changing role reflects the increasing responsibilities placed on teenage children as they matured. The surviving diary begins after Burgess had already left school. Schooling appears to have been a part of most children’s lives, if only for as little as a couple of months in the case of the labouring poor.³⁷ Though his brothers continued to go to school most days, Burgess, aged sixteen, was at home with his mother doing errands and assisting his father occasionally. To begin he was afforded a great deal of discretionary time, indeed he retained a large amount of free time throughout the years he kept the diary, more than his younger brothers who went to school each day.

At the start of his diary, the greatest demands on sixteen-year-old William’s time are errands and tasks for his mother. As the diary progresses we find him increasingly engaged in adult sociability. Burgess participated in evening card games, particularly

³³ Hunt, *Middling Sort*, chapters 1-3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁵ Mary Lindemann, 'Imposture, Fraud, and the Politics of Republicanism', paper presented at the American Historical Association Annual Conference, New York, January 2009.

³⁶ Burgess, 'Journal'.

³⁷ David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London, 1981), 94-105, Earle, *A City Full*, 19-38, Hunt, *Middling Sort*, chapter 2, Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001) 65-76.

with his Aunt Betsy who regularly came to tea. Together they played whist, cribbage, and quadrille, and Burgess was keen to record his winnings and losses like a good banker-in-training. The opportunity to participate in adult activities seems to have been attractive to Burgess, but there were extra responsibilities to accompany new recreations. In 1790, the final year of the diary, eighteen-year-old William attended his father into the City two or three days each week, returning home with him for dinner. While it was an increase from previous years, this frequency of work was still very low. Burgess retained a great deal of time for walking in the fields, shopping, and visiting relatives; his afternoons were generally taken up with those diversions. While William had few responsibilities, he was limited by his parents' oversight and his financial dependence; as he aged he would find more access to funds and greater control over his actions. Of course William's apparent freedom to choose may have been heavily circumscribed in ways that are not explicitly stated. For instance Burgess' activities almost invariably involve another family member, either accompanying him on a walk or on a visit to relatives. The control exerted by a master or mistress is more explicitly stated in the diary of Edward Binyon.³⁸ Written during his time as an apprentice in the 1760s, he only recorded his activities a few times a month. He generally wrote when he went to the theatre or journeyed out of town and his accounts of these activities make plain how his master controlled access to activities.³⁹

At the other end of the lifecycle (and this is particularly visible in Bridge's latter diaries) elderly men worked less. Greater leisure could have resulted from a secure financial situation thanks to investments in annuities and property. Of course, as merchants aged their health was no longer up to the strain of working twelve to fourteen hour days either. Bridge spent more days in bed and rose early on a less consistent basis.

Only Elizabeth Tyrrell provides evidence of what women in merchant families might have done. Tyrrell does not appear to have been an early riser like many of the professional or mercantile men, but she does seem to have generally been active by 9.00. Her hours were not late either. She recorded staying up until after midnight on New Years Eve and until 1.00 on Twelfth day, but her mentioning of these times suggests they

³⁸ Friends House Library, MS Box V 2/1 Edward. Binyon, 'Diary', Edward. Binyon, 'Diary of a London Quaker Apprentice, 1765-68', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, 21 (1924), 45-52.

³⁹ Binyon, 'Diary of a London Quaker Apprentice', 50.

were anomalous. We also catch occasional glimpses of adult women in the diaries of their husbands that offer support for the picture drawn from Tyrrell's diary. The wife of Jacob Hagen, for instance, appeared in his diary as she joined him for meals, Quaker meetings, or at the end of the day when they met up at home or at a friend's. She often visited her children and spent time with her grandchildren during the day while Jacob was at work in the City. William Burgess' mother is rarely seen outside the home in his version of events, apart from visits to friends and relatives and jaunts to church on Sunday mornings.

Tyrrell's daily routines varied more than the male diarists' did, but there is little evidence that pleasure was the cause; rather her days were structured around caring for her children and engaging in visiting and hosting. Tyrrell rarely mentioned doing housework. She did have a small staff that could assist with these matters, but several historians have drawn attention to the considerable amount of time women must have spent engaged in routine managerial tasks.⁴⁰ The household activities Tyrrell does mention were occasional tasks, such as sorting out a store room (4 January 1808), having people come to clean rooms on the day before, and doing bills at the end of the previous December.

In contrast with men whose lives became more structured as work and other obligations became more prominent with age, women showed more flexibility as they grew older. Comparing Elizabeth [I] Tyrrell with her daughter we find a clearer organization in the way the younger Tyrrell presented her daily routine than how the mother described her own. Unlike many young men and some young women of propertied backgrounds who lived at boarding school, Elizabeth [II] lived at home.⁴¹ Her days were framed by educational activities. She never mentioned getting up in the morning, but rather began with her father and brothers leaving or practicing her music (beginning about 9.00). Her weekly obligations were primarily visits from various

⁴⁰ Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (London, 1988). Rosemary O'Day, *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies: Patriarchy, Partnership and Patronage* (Harlow & New York, 2007), 205-39, Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), 95-172.

⁴¹ Susan Skedd, 'Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls' Schooling in England, C.1760-1820', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*.

instructors in art, music, and languages. Young Elizabeth had a considerable amount of time for playing, though she was obliged to work in the evening.

Routines of merchants and other permanent residents were also affected by the season. Public lectures and exhibitions are prominent in this regard, particularly in the second half of the period.⁴² Job Knight's diary presents a working Londoner resident in London year-round who attended lectures only in the winter and early spring. In February and March 1818 he attended lectures by John Thelwall and heard speeches given at Guy's Hospital and the London Philosophical Society. He recorded no club meetings or lectures after the end of March. The seasonality of gatherings is also evident in Charles Smith's diary of life in southeast London. Most of the private parties in Greenwich and Woolwich recorded by Smith occurred during the late winter and spring.⁴³

For working Londoners some weekly events (particularly church) affected how time was spent, but patterns of work were far more important in organizing activities across the week. While some women engaged in recreational sociability during working hours, the routines of men partly determined when visits and meals might take place. The limitations placed on time by the working week hampered individual expression, but it would be an error to present merchants and professionals as having been completely regimented and constrained. The diaries of John Eliot and Thomas Bridge both reveal young men going out for a ride at times when a rigid schedule indicates they should have been working. They were not skiving, but rather displaced their leisure. Eliot was able to go riding out to Croydon to have tea with his aunts, but he then had to return to town to work into the night.

Working: the view below the merchants

Below the merchants and professionals on the economic ladder, working hours remained long and became less flexible. Hans-Joachim Voth's work highlights several features of working-class life and routines. Voth shows that the workday lasted from about 6.30 until about 19.00 in the summer.⁴⁴ Work began slightly later in the winter.

⁴² Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA., 1978).

⁴³ See especially March 1820.

⁴⁴ Voth, *Time and Work*, 66-76 and 94-8.

Voth's testifiers mentioned that they went to work about thirty minutes later and broke for breakfast at 9.00. Labourers then returned to work until dinner between 12.30 and 14.00. Some workers broke for tea between 17.00 and 18.00 and left work around 19.00. After supper, the majority went to bed about 22.00. Over the period 1760 to 1830, Voth found that hours lengthened up to 1800, then began to shorten as holidays became shorter and work became more regular and consistent.⁴⁵ Voth is not primarily interested in recreation, but the daily schedule he draws up suggests about three hours a day in which the working classes could attend to their washing, cleaning, shopping, possibly enjoy diversion, and eat supper. Voth finds 7-10% of all people testifying that they were at leisure, with the highest rates observed on Mondays in 1760 and 1800 (12 and 14.1 percent respectively) and Sundays in 1800 and 1830 (15.7 and 22.2 percent respectively).⁴⁶ Every day of the week involved some recreation, though Voth does not draw out the distribution of his pleasure-seekers over the course of the day (due to small sample size). It seems likely based on Voth's sample that most recreation was enjoyed on days off.

Voth's findings are supported by the diary of Job Knight. Unfortunately, Knight is as close as our diarists get to the experience of the working class. Knight spent his working days in Toplis' business premises and on a variety of errands. Knight probably should not be taken as a representative of the working classes, as his diary and background suggest that he was upwardly mobile and that his long hours of labour were part of a long-term struggle to establish himself as a high-end furniture maker. Knight had come to London from Essex in 1815 and hoped to advance himself within Toplis' company. He laboured considerably harder than the other men in training, however. James Ware and William Burgess were both training for genteel careers and rarely put in long hours like those Knight pursued on a daily basis. So while Knight was above an artisan in status, he was putting in similar hours.

Moving around London purchasing drawing supplies and meeting with customers, Knight's workday lasted from sometime between 7.00 and 8.00 until around 20.00. Rising, on average between 7.30 and 7.45 during the winter months and slightly before

⁴⁵ Ibid., 118-20.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 90.

7.00 during the summer, Knight generally went directly to the counting house. He breakfasted around 9.00 and then either returned to the counting house to draw and work on his books or moved on to the workshop or the place of sale. Knight generally stopped for dinner between 13.30 and 14.00, though dinnertime varied depending on what activities he was involved in at the time. If a sale ran late or he was in the middle of an errand, he might dine later, or stop earlier to eat if he was already away from work. An afternoon of labour in a variety of locations was interrupted between 16.00 and 17.00 when Knight stopped for tea, often at home or at a friend or relative's house. He then returned to working, sometimes in the counting house or workshop, other times at home, finally stopping around 19.30 in the winter or 21.00 in the summer. He tended to go to bed at 23.00 or shortly thereafter. Knight's evenings were often spent visiting relatives or his friend Godwin, particularly in the spring and summer. During the winter he spent the majority of his evenings at home drawing and writing, though it was not unknown for him to visit someone or attend an exhibition or lecture.

Knight's diary reflects seasonal variations that Voth also points out and provides evidence to suggest that the late starts in the morning were due to fog rather than darkness *per se*. The effect of weather on working hours made the busy seasons for work even busier. Apart from having different recreational opportunities depending on the season, tradesmen and mechanics had more to do in some seasons than in others.⁴⁷ The importance of shopping and display in the London season meant trades catering to the gentry and nobility were particularly busy in the winter and spring. In London the summer and autumn were relatively slack periods for labourers as empty fashionable neighbourhoods meant little demand for goods and services.⁴⁸

Elizabeth Inchbald is the only working woman in the sample, though as an actress she can hardly be considered to have been part of the working class. She also began her day much later than most working women. Because his primary interest is on national output and worker productivity, Voth is not as focused on women in his analysis, though they do receive attention from time to time. He found women adhering to a daily routine

⁴⁷ See also T. S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1959). Leonard Schwarz, *London in the Age of Industrialisation: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1992), 48-50 and passim.

⁴⁸ Earle, *A City Full*, 10. Voth, *Time and Work*, 98.

similar to men and witnessing crimes when they were at play at about the same rate as men.⁴⁹ Inchbald rarely specifies the exact times when she pursued particular activities, but given that she performed in the theatre it is unlikely that she would have gotten to bed by 22.00 as most labourers did. Inchbald structured her daily records of activity around rehearsals, writing, meals, and performances. Her recreation, like that of many other people who worked for a living, was concentrated around essential breaks from work for meals or tea. Inchbald may have adjusted her meals and writing times to suit other obligations or activities, but there is no indication that she was able to avoid devoting large portions of her days to labour. Servants may have had to divide their time more awkwardly to suit the needs of a master or mistress.⁵⁰ Almost all women engaged in some sort of paid labour, and they also shouldered a larger burden of unpaid housework than men.⁵¹ Women who were victims or witnesses of crimes were as likely to be found engaging in unpaid obligations as in paid work.⁵² It must be pointed out that Voth's sample sizes are dangerously small for women, so the hours he reports must be treated with care. Nevertheless Inchbald's diary suggests that women had more discretion over how their day was broken up but no more access to recreation than men did. As I suggested for merchants, men's patterns of work and leisure may have encouraged women to attempt to discharge unpaid duties while men were at work, thereby opening up evenings and holidays for diversion.

The effects of the lifecycle on the time-use of working people are not well elucidated by either diaries or the trial evidence Voth uses. The ages of deponents are rarely mentioned in Old Bailey trials, Job Knight's diary does not extend into old age, and Elizabeth Inchbald moved up the social ladder quite dramatically. The presence of children probably decreased the amount of time people could devote to leisure, unless, as might have occurred with Knight had he survived to middle age, enough money could be accrued to hire servants and take time away from labour.⁵³ The availability of temporary childcare may have made escape from household duties more possible than has been

⁴⁹ Voth, *Time and Work*, 76 and 108-9.

⁵⁰ Patty Seleski, 'Women, Work and Cultural Change in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century London', in Tim Harris (ed.), *Popular Culture in England, C.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 1995), 151.

⁵¹ Earle, *A City Full*, 114.

⁵² Voth, *Time and Work*, 108-9.

⁵³ For a plebeian instance of hiring a child-minder see OBP, Ralph Cutler.

recognized, thus reducing the negative impact of having children on time devoted to recreation. But discretionary time was not likely to be available as the labouring poor aged. Unlike merchants who were able to invest in stock for support in old age, the labouring poor were unlikely to be able to withdraw from work. So while some escapes from the exigencies of household management might have been found, work remained a constant for most of the population. Declining physical capacity reduced people's ability to earn, forcing people to depend on charity or support from family members.⁵⁴ More common than the retired widow living on rents were the "Creeping old Women" who carried messages between servants and were paid with "broken Provisions and odd Pence."⁵⁵

The impact of patterns of work on leisure and recreation

The conditions of access to leisure varied considerably across the social hierarchy. Both male and female members of polite society had a great deal more time for diversion than their social inferiors, despite the possibly onerous burdens of social obligations. The merchants' schedules showed flexibility, but work remained a feature of five or six days each week. Even members of polite society who, like Canning, had political responsibilities were only busy a few days each week for a few months of the year. Otherwise they were at leisure to pursue diversion or carry out their social obligations. At different levels of society choices about leisure were structured by varying amounts of discretionary time and freedom from obligations.

The lives at the top did not lack structure, but the gentry and nobility clearly approached their activities with more choice than did those below them about when to pursue diversion and for how long. Diaries suggest that people at different levels of society had contrasting ideas of what they ought to be doing with their time. At the top time was not thrown away; rather socially acceptable activities such as visits, instruction, and meals structured diary entries. Lower down the social ladder, diaries revealing timings were organised around paid labour, meals, and sometimes around religious

⁵⁴ Susannah Ottaway, *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2004), 65-115.

⁵⁵ Legg, *Low-Life*, 47. See also Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History: Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford, 2000), 3-11.

observance. These differences correspond to different functions leisure played in lives. For people who had more time for play, their activities took on a greater seriousness and play may often have been mixed with non-play. The politician or elite woman mixed pleasure with politics while the merchant and his wife mixed trading with diversion. Those lower down the social ladder may have divorced work from play more readily, but the evidence needed to make a strong case for this is lacking. The socioeconomically based differences in approaches to recreation further support the definitions drawn out in the introduction: psychological attitudes to recreational activities were not the same at all levels of society. This should not lead us to marginalize the importance of plebeian recreation or to consider it as some sort of bread-and-circuses safety valve that prepared people for the next round of work. Chapter 8 draws out the ways in which we can find evidence of taste in plebeian amusements. Plebeian recreation might have been separated from work, but it was an activity whose practice revealed individual strategies for negotiating constraints.

The lifecycle affected different socioeconomic groups in different ways. We have seen landed men whose leisure patterns were apparently impervious to age and responsibility, though we must not exaggerate this. The Duke of Queensberry had a reputation for being an old pervert because he was different from others of his age and class. For most people aging meant changing tastes. For many an increase in age also meant a decline in access to free time. For the merchants, lawyers, doctors, and divines considered here, the money they earned could compensate for lost time, but old age eventually limited mobility for most.

At the individual level we can see evidence of variations at all levels of society, but it is a safe guess that wealthier people could express their individual proclivities more readily than the middling or poor despite greater social obligations. For one thing, people whose wealth derived from sources other than their own labour could spend their time as they saw fit. They risked more than the poor or middling in terms of social status if they went rogue, but they were unlikely to put themselves into insurmountable financial difficulties as working people would.

The variations in individual flexibility among different social groups are perhaps best demonstrated by individual reactions to the weather. For those who had to work, the

weather had to be truly terrible to justify a day off. Indeed the weather had to be so bad that it prevented work. Job Knight suspended his drafting because of fog for a few days in February 1818.⁵⁶ Fog might also limit nighttime activity—a foggy night reduced moonlight and visibility.⁵⁷ Improvements in street lighting may have made a difference, but even in 1818 Lady Brougham stayed indoors because the fog made driving dangerous.⁵⁸ The increased smoke output of London's rapidly growing population seems to have more than compensated for better lighting technology. Those not gainfully employed were more able to respond to bad weather. Lady Mary Coke was particularly opposed to going out in bad weather and explicitly mentioned occasions when she intended to stay in until evening because of rain, snow, or cold. For Coke and other members of the economic elite staying inside limited the variety of diversions, but did not preclude them. While the cold kept Lady Mary at home, it may have had the opposite effect for others. Knight, for instance, attended lectures and meetings in February and March twice a week. Many of these would have only been available at that time of year, but attending a lecture also meant that he could be active at night without having to light and heat his own rooms. Excessively warm weather could also be a problem for polite society (Catherine Mackintosh complained of the "oppressive heat" that made activity difficult during summertime spells).⁵⁹ But it was not something that allowed working people to put off work.

Similarly, greater individual discretion was offered to propertied society when it came to enjoying breaks for holidays and personal events. Merchants deviated in this regard (several were to be found at work most days in the Christmas-New Year period). If Voth is correct and holidays became fewer for workers, then propertied society further diverges from the popular experience by maintaining flexible schedules. The gentry and some professionals and merchants indulged in long holidays in the country during the summer and autumn. The tendency of theatres to schedule performances that targeted working audiences for Lord Mayor's Day, George III's birthday, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide suggests that some variations from usual time-use patterns did occur for

⁵⁶ Job Knight, 'Diary', 6 February 1818.

⁵⁷ A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: A History of Nighttime* (London, 2005), 131.

⁵⁸ Brougham, 'Diary', 22-4 December 1818.

⁵⁹ Mackintosh, 'Diary', 16.

working people.⁶⁰ The plays varied partly because more plebs had time off and partly because the gentry and nobility were likely to be out of town at Lord Mayor's Day, Christmas, and Easter. The common gift to servants of a Christmas box added to the festivity as servants found themselves with extra money to spend.

Work and business pervaded the lives of people at all levels of London society and obligations further occupied people's attention. Yet we can see differences in how people approached recreation based on socioeconomic status, gender, and profession because each group had different business burdens and unpaid obligations. The breakdown of available time helps to organise Londoners based on their access to leisure and approaches to recreation. As we can see, it was not all fun and games for the nobility, but their discretion over time-use altered the way they approached their days. At the same time we must not see people who worked for a living as one-dimensional. As work mixed with play, play might creep into work as well.

⁶⁰ Voth, *Time and Work*, 100-5, *The London Stage, 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces, Together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment* (Carbondale, 1960), passim. Hughes, *Drama's Patrons*, 159-60.

5. By carriage, sedan chair, and foot: traversing the recreational metropoliss

In Volume II of Frances Burney's novel *Evelina*, Evelina Anville is forced to spend a period living in Holborn and passing time with her shop-keeping cousins the Branghtons. Burney presents the Branghtons as painfully unsophisticated: they are loud, argumentative, and gauche. Worst of all, they are unsophisticated in their choices of recreations. In letter XIII, Evelina sits with her cousins, Polly and Tom; Mr. Branghton, their father; and their lodger, Mr. Smith as they try to select a place to go for the evening. Tom Branghton suggests New Georgia in Hampstead and the Tower of London; Mr. Smith recommends Don Saltero's in Chelsea, Samuel Foote's theatre in the Haymarket, and the pleasure gardens at Marybone and Vauxhall; Mr. Branghton broaches Sadler's Wells.¹ Yet Evelina knows of none of these places, much to the surprise and horror of her relations. It is as if Evelina had been living in a different world during her previous stay in London with the polite Mirvans. Burney exaggerated Evelina's innocence, both to emphasize her delicacy (Foote's unsentimental comedy would have appalled the tediously delicate young lady) and to hammer home her unfamiliarity with metropolitan life, but the stark divide between the amusements of the City resident and the fashionable person in the West End was a common trope in eighteenth-century writings.

Both elite and middle could demonstrate a lack of awareness of how other people lived. In Volume I the recreational division between the City shopkeeper and the West End gentry finds expression at the opera where Mr. Branghton is shocked by the price of seats and can find no attraction in the Italian music on offer. This contrasts sharply with Evelina's experiences of the opera with the Mirvans; she had been raised with an awareness of how to behave and to appreciate the delicacy of the performance and the virtuosity of the musicians.² The excursions Evelina and the Branghtons take reinforce the difference between the two ends of town. Besides heading to different venues from the Mirvans, the Branghtons rely on hackney coaches and their own feet to get around London. The Mirvans, Lord Orville, and Sir Clement Willoughby, all of whom operate

¹ Fanny Burney, *Evelina, or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, eds Edward Bloom and Vivien Jones (Oxford, 2002), 188-9.

² *Ibid.*, 89-96.

in fashionable circles, navigate the metropolis in their own private vehicles, either sedan chairs, carriages, or chariots. Yet as the list of destinations reviewed above shows, the Branghtons commonly traveled just as far as the Mirvans in search of recreation. This chapter looks at the ways choices reflect the limitations of space, distance, and transportation in London. Historians have pointed to differences between the court and the City ends of town, but have not looked in detail at how mental and physical factors constrained people's movements.

The layout of London and the location of venues within it is important for understanding diarists' movements. In the eighteenth century as today, to refer to the capital of England as 'London' is synecdoche.³ As John Noorthouck described it in his *A New History of London*, published in 1773, London encompassed two cities (London and Westminster), one Borough (Southwark) and forty-six villages.⁴ The diarists who have been included in this study lived within commuting distance of the metropolis, i.e. they are people who regularly spent the day in the central built-up areas and could return home in the evening. This naturally includes residents of the City, Westminster, and the adjacent built up areas, but it also encompasses residents of semi-rural villages and hamlets that were physically separated from town but could be reached within about an hour's journey. Examples of these sorts of locales include Peckham and Camberwell in the south, Mile End and Bow to the east, Highgate and Hampstead to the north, and areas such as Paddington or what is now Notting Hill in the west. Throughout almost the entire period, a journey to these places would have involved passing through open fields, but they were not so remote as to make going to town for business or pleasure and returning home in the evening too difficult to do regularly. Several of the merchants had retreats just outside of London where they might spend their evenings or weekends. I have included them in the discussion, but second homes are not included on Figure 2. Also included are some people who may have felt they lived outside London but who engaged with it frequently. In her diary Lady Brougham mentions people going "to Town",

³For instance Peter Borsay, 'London, 1660-1800: A Distinctive Culture?', in Peter Clark and Raymond Gillespie (eds.), *Two Capitals: London and Dublin 1500-1840* (Oxford & London, 2001).

⁴ John Noorthouck, 'Book 2, Ch. 1: Situation and General View of London', *A New History of London: Including Westminster and Southwark* (1773).

demonstrating that she considered her residence at Wimbledon to be separate from town.⁵ Similarly Lady Mary Coke refers to her residence at Notting Hill as a “Country House”.⁶ Notting Hill was certainly not an urban area, but Lady Mary was still able to nip to town and back for a visit or a routine trip to the opera.

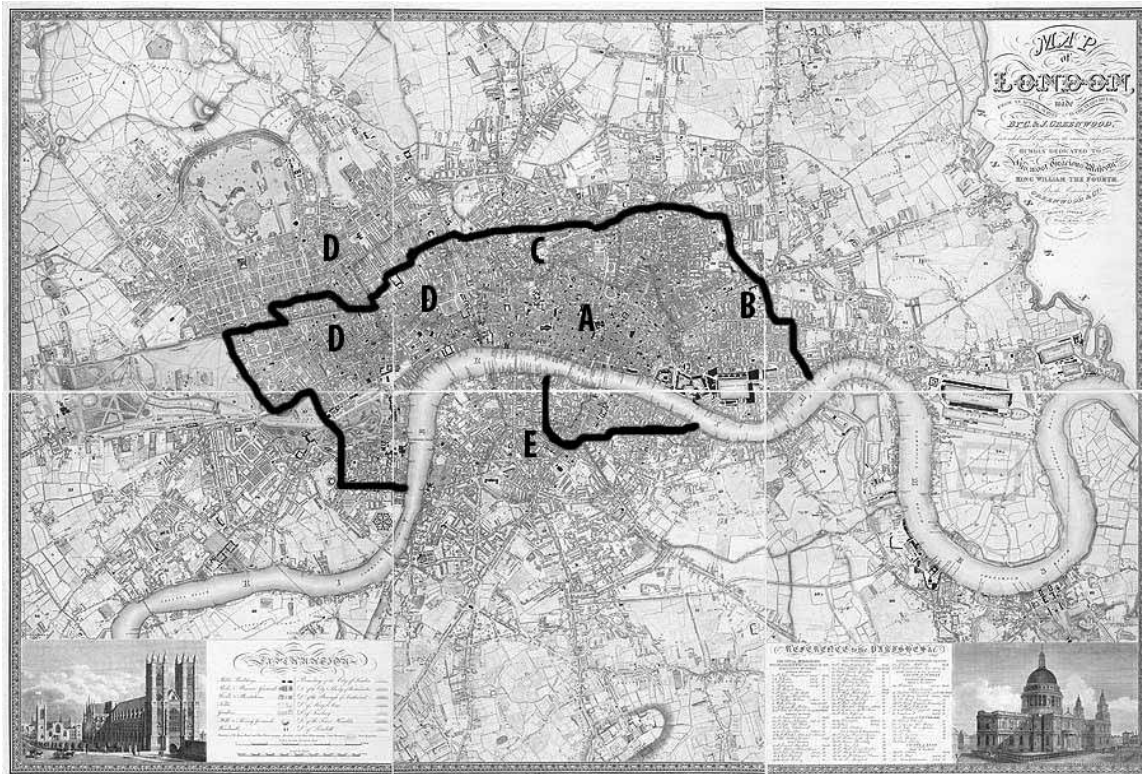


Figure 1 The growth of London. The black line on this map from 1830 represents the extent of the metropolis c.1760.

Figure 1 shows the growth in the geographical area covered by London between 1760 and 1820. Leonard Schwarz has revealed much about the overall demographic make-up of the metropolis through detailed examination of tax assessments. The gentry, nobility and elite merchants made up approximately 3% of Londoners while the middling classes encompassed 16-21% of the population according to Schwarz’s analysis based on the window tax returns.⁷ Schwarz has demonstrated that areas with very high levels of people in high or low tax brackets tended to have low levels of the inverse, but the proportion of untaxed houses remained steady, suggesting that while some areas had a

⁵ Brougham, 'Diary'.

⁶ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, II:36.

⁷ Leonard Schwarz, 'Income Distribution and Social Structure in London in the Late Eighteenth Century', *EHR*, 2nd ser., 32/2 (1979), 255-6.

larger labouring population than others, the bottom 25% of the population were evenly distributed across the metropolis.⁸ Similarly, the middling sort could be found throughout.⁹ The distribution of wealth became more uneven over the course of the nineteenth century. David Green has found evidence for a shift occurring between 1840 and 1870 from an belt of poverty around the outer edge of the City to a split between wealthier parishes in the west end and poorer parishes east of the City.¹⁰

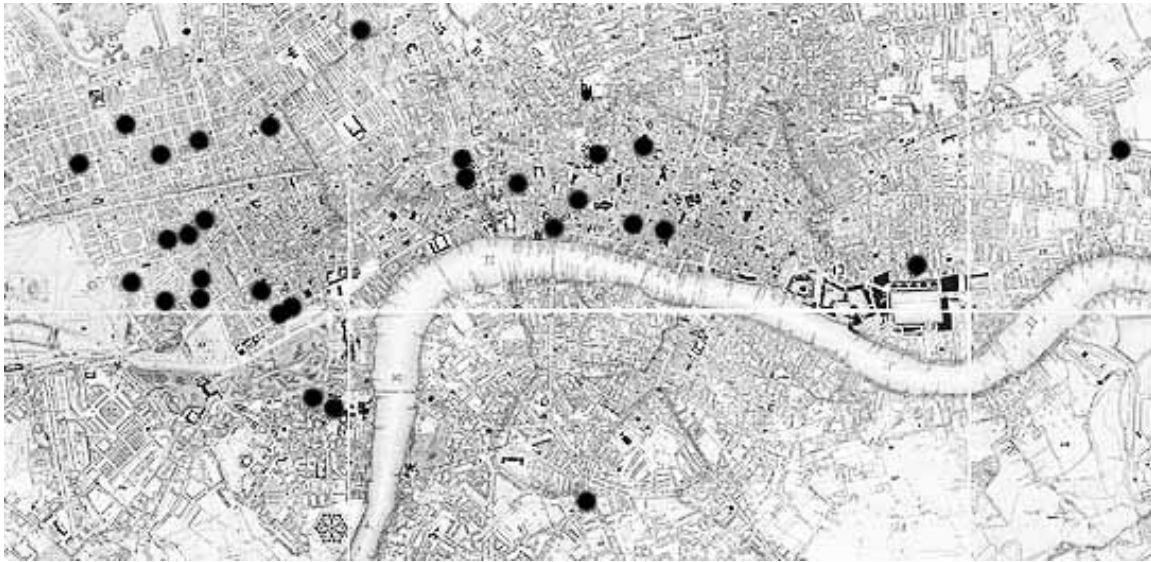


Figure 2: Diarists' residences. This map includes only one residence for each diarist.

The City of London, just slightly larger than the original Roman city, was made up of twenty-six wards, mostly lying within the (largely dismantled) city walls (area A on Figure 1). Well before 1760 the jurisdictional boundaries had ceased to reflect the extent of building around the City. Houses surrounded the City on all sides. The east-central districts of the City contained wealthy merchants with large houses set in courts behind the main thoroughfares, but it also contained narrow alleyways that housed the poor and disadvantaged.¹¹ John Eliot and his grandfather both lived in Bartholomew Close, an area not known for affluence. Other diarists were sprinkled through the City. Stephen Montage resided in a modest house in Cripplegate and Samuel Curwen lodged in Castle

⁸ Leonard Schwarz, 'Social Class and Social Geography: The Middle Classes in London at the End of the Eighteenth Century', *SH*, 7 (1982), 170-1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 172-4.

¹⁰ Green, *From Artisans to Paupers*, 196.

¹¹ A pre-fire assessment based on the hearth tax has linked the wealth of households to the size of the street they lived in. See Michael Power, 'The Social Topography of Restoration London', in A.L. Beier and R.A.P. Finlay (eds.), *London, 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London, 1986).

Street, Falcon Square and Furnival's Inn, Holborn. These were respectable areas, but neither affluent nor poor. Job Knight's lodgings in Ave Maria Lane, just west of St. Paul's, reminds us that moderately priced lodgings could be found in expensive areas of the City. Thomas Bridge's house in Bread Street and the Tyrrell's home on Queen Street, Cheapside were in relatively expensive districts and reflect their economic and, at least in the case of the Tyrrells, social importance.

Along the northern bank of the Thames to the east of the City were former villages that were gradually overrun over the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries as they were developed as retreats for City merchants, as new areas of industry, and as residential areas for maritime trades (area B on Figure 1). Elijah Goff, a wealthy merchant, resided in St. George-in-the-East, a primarily working-class area. North of the City urban development pushed out from the area around Clerkenwell in the decades after 1760, and filled in the land south of Finsbury Fields by 1820 (area C on Figure 1). One of the most famous developments, Somers Town near the modern King's Cross and St. Pancras stations, was laid out and built in the 1810s. William Godwin lived in Somers Town before and during his marriage to Mary Wollstonecraft.

The West End was not a political entity with fixed boundaries (areas marked D on Figure 1). The areas referred to as the West End lay primarily in the liberties of Westminster: the parishes of St. Martin's in the Fields, St. James's, St. Anne's, St. Paul's Covent Garden, St. Mary's le Strand, St. Clement's Danes, and St. George's Hanover-square.¹² James Boswell (when in Downing Street) and John Wilkes (when in Princes Court) both lived in the city of Westminster in respectable, but not exclusive, areas. Canning was one of many men living in the Inns of Court who were not involved in practicing law.¹³ His residence at Lincoln's Inn was convenient for his favorite cultural activities (the opera and the theatres) and not remote from Parliament. William Burgess's home in Marylebone was rather distant from his workplace in the City, but it provided a refined area of residence for an affluent family. The presence of the royal residences at St. James and, later, Carlton House created a focus for upper-class activities and a desire

¹² John Noorthouck, 'Book 4, Ch. 1: General View of the City of Westminster', *A New History of London* (1773), 695-7.

¹³ Amanda Vickery, 'Home: Behind Closed Doors in Eighteenth-Century England', unpublished book manuscript (2008).

to live in the nearby developments. The Court at St. James's Palace was the site of morning levees during the season when the King welcomed the social elite into his presence. The king's palace became less important as a venue for elite gatherings from the 1780s as the king's mental health declined. The houses of peers and magnates also served as centres of sociability. Lord Spencer's house in St. James Place was one of the noble residences that served as a focus for West End sociability. Other gentry and noble diarists demonstrate the pull of the fashionable streets and squares: Pelham lived on Stretton Street, Lady Mary Coke in Berkeley Square, Frances Boscawen on South Audley Street, and Mary Berry on North Audley Street.

Land south of the Thames in Surrey developed rapidly in the early nineteenth century as buildings covered St. George's Fields following the opening of Blackfriars (1769) and then Waterloo (1817) Bridges (area E in Figure 1). Further south, Camberwell, Peckham, and Newington Butts were popular locations for City merchants' semi-rural retreats and also contained substantial homes for many commuters into the City. Urban expansion gradually filled in the roads to these former villages. Jacob Hagen commuted each morning from Peckham to his warehouse in Mill Street on Jacob's Island in Southwark before proceeding into the City. In 1760 the village of Clapham was also an important area for affluent families and became particularly famous for the vocal Evangelical Christians, such as diarist John Thornton, who resided there. Further southwest were the villages of Wimbledon and Kew, within easy reach of the metropolis, which nevertheless remained distinct from London throughout the period. Mary Anne Eden grew up at Wimbledon and continued to live there intermittently with her father until her marriage to Lord Brougham. The Tyrrells' country house at Kew provided them with a nearby country residence, which also possessed social cachet through its proximity to the royal palace. Further east along the river were Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, and Deptford. These were districts of modest wealth with inhabitants dependent upon shipping and shipbuilding for their livelihoods, including labourers, their bosses, and people, like Charles Smith, connected with the fiscal-military state.

London boasted a greater variety of commercial leisure spaces than anywhere else in England. Broadly, recreational venues can be divided into six categories: theatres and opera houses; pleasure gardens and related spaces; exhibitions and museums; parks and

gardens; churches; and public eating and drinking establishments. Activities within these categories certainly overlapped; some types of performances in theatres, for instance, could also be found in pleasure gardens, and the displays at museums might have analogues in coffee houses or taverns.

Perhaps the most famous of London's attractions, at least when judged by the sheer number of appearances in printed media, were the theatres and opera. Throughout this period London was home to two theatres protected by royal patents: Covent Garden and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.¹⁴ These two theatres operated during the autumn, winter, and spring, and held a monopoly on spoken drama.¹⁵ The dominance of Drury Lane and Covent Garden was increasingly challenged through the period by a collection of "minor" theatres.¹⁶ The minor theatres initially sought to circumvent the royal patent by performing genres not protected by the royal patents.¹⁷ Astley's, for instance, operated primarily as an exhibition of equestrian talent and the minor theatres south of the river relied on song and non-spoken performances to violate the spirit if not the letter of the patent. The Little Theatre in the Haymarket was licensed to perform during the summer when the patent theatres were closed. Opera was less widely available in London at this time (it was only performed in the Opera House and, briefly, at the Pantheon) and possessed a limited clientele, primarily from among the social elite, in part because it was considerably more expensive than the theatres.¹⁸

¹⁴ Hughes, *Drama's Patrons*, Marc Baer, *Theatre and Disorder in Late Georgian London* (Oxford, 1992), Ian Woodfield, *Opera and Drama in Eighteenth-Century London: The King's Theatre, Garrick, and the Business of Performance* (Cambridge, 2001), Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880* (Iowa City, 2001). *London Stage*.

¹⁵ Vincent Liesenfeld, *The Licensing Act of 1737* (Madison, 1984). Harry Pedicord, "By Their Majesties' Command": *The House of Hanover at the London Theatres, 1714-1800* (London, 1991).

¹⁶ Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), Worrall, *Theatrical Revolution*, Marius Kwint, 'Astley's Amphitheatre and the Early Circus in England, 1768-1830' (University of Oxford DPhil Thesis 1994).

¹⁷ "Minor" theatres were licensed by the Middlesex or Surrey magistrates under a law of 1752. They were not permitted to perform spoken-word plays and were not impacted by the 1788 Theatrical Representations Act (allowing provincial justices of the peace to licence performances of material that had previously been performed in Drury Lane or Covent Garden or which had been approved by the lord chamberlain), because the 1788 Act did not allow licences to be granted for performances within twenty miles of London. Jean Baker, 'The Proclamation Society, William Mainwaring and the Theatrical Representations Act of 1788', *HR*, 76/193 (2003), 362-3. Marius Kwint found that after 1789 the Surrey bench lost interest in prosecuting theatres. Kwint, "Astley's Amphitheatre", 149.

¹⁸ Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*, Frederick Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800* (Ann Arbor, 1980), Judith Milhous, Robert Hume, and Curtis Price, *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London. Volume 1, the King's Theatre, Haymarket, 1778-1791* (Oxford, 1995), Judith Milhous, Gabriella

Historians have recently acquired a better understanding of concert life in London in the Georgian period.¹⁹ McVeigh provides an account of upper-class venues that hosted elite concert series in contrast with a variety of humbler venues catering to larger audiences with slightly different musical tastes. The west end was equipped with a few custom-built concert spaces (e.g. in Hanover Square, at Madame Cornelys' on Soho Square, and at the Pantheon). Meanwhile City types attended well-organised concert series in Freemason's Hall and the Crown and Anchor, as well as smaller gatherings in purpose-built rooms or in taverns and coffeehouses.

London was well equipped with a distinctive category of venues that was imitated around England and Europe: the pleasure garden.²⁰ At the top of the pile in terms of exclusiveness was Ranelagh, a spot that was regularly visited during the late spring by the socially elite until its closure late in the century. Two other big-name gardens; Marybone, which ceased to exist in the 1770s, and Vauxhall (the original of the type), which attracted a changing clientele with innovative exhibitions, were slightly broader in their social catchment areas.²¹ The pleasure gardens most commonly associated with eighteenth-century recreation lay upstream of London and Westminster on the Thames, south and west of the major conurbation. Pleasure gardens combined crowds, food, music, and visual entertainments such as sculpture, painting, architecture, dance, acrobats, and pyrotechnics to offer patrons a variety of entertainment options.

Complementing the pleasure gardens, which were separated from the metropolis by open fields, was the Pantheon located on Oxford Street near the northern edge of the capital's fashionable West End. Initially intended as a "winter Ranelagh", from the 1770s

Dideriksen, and Robert Hume, *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth Century London. Vol. 2, the Pantheon Opera and Its Aftermath 1789-1795* (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁹ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, Simon McVeigh, 'The Professional Concert and Rival Subscription Series in London, 1783-1793', *Research Chronicle, Royal Musical Association*, 22 (1989), 1-135, Rachel Cowgill, "'Wise Men from the East": Mozart's Operas and Their Advocates in Early Nineteenth Century London', in Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (eds.), *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich* (Oxford, 2000), Robert Elkin, *The Old Concert Rooms of London* (London, 1955), Michael Tilmouth, 'Some Early London Concerts and Music Clubs, 1670-1720', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 84 (1957-8), 13-26.

²⁰ Jonathan Conlin, 'Vauxhall on the Boulevard', *UH*, (2008), 24-48.

²¹ Mollie Sands, *The Eighteenth-Century Pleasure Gardens of Marylebone 1737-1777* (London, 1987), Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780*, Jonathan Conlin, 'Vauxhall Revisited: The Afterlife of a London Pleasure Garden, 1770-1859', *JBS*, 45/4 (2006), 718-43, Warwick Wroth and Arthur Wroth, *The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1979), P. J. Corfield, *Vauxhall and the Invention of the Urban Pleasure Gardens* (London, 2008).

to the 1790s the Pantheon served a succession of functions including assembly room, concert hall and theatre.²²

Though not generally discussed in the same breath as pleasure gardens, several semi-rural pubs and tea gardens dotted around London offered similar amenities to humbler crowds. Generally people attended these venues during the day, rather than at night as was the case with Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and Marybone. The entertainments were also less elaborate, generally focusing on eating and drinking, socializing, and games such as lawn bowling. They were widely distributed. Some of the most famous were located near modern King's Cross (Bagnigge Wells and White Conduit House) and in St. George's Fields (the Dog and Duck). A pattern of traveling further out of town for daytrips or short excursions is also discernable, with many travel guides discussing the attractions of Islington, Hampstead, and Chelsea in the near vicinity and Richmond and Hampton Court further away, though they give no attention to the means of getting out of the city either through directions or information about stables and stages.²³ Metropolitan expansion forced some institutions closest to the edge of town, particularly the Dog and Duck, out of business in the first decades of the nineteenth century, but others, such as Bagnigge Wells, survived until at least the late 1820s.²⁴

London's "shows" have been well described by Richard Altick, whose enormous work provides a catalog of the vast variety of attractions available in London at the time.²⁵ London's exhibitions and shows took a variety of forms. Mrs. Salmon operated a noted museum of wax figures on Fleet Street. More up-market artistic endeavors included the annual Royal Academy exhibitions at Somerset House for a month each spring from 1780 and lesser, but permanent, art galleries including the British Gallery

²² Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, chapter 5, 'The Pantheon', in F. H. W. Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London: volumes 31 and 32: St James Westminster, Part 2* (1963), 268-83.

²³ Elizabeth McKellar, 'Peripheral Visions: Alternative Aspects and Rural Presences in Mid-Eighteenth Century London', in Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Metropolis and Its Image: Constructing Identities for London, C.1750-1950* (Oxford, 1999). Though see also Roy Porter, 'Enlightenment London and Urbanity', in T. D. Hemming, Edward Freeman, and David Meakin (eds.), *The Secular City: Studies in the Enlightenment* (Exeter, 1994), 30. John Trusler, *The London Adviser and Guide Containing Every Instruction and Information Useful and Necessary to Persons Living in London, and Coming to Reside There* (London, 1786), 166-7.

²⁴ John Feltham, *The Original Picture of London, Enlarged and Improved*, ed. J. Britton (London, 1826), 362-3.

²⁵ Altick, *Shows of London*.

and the Shakespeare Gallery.²⁶ A variety of museums of artifacts and curiosities also existed, including Lever's Museum in Leicester Square or the British Museum at Montagu House.²⁷ These were the most long-lived and socially important of the museum genre; a variety of smaller collections were also exhibited for shorter periods of time.²⁸ Particularly in the early nineteenth century, a succession of panoramas attracted crowds to see views of urban and natural landscapes that changed annually, part of a longstanding interest in visual representations of foreign lands. The interest in curiosities was further supplied by collections of curiosities in coffeehouses. Most notable in this respect was Don Saltero's in Chelsea where patrons were able to browse an eccentric collection of artifacts, taxidermy, and fakes of all sorts.²⁹ Collections of live animals were also popular. Famous menageries were located in the Tower and the Exeter Change on the Strand.³⁰ The Exeter Exchange resembled a permanent mini-fair by the 1770s as diverse animals, toyshops, and even Charles Didbin's puppet theatre came together under one roof.

Multipurpose venues for lectures and gatherings were dotted around the town, though they were most highly concentrated in the centre of the City and in the Liberties of Westminster. Livery company halls served as spaces for lectures and performances in the City. The livery companies have been most examined as spaces for debating societies and concerts.³¹ Other multipurpose spaces offered opportunities for public lectures, debates, and improving sociability. After the decline of Madame Cornelys'

²⁶ Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford, 2003), Rosie Dias, 'a World of Pictures': Pall Mall and the Topography of Display', in Miles Ogborn and Charles Withers (eds.), *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2004).

²⁷ David Mackenzie Sir Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London, 2002), Marjorie Caygill, 'From Private Collection to Public Museum: The Sloane Collection at Chelsea and the British Museum in Montagu House', in R. G. W. Anderson et al. (eds.), *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2003), Derek Cash, 'Access to Museum Culture: The British Museum from 1753 to 1836' (University of Oxford DPhil thesis, 1994), Anne Goldgar, 'The British Museum and the Virtual Representation of Culture in the Eighteenth Century', *Albion*, 32/2 (2000), 195-231.

²⁸ Marcia Pointon, 'Dealer in Magic: James Cox's Jewelry Museum and the Economics of Luxurious Spectacle in Late-Eighteenth-Century London', *History of Political Economy*, 31 (suppl.) (1999), 423-51, Feltham, *Original Picture*, 329-34.

²⁹ Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven & London, 2005), 121-5.

³⁰ Daniel Hahn, *The Tower Menagerie: Being the Amazing True Story of the Royal Collection of Wild and Ferocious Beasts* (London, 2003).

³¹ Donna Andrew, *London Debating Societies, 1776-1799* (London, 1994).

establishment, an educational Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres occupied Carlisle House.³² Scientific lectures, public, exhibitions, and circulating libraries were located primarily around St. Paul's and along the Strand, though areas around Pall Mall and Oxford Street saw an expansion in institutions for learning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.³³ The expansion of improving institutions in the west end was not paralleled by similar developments north, south, and east of the City.

London provided for people interested in churchgoing through its architecturally fantastic churches as well as its famous preachers. Venerable churches such as St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey were predictably popular, as were other historic churches designed by Wren and his successors. The Magdalen Hospital was reputed for its music and for the sentimental sermons of the famous William Dodd. It was popular in polite society for several decades. Dissenting meeting houses drew in a loyal niche clientele too. While the most popular Anglican clergy preached in the rich churches in the heart of the City and Westminster, dissenting churches were more common in areas built in the eighteenth century and in the former villages on the outskirts.³⁴

Less widely distributed than churches and chapels, but equally open to a wide variety of people because they were free, public parks and gardens provided spaces for all sorts of Londoners to walk in good weather. St. James's, Green, and Hyde Parks on the western edge of town were perhaps the most famous, but Charter House, Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, and Inner and Outer Temple all had gardens laid out with walks where people might perambulate. Further afield there were parks for people with the time and means to get away from town at Greenwich, Kensington, and Richmond, as well as the Physick gardens at Chelsea. Between 1760 and 1820 many of the fields on the edges of town were built over, depriving people of space to walk and increasing the importance of the parks.

Finally, London had a vast array of coffeehouses, taverns, and eating spaces.³⁵ Though these would almost certainly have been renowned at the time, only a handful have retained their fame and those that are recognizable probably have James Boswell to

³² 'Soho Square Area: Portland Estate: Carlisle House, Soho Square', in F. H. W. Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London: volumes 33 and 34: St Anne Soho* (1966), 73-9.

³³ Feltham, *Original Picture*, 283-342.

³⁴ John Feltham, *The Picture of London, for 1802* (London, 1802).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

blame. As venues they blended business and pleasure and served as a focus for urban recreation and sociability. Though they had diversified over the previous century to serve a collection of hot drinks and novel alcohols, these establishments retained their important role in London social life.³⁶

Perhaps because it was incomparable, London has not received the same degree of attention to structure, organization, and use that scholars have paid to provincial towns in recent years.³⁷ Spurred on by Peter Borsay's analysis of the *English Urban Renaissance*, historians have examined the types of towns that developed in the provinces and the ways those towns interacted.³⁸ Jon Stobart, Andrew Hahn, and Victoria Morgan demonstrated how regional hierarchies were constantly shifting and were perceived differently from person to person.³⁹ Some commodities were worth traveling for, others attracted less energy. In the same volume Stobart, et al. suggest that not only did people operate within a regional system, but towns had internal hierarchies as well. In the context of provincial towns, particular streets or blocks became associated with fashionable shopping and pastimes; amenities were not spread evenly throughout most towns.

London, obviously, provides a different case. Unlike a provincial town, which might be viewed as part of a regional or national system, London has been looked on as a system in itself. London has been characterised as a 'multi-centred metropolis' where administrative structures created fragmented identities and internal variations.⁴⁰ Some amenities have been viewed as catering to localized demand. David Worrall has argued that multiple foci existed for theatres that were dispersed around the metropolis to cater to

³⁶ Markman Ellis, *The Coffee-House: A Cultural History* (London, 2004), Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London, 1983), Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses: A Reference Book of Coffee Houses of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1963).

³⁷ Though see Hugh Phillips, *Mid-Georgian London: A Topographical and Social Survey of Central and Western London About 1750* (London, 1964).

³⁸ Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), Peter Borsay and Angus McInnes, 'The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Or an Urban Renaissance?', *P&P*, 126 (1990), 189-202, Angus McInnes, 'The Emergence of a Leisure Town: Shrewsbury, 1660-1760', *P&P*, 120 (1988), 53-87, Schwarz and Stobart, 'Leisure, Luxury and Urban Specialization', Stobart, 'Leisure and Shopping'.

³⁹ Stobart, Hann, and Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption*.

⁴⁰ Clark, 'The Multi-Centred Metropolis', 252-6, Joanna Innes, 'Managing the Metropolis: London's Social Problems and Their Control, C.1660-1830', in *Two Capitals: London and Dublin 1500-1840*, 64-7.

different hinterlands.⁴¹ From the 1790s theatres were more widely distributed around the metropolis, but, apart from the Royalty Theatre situated in the East End, minor theatres grouped along the Strand or just south of the river. Their geographical spread increased, but most theatres remained close to the patent theatres at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Other historians have questioned the timing and extent of sub-metropolitan differentiation.⁴²

One assumption behind historians' conceptualization of London as a multi-centred metropolis is that amenities had to be distributed across the metropolis due to the difficulties engendered by the size of the capital and the absence of efficient transport. As London grew it developed distinctive local cultures engendered by distance and difficult transport. However work done by Robert Shoemaker raises questions about the extent to which people were limited in their ability to move around the metropolis. Using court depositions to examine where people could be found with relation to their homes, Shoemaker has argued that Londoners were highly mobile in the century following the Restoration and that women may have been more likely to move across the metropolis than men.⁴³ Shoemaker's argument disputes historians' assumption that Londoners were limited in where they went by the absence of transportation options for the labouring poor or that women remained close to home.

Just as Shoemaker turned his attention from looking at the nature of neighbourhoods and the sorts of opportunities they provided to the places where people actually went, sociologists have shifted the focus of studies of urban life from supply-side studies to 'cognitive behavioural' approaches. By looking at individual itineraries around cities, sociologists have created a picture of metropolitan living that emphasizes the differential use of urban space depending on socioeconomic status. Studies of urban living have argued that in the last fifty years socially elite urban dwellers have used large areas, but most other residents use only small areas of the metropolis.⁴⁴ At all

⁴¹ Worrall, *Theatric Revolution*, 57, 220-2.

⁴² Clark, 'The Multi-Centred Metropolis', 250.

⁴³ Robert Shoemaker, 'Gendered Spaces: Patterns of Mobility and Perceptions of London's Geography, 1660-1750', in Julia Merritt (ed.), *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720* (Cambridge, 2001), Susan Whyman, 'Sharing Public Spaces', in Clare Brant and Susan Whyman (eds.), *Walking the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London: John Gay's Trivia (1716)* (Oxford, 2007).

⁴⁴ Brian Berry, *Comparative Urbanisation: Divergent Paths in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1981), 32-2,

socioeconomic levels, people develop mental maps of their neighbourhoods using socioeconomic status, geography, and ethnicity to mark out boundaries.⁴⁵ The process by which people create a “face block” built around familiarity with a group of local people results in boundaries of communities within cities may not be obvious to the outsider. Mental maps give people a sense of where they ought to go and where they are unsafe or unwelcome. Closer attention to patterns of use and movement in the past and an examination of individuals’ comments on landmarks and boundaries are essential for understanding boundaries within town that are not marked out by geographical features or jurisdictional boundaries.

To understand how mental maps were constituted and the effects they might have had on people in the past it is necessary to look beyond accounts of the manners of London present in guidebooks and descriptions. Shoemaker provides evidence of people’s movements, but court records cannot give us a good sense of where individuals went on a daily basis. Analyzing quotidian use of the metropolis remains difficult because source material is not abundant. However a partial picture of the metropolis can be created by tracking the movements recorded in diaries. We can begin to consider personal reactions to the spaces of the metropolis and the significance different areas held at an individual level. We cannot assume that diarists recorded all of their movements or that we can know everything about how they felt about the spaces they used or the methods they used to get there, but diaries provide the best evidence of daily movements over medium to long periods.

Residential location and patterns of movement

The limited evidence historians have gathered about individual itineraries has pointed to people moving widely throughout the metropolis.⁴⁶ Plotting individual itineraries for a number of diarists gives us the opportunity to add nuance to this perspective. I have only plotted diaries in two decades, though I draw on diaries written

Harold Carter, *The Study of Urban Geography* (London, 1981), 116.

⁴⁵ Berry, *Comparative Urbanisation*, 63-4.

⁴⁶ Shoemaker, 'Gendered Spaces', Vanessa Harding, 'City, Capital, and Metropolis: The Changing Shape of Seventeenth-Century London', in *Imagining Early Modern London*, Ian Archer, 'Social Networks in Restoration London: The Evidence of Samuel Pepys's Diary', in Alexandra Shepard and P. J. Withington (eds.), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester & New York, 2000).

in other decades in my discussion. Most diaries are useful for analyzing movement, though some which list only the names of activity partners, for instance, have been excluded. Diaries that do not provide evidence of a multiple types of activities (i.e. visiting AND theatre-going or coffeehouse attendance) have not received systematic attention in this chapter. Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5 present the residences and zones of movement of several Londoners between 1757 and 1767. Here we can see how James Boswell, the Honorable Lady Frances Boscawen, Lady Mary Coke, John Eliot and Stephen Monteaige moved around the metropolis in the month of May. Figure 6 and Figure 7 present the same data for diarists between 1809 and 1818 to allow us to gauge change over time. In Figure 6 and Figure 7 are the destinations of Charles de Coetlogon, Elizabeth Tyrrell, and Job Knight. May was the height of the London season and likely to be a period of good weather, so it was probably the month of the year when people moved most widely. Because each diarist is only allotted one sort of symbol for their destinations, it is not possible to see how different parts of the metropolis provided different activities. The map also obscures some of the density of movement because it is difficult to show both the frequency of visits to particular spots and the variety of spots in a nuanced fashion on the same maps. Nevertheless we are able to see broadly where people went.

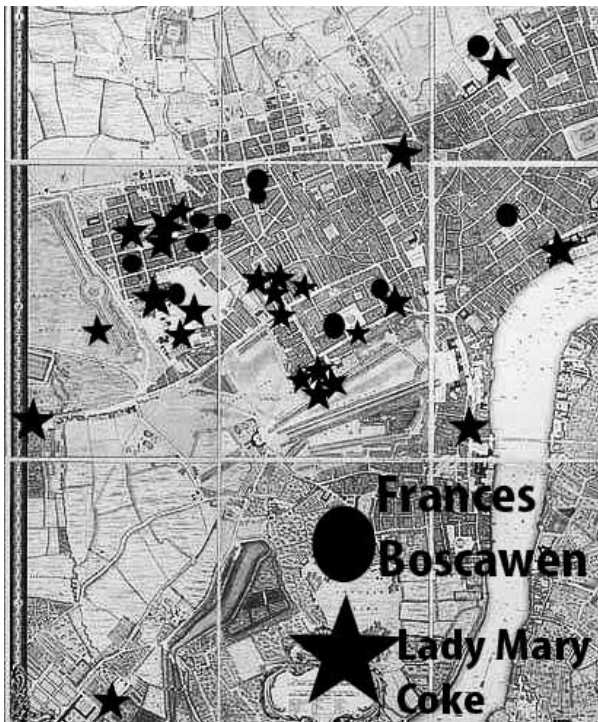


Figure 3: locations visited by Frances Boscawen (May 1763) and Lady Mary Coke (May 1767).

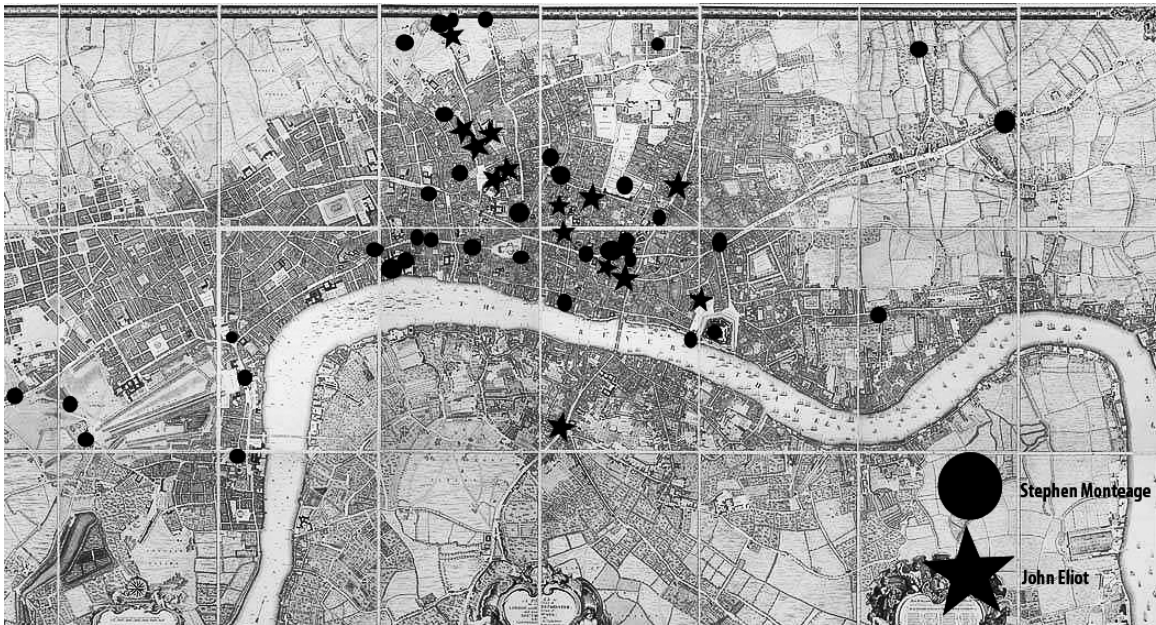


Figure 4 locations visited by John Eliot (May 1757) and Stephen Monteage (May 1763)

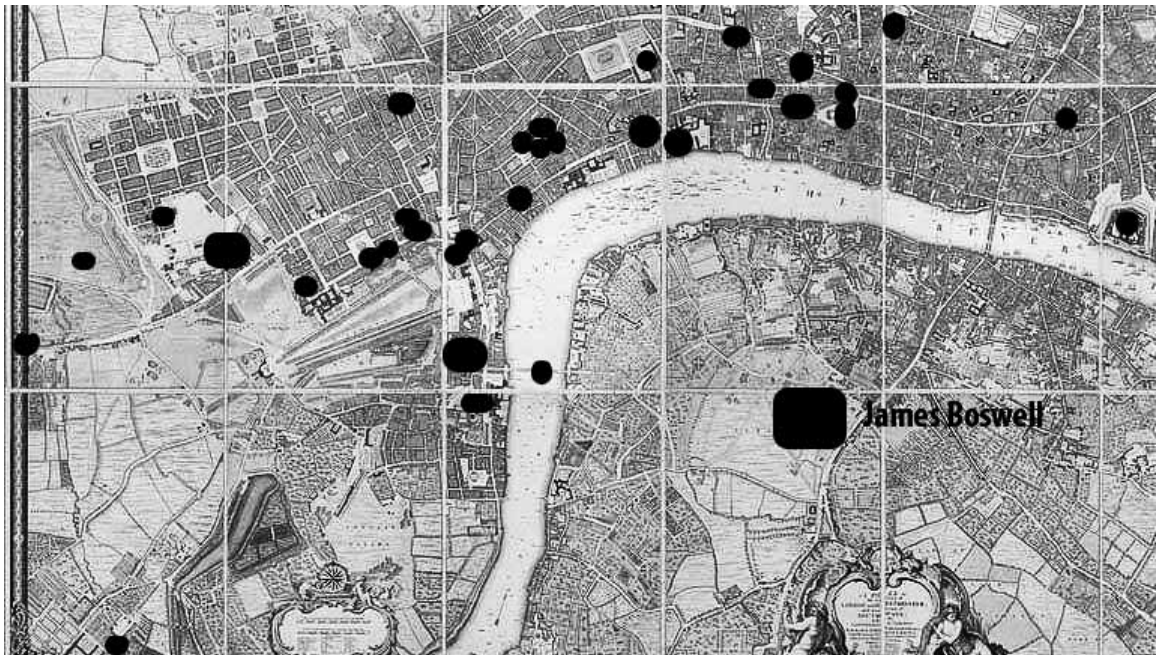


Figure 5 locations visited by James Boswell (May 1763)

Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5 present some suggestive patterns in individual movements. As Figure 3 shows, Lady Mary Coke and Frances Boscawen rarely traveled east of Charing Cross. Coke crossed that boundary for two destinations in May 1767: to go to Norfolk House in Bloomsbury and to go the Somerset house in the Strand.

Boscawen only went east of Charing Cross to visit a theatre in May 1763. Most of their movements were contained between Oxford Street and St. James's Park west of the Haymarket and east of Hyde Park. Coke went to Ranelagh and Kensington Gardens. These boundaries are evident in other months as well. Though both went to the City to buy fabric and garments once or twice a year, they did not make frequent trips east of Covent Garden. A gender contrast emerges when we look at James Boswell who moved much more widely than the gentry women. Unlike the ladies, who mainly remained in the most fashionable neighborhoods of the west end, Boswell went all over, both at this time when he was new to town and in later years when he went deep into the City to visit friends and acquaintances (Figure 5). From his house on Downing Street he went as far west as Kensington and as far east as the Tower. He traveled widely in the City, visiting coffee houses along the Strand and near St. Paul's. Similarly Stephen Montague traveled from his residence near St. Giles Cripplegate on the northern edge of the City to Mile End, Hyde Park Corner, parliament, and Islington (Figure 4). Montague walked extensively and made regular trips to coffeehouses, tea gardens, and pubs outside of the built-up area of the metropolis. When he was in town, however, he stayed mainly within the City. His usual hangouts were pubs and coffeehouses along the Fleet and Cornhill and in St. Paul's Churchyard. The map shows the similarities with John Eliot's movements. John Eliot stayed mainly within the City when he was in town, but when he went out riding he traveled widely, beyond the extent of this map to places like Shooters' Hill in Kent.

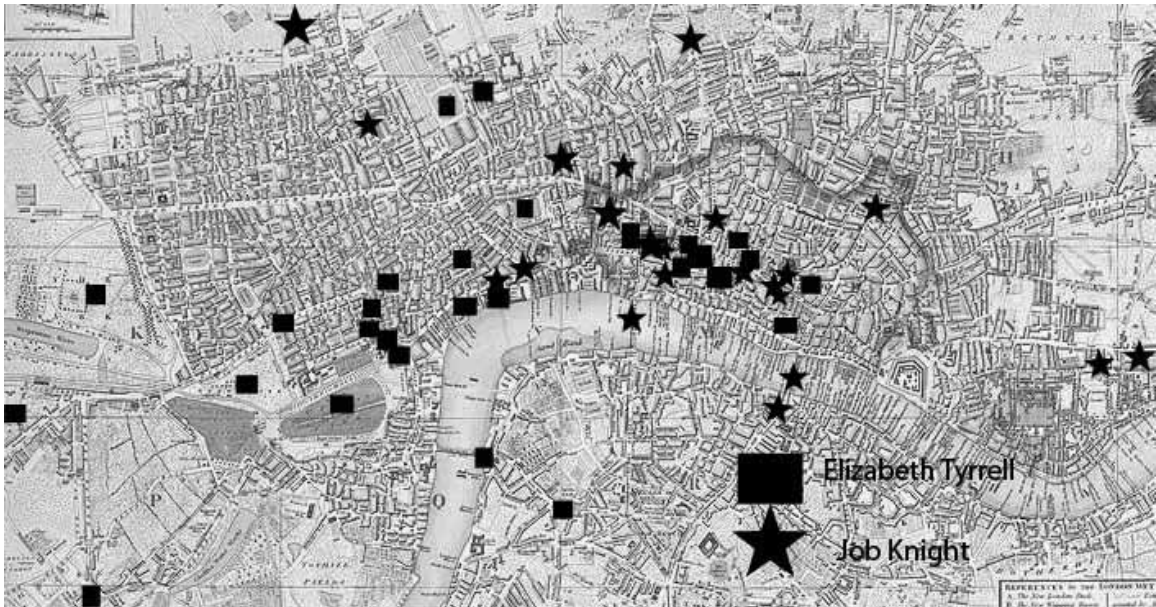


Figure 6 movements of Elizabeth Tyrrell (May 1809) and Job Knight (May 1818)

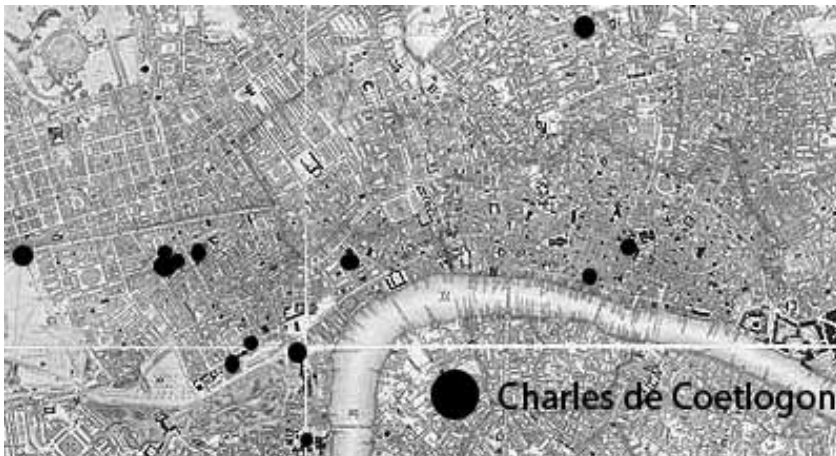


Figure 7 Charles de Coetlogon's movements (May 1817)

The patterns from the 1810s presented in Figure 6 and Figure 7 are less distinctive than the routines from the 1760s. De Coetlogon seems more bound to his half of the city than the other two are to theirs. Knight and Tyrrell move widely from their residences in the City. Like Montague or Eliot, Knight spent most of his time in the City but he often went east to the houses of relatives in Ratcliff. Tyrrell visited people in Westminster and went to commercial attractions and parks on that side of town. Unlike the City residents in the 1760s, she went west more often than she traveled in any other cardinal direction. De Coetlogon is of lower status than the west end residents in the 1760s whose

movements I presented and Knight is of lower status than the City residents I have already presented. Tyrrell's movements may be a feature of her relatively high status among City residents.

In the 1760s individuals tended to operate within one half of town (i.e. the City vs. the Court) though the movements of Montage, Curwen, Knight, and Tyrrell show that crossing between the two was not rare. As Robert Shoemaker also found, people living in the west end generally stayed within the west end of town.⁴⁷ Gentry men went into the City primarily for public eating and drinking. City residents such as Montage, Curwen, Knight, and Tyrrell, on the other hand, moved across the entire metropolis, as did people living in areas outside the City and Westminster. Shoemaker argues that below the level of the gentry women moved more freely than men.⁴⁸ My evidence shows that gentry women were restricted to fairly small areas of the west end. Elizabeth Tyrrell's movements demonstrate that women moved widely, but there is no reason to think that merchants and bureaucrats were more restricted than their wives. The movements of John Eliot and Stephen Montage in Figure 4 and of the later diarists Samuel Curwen and Jacob Hagen (not shown) reveal men traversing large areas of the metropolis. Diaries written by the wives of merchants have not been found, but comments in diaries kept by males suggest that while women did not travel out as often as men for drinking and dining in public spaces, they were often to be found taking rides and meeting brothers and husbands north and south of the built-up area of London.

Comparing Figures 3 to 7, we can see some evidence of a divergence in behaviour patterns. The men on the last map are more contained in their end of town than the men in Figures 4 and 5. Elizabeth Tyrrell goes to more areas of the metropolis than Boscawen or Coke, but her behaviour may relate more to social position as a member of the City's elite than to a widespread change in behaviour. The persistent tendency to move widely despite the growth of the metropolis indicates that people were still able to get around much of town.

⁴⁷ Shoemaker, 'Gendered Spaces', 149-51.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 163.

Transportation and movement

As the wide areas of movement exhibited by merchants, professionals, and the middling sort demonstrate, it was possible to get around all of London. Yet comments in diaries and letters reveal that getting around town was not as straightforward as some individuals' movements would suggest. Distance could limit accessibility. In a letter to William Pulteney, Earl of Bath, Elizabeth Montagu complained that she "slept well after a tiresome evening of visiting as far as Lincoln's Inn fields."⁴⁹ Lincoln's Inn was not a considerable distance from Montagu's house in Hill Street, Westminster. Nonetheless, for people who generally went no further east than the theatres, Lincoln's Inn was a long way. Montagu's complaint suggests that the norms influencing the use of different forms of transport did more to limit someone's engagement with the metropolis than money or the size of the built-up area. The methods of moving around preferred by polite society actually hampered their ability to get around.

In some situations women found that it was the night that caused problems rather than the distance. Mary Berry complained of being unable to see her cousin Robert Fergusson as he awaited his trial for Crim.Con. with Lady Elgin. "The distance...makes all meeting in the evening out of the question."⁵⁰ Walking at night was avoided, not least because it put single females at risk from other people in the streets. The safety and security of carriages encouraged people "to box up" their family in order to avoid the discomforts and dangers encountered in the street.⁵¹ Stuck at a party in April 1808, Berry waited for hours for Lady Rosslyn to carry her home. She finally gave up and was walked home by a Mr. Campbell who was at the party.⁵² Similarly, upon returning late to town from her house near Twickenham with her sister Agnes, she found a doctor waiting to alert them to a friend's illness. Agnes walked with the doctor to the patient, but Mary arranged a coach and servant to fetch her later that evening.⁵³ As these anecdotes suggest, use of transport was highly gendered. Polite women in particular were frequent

⁴⁹ Huntington Library, Montagu papers, Box 49, Elizabeth Montagu, 'Correspondence', MO 4620, 6 January 1764.

⁵⁰ Berry, 'Diary', Add MSS 37732, f. 59.

⁵¹ OBP, Rhynewick, Otherwise Renwick Williams, Breaking the Peace: Assault, 8th July 1790 (t17900708-1).

⁵² Berry, 'Diary', Add MSS 37732, f.107.

⁵³ Ibid. Add MSS 37732, f. 40.

coach and sedan chair users; they walked almost nowhere at night. It seems unlikely that merchants' wives would have walked at night, though systematic evidence to support this remains elusive. Men of polite status often took coaches, but they were free to walk if they needed to. Middling men sometimes took coaches, but generally they walked where they needed to go.

Coaches offered protection from people, the dirty streets, and wet or windy weather, but provided little defense from the cold.⁵⁴ They were also vulnerable to slippery pavements that could cause accidents or injury to the animals.⁵⁵ Jacob Hagen rode in coaches far more frequently during the winter months. Illness also provided a reason to ride in a carriage, thereby avoiding exertion on foot.⁵⁶ Mary Berry wrote in January 1808 that she “was out in the carriage in the morning for the streets are so dirty...that I have not been able to walk this age.”⁵⁷ In order to keep clean pedestrians had to don unglamorous pattens—risers attached to the bottom of shoes to lift them out of the mud. Though they are primarily associated with the labouring sorts, Jane Porter suggested to her daughter Jane that she wear them when she went out into the “filthy” streets.⁵⁸ The streets of the West End could be dirty just as the streets of the City could.

Politeness and the need for fashionable display also encouraged people to employ coaches. Susan Whyman has argued that coaches (pulled by two or four horses, with an enclosed car seating four to six people) were an important accoutrement of politeness.⁵⁹ Arriving at a visit in a coach displayed to hosts that their visitors were wealthy and aware of how to make an entrance. Thomas Bridge's acquisition of a chaise (a two-wheeled

⁵⁴ Huntington Library, Montagu papers, Box 44, Elizabeth Montagu, 'Correspondence', MO 4570, [c. 1762].

⁵⁵ Tracy Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800-1914* (Cambridge, 2000), 204. See also Sally Jeffery, 'Pebbles, Posts and Purbeck Paving: A Study of Early 18th Century Street Paving in London, with a Gazetteer by Robert Crayford', *Transactions, Association for Studies in the Conservation of Historic Buildings*, 13 (1988), 29-36. D. G. Clow, 'From Macadam to Asphalt: The Paving of the Streets of London in the Victorian Era. Part 1: From Macadam to Stone Sett', *London's Industrial Archaeology*, 8 (2004), 5 and 8. Ralph Turvey, 'Road and Bridge Tolls in Nineteenth-Century London', *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser., 17 (1996), 150-64, Ralph Turvey, 'Street Mud, Dust and Noise', *London Journal*, 21 (1996), 131-48.

⁵⁶ For instance De Coetlogon, 'Diary', 22-4 June 1817.

⁵⁷ Berry, 'Diary', Add MS 37732, f. 73. For similar sentiments see Mary Hamilton Dickenson, *Mary Hamilton, Afterwards Mrs. John Dickenson, at Court and at Home*, eds Elizabeth Anson and Florence Anson (London, 1925), 261.

⁵⁸ Huntington Library, Porter Papers, Box 22, Jane Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 1132.

⁵⁹ Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), chapter 4.

vehicle that was smaller, lighter, and faster than a coach) allowed him to impress his friends when riding out to visit them (at their fashionable suburban villas) in Newington and Islington. Bridge's newfound wealth gave him the chance to make excursions to visit friends outside of the City and to display his vehicle. The costs associated with keeping a horse or a carriage escalated quickly and for the less affluent diarists it would have been impossible to maintain a coach. A vehicle had to be purchased and cost nearly £40 a year for parts and maintenance. John Trusler estimated that owning a horse cost between £28 and £38 a year depending on the quality of care. That was in addition to the cost of the horse itself. Those costs are for a one-horse chaise seating just two. In addition to the cost of the horses, the carriage, and the upkeep, servants and footmen had to be hired.⁶⁰ For a four-horse carriage that accommodated four or more, plus a driver and footmen, the expenses jump to between £140 and £163 per annum. A driver made life easier because the vehicle could be left in his care while the riders enjoyed diversion. Simply having the time and money to go around town in a coach meant a diarist was of substantial means.

For similar reasons, gentry on their way to walk in the park or around shops opted for a carriage to avoid the dirt and traffic and to display their wealth and status on the way to a destination where the street was better set up for walking. Lady Brougham, for instance, drove to the park to take walks.⁶¹ Sarah Elwes' footman described accompanying his mistress on a day out: "[Mrs. Elwes and her female companion] got into their carriage...they ordered the carriage to stop at the top of Bond Street which it did the end next to Oxford Street. They then alighted from the carriage proceeded near Fifty yards down Bond street the left hand side of the way".⁶² Women walked in the areas where they wanted to be seen and to browse the shops, before getting back into the car in order to be carried just a couple minutes walk to their next destination either for comfort or to avoid less desirable areas.

Showing up in a Bentley shows class, and arriving in a Porsche shows flash. Similarly, the coach was a status symbol, but other, newer styles of wheeled vehicle showed off a young man's sense of fashion. A new contraption was something to show

⁶⁰ Trusler, *London Adviser*, 169-72.

⁶¹ For instance Brougham, 'Diary', 13 November 1818.

⁶² Lambeth Palace Library, D 675-6, Court of Arches Court of Canterbury, 'Elwes V. Elwes', ff. 1034-5.

off. Mary Hamilton described a ride with her uncle “to dine with Mrs. Garrick at Hampton, we went in his *traveling* Chaise of wch he shew'd me all ye convenient contrivances.”⁶³ Gigs and curricles, chic around the turn of the century, could be used for speed or to show off wealth. However few people showed off speed in London. Outside of town carriages might have had a speed advantage over walking, but in London narrow streets and difficult pavements made coaches inefficient means of traveling.

Men and women who did not have access to a coach of their own could hire hackney coaches to get around town at night or to avoid walking. Hackneys were generally hired from recognized stands scattered throughout the metropolis and charged standard rates based on distances.⁶⁴ Hacks were apparently widely available in the west end and in the centre of the City, though the absence of stands in less desirable parts of town may indicate that it was a service less available to the poor or people living in less reputable areas. Both men and women of upper and middling status used hackney coaches.⁶⁵ Diarists mention hiring them most often in the west end. Bowles' hackney coach directory for 1786 lists eighty-six stands extending from Ratcliff to Ranelagh and from Islington to Newington Butts.⁶⁶ Taking the occasional hack was much cheaper than owning a coach. Fares began at a shilling for a distance up to a mile and a quarter and rose to 1s6d for two miles, and a further 6d per half mile after that. The household budgets I examine in the next chapter show that spending more than 3s on hackney coaches in a day was unusual.

Sedan chairs were another option. The small size of a sedan chair meant that they were less likely to be impeded by congestion than coaches. Chairs could be carried around tighter spaces and could reverse far more easily than a coach with horses could. They could also be hired like a hackney coach. Fanny Burney commented in 1772 that

⁶³ Dickenson, *Mary Hamilton*, 251.

⁶⁴ Mark Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder: London Streets and Hackney Coaches C.1640 - C.1740', in Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore (eds.), *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (London, 2003). Hackney coaches could also provide time to do things, like read: Pelham, 'Diary', f. 31, 22 Dec 1793.

⁶⁵ It was apparently expected that attorneys would walk between appointments when the weather was fine. A committee of the Law Club was upset with Joseph Day for asking for reimbursement for the cost of riding in a hackney coach in fine weather. Joseph Day, *An Address to the Attorneys at Law and Solicitors Practising in Great Britain and to the Public Upon the Proceedings of a Committee of the London Law Club Relative to a Bill to Be Presented to Parliament for the Incorporation and Better Regulation of the Practitioners* (London, 1796), 182.

⁶⁶ Carington Bowles, *Bowles's New London Guide and Hackney-Coach Directory* (London, 1786).

she rode to the theatre in a chair “so that we got in the instant we arrived, without the least difficulty. The chair, however tiresome & fatiguing, is the only way for going to the theatre....”⁶⁷ For people going places alone, particularly at night, a chair was a suitable way to show up. Not flashy, but perfectly safe, chairs were particularly preferred to coaches at nighttime, though slippery streets could cause chairmen to tumble.⁶⁸ Lady Mary Coke bespoke a plain chair for use at night, in addition to her usual chair.⁶⁹ As well as providing protection from pedestrians and the street, chairs were also reputed to be warmer than coaches and could be carried indoors in truly terrible weather.⁷⁰

Sedan chairs were cheaper and more mobile than coaches, but they would only have been faster in situations when a coach would have been caught in traffic. Improvements to London's pavements and street lighting may have driven the sedan chair out of fashion by making walking or riding in a carriage after dark safer. Declining from the height of popularity in the 1770s, chairs were still available for rent in 1819 when Jane Johnston took one and they continued to appear in the proceedings at the Old Bailey until 1832 (with one appearance of the Eton College sedan chairs as late as the 1860s).⁷¹

The need to keep safe, warm, and fashionable thus limited how easily one could get around London. For people without the need to keep up appearances or the money to attempt to roll around London in style, the metropolis was much easier to navigate. Of course, some people had individual proclivities that altered how they could get around. Being picky about their transportation caused problems. Jane Porter (d. 1831) showed unusually strong antipathy to wheeled transport. In another letter to her daughter she wrote that she had refused a dinner invitation because it would be “too far for me to walk back & I hate dirty coaches.”⁷² Foot travel had a following in the eighteenth century both as a method of transport and as a leisure activity. Walking the city streets was perhaps

⁶⁷ Fanny Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, Lars Troide, Stewart Cooke, and Betty Rizzo (eds.) (Oxford, 1988), 1:225.

⁶⁸ Montagu, 'Correspondence', MO 4570 [c. 1762].

⁶⁹ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, 125.

⁷⁰ Huntington Library, Stowe Collection, STB CI&L Box 1 (21), William Townsend, 'An Inventory of the Household Furniture Belonging to the Right Honbls Lady Elizth Bathurst Deceased at Her Late Dwelling House in Wigmore Street Cavendish Square Taken This 4th Day January 1772', Montagu, 'Correspondence', MO 4570 [c. 1762].

⁷¹ Ralph Straus, *Carriages & Coaches: Their History & Their Evolution* (London, 1912), 86 and 105-6. Johnston, 'Diary'. OBP, William Smith, Killing: Murder, 11th June 1866 (t18660611-534).

⁷² Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 1105.

more dangerous and certainly dirtier than other forms of travel, but it also allowed one to engage with the urban environment in ways that were not otherwise possible.⁷³ James Boswell ‘sauntered’ around town enjoying the metropolis and seeing the sights.⁷⁴ Monteaige and Curwen enjoyed taking walks out of town too, rambling as far as Hampstead, Peckham, Leyton, and Chelsea. Edward Thompson, a naval officer of higher status than Monteaige or Curwen, emphasized the enjoyment derived from the “meditations in [his] walks.”⁷⁵

The eighteenth century is not known as a period of great urban renewal within London, but from 1760 the quality of the streets began to increase as various metropolitan bodies attempted to repave and improve street lighting.⁷⁶ The progress of repaving projects was hampered by the limited jurisdictions of paving associations, many of which only covered a street or two.⁷⁷ Just as modern street improvements and repairs are never-ending, we find continued evidence of dangers and delays.⁷⁸ The streets were never fully laid and lighting continued to be inconsistent or insufficient.

Wheeled transport was so difficult to operate efficiently that the Opera and some other enterprises instructed their audiences how to arrive and depart. In order to ease congestion, the Opera advertised in the press that all patrons should alight from their carriages with their horses facing in the same direction. Everyone was told to order their coachman to pick them up going in the opposite direction at the end of the evening.⁷⁹ Vauxhall’s owners even advertised that patrons could arrive more easily than before when Vauxhall Bridge opened, but how this might have affected customers remains

⁷³ Penelope Corfield, 'Walking the City Streets', *JUH*, 16 (1990), 132-74, Susan Whyman, 'Introduction', in *Walking the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London*, Paul Tankard, 'Johnson and the Walkable City', *Eighteenth-century Life*, 32/1 (2008), 1-22.

⁷⁴ Tankard, 'Johnson and the Walkable City'.

⁷⁵ Thompson, 'Diary', fol. 23a.

⁷⁶ H. J. Dyos and Derek Aldcroft, *British Transport: An Economic Survey from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth* (Leicester, 1969), 60-1. Alison O’Byrne, 'Walking, Rambling, and Promenading in Eighteenth-Century London: A Literary and Cultural History' (University of York Ph.D. Thesis 2003), 8-9. J. M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror* (Oxford, 2001), 207-25, Elaine Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies: The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720-1830* (Basingstoke, 1998).

⁷⁷ Langford, *Public Life*, 454-5, Clow, 'From Macadam', 3-14.

⁷⁸ Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 9/35/73, John Simpson, 'John Simpson to Lord Bruce, 7 September 1773', Burney, *Early Journals and Letters*, I: 239.

⁷⁹ National Archives, Master Richards' Exhibits, C 106/70, Exchequer and Chancery, 'Jackson V Moloway'. See *The Times*, 2 May 1785, CS16908450

unclear.⁸⁰ Women, particularly gentry women, were limited to traveling short distances by the slow speed and difficulty of traveling in coaches or chairs. Therefore it was necessary for venues hoping for their patronage to be relatively close to Westminster. This meant that they were at a greater distance from merchants living at the eastern edge of the city, but this was compensated for by their less frequent visits to the theatres and their willingness to travel on foot.

The distribution of recreational venues

The constraints on movement caused by distance, slow speed, and prejudice against particular areas of town affected where leisure businesses could open up and be profitable. Services were only economically viable when they served a market. In part this meant setting up near a large population, but it also involved choosing a location near the particular group of people who would demand what an entrepreneur intended to provide. As Jon Stobart and Leonard Schwarz have demonstrated, entrepreneurs selling luxury jewelry were unlikely to set up shop in a manufacturing town. Rather, goods and services catering to elite markets tended to clump together in leisure or service towns.⁸¹ Georgian London, of course, was not just one type of city. It was a centre for business, trade, production, and government. The different specialties overlapped and social segregation was only partial, yet among propertied society different lifestyles made different services more or less important. Like other types of centres, leisure facilities were distributed according to where they were most likely to be used.

The most frequent destinations for recreation were private houses. Individuals considered where their companions lived when selecting a home. People lived close to—but rarely on the same street as—the people they visited. For diarists the neighbourhood was less important or far more extensive than it was for the labouring poor.⁸² Gentry made the location of their residence a higher priority than merchants did, and were therefore able to minimize the need to travel for visiting. The high concentration of the

⁸⁰ Lambeth Archives, IV/162/2/2, 'Vauxhall Cuttings', n.p. advertisement in the *Courier*, 21 August 1816.

⁸¹ Schwarz and Stobart, 'Leisure, Luxury and Urban Specialization'.

⁸² Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987).

gentry in one part of London where leisure facilities were near to them contributed to their limited travel around the metropolis as a whole.

Pubs, taverns, and eating houses were located in particular areas in order to serve a market. Figure 8 shows that the distribution of eating and drinking establishments used by diarists was surprisingly limited. Most eating and drinking spaces were located either around Covent Garden or along the main thoroughfares leading from Temple Bar to Cornhill. Diarists living in Westminster tended to visit the venues around Covent Garden while City residents patronized establishments along Fleet Street or Cornhill. For some people the choice was about convenience, but people did not simply go to the nearest establishment. Spaces had individual flavors and catered to particular clienteles. These differences were themselves partly related to where a venue was located within the metropolis. The patterns of use in the later eighteenth century suggest a distribution of venues similar to that found by Matt Green for early eighteenth-century coffeehouses, though the clienteles in different areas were not so easily defined.⁸³ As James Boswell reveals by his patronage of Child's in St. Paul's Churchyard, people did not always go to establishments in their own half of town. They often preferred to spread their patronage around a variety of spaces, sometimes spread over much of town. The example Stephen Montague, who retired to some sort of drinking establishment every night, shows that people did not go to the same place or even the same street every time they went out drinking (Figure 9). Rather they had a selection of venues they visited scattered across a relatively large area of the City and eastern Westminster.

⁸³ Matthew Green (Oxford University DPhil thesis, in progress).



Figure 8: public eating and drinking of John Eliot, Stephen Montéage, James Boswell, Samuel Curwen, Jacob Hagen, George Canning, Charles de Coetlogon, and Job Knight.

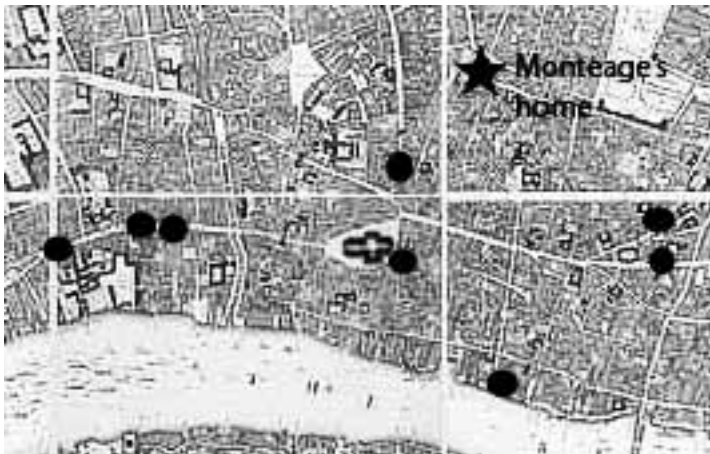


Figure 9: Stephen Montage's local eating and drinking

Public eating and drinking establishments visited by diarists were common in the City, but rarer in Westminster. This reflects a difference in propertied lifestyle between the two regions. For City residents, particularly those who were carried to the Exchange on business every day, dining out was a part of daily life. It was undertaken with colleagues and companions, but it also satisfied a professional need by providing opportunities for meetings and networking. On the other side of Temple Bar, however, residents of Westminster were far more likely to dine or take their beverages in private houses. Their business went on in homes or in Parliament and dining near the Houses was less common than dining at the Houses. Boswell and George Canning, both young men who patronized public eating and drinking spaces more often than most older people of comparable social status, visited private houses for meals as part of a daily routine. Boswell was constantly around his Lord Eglinton's and Canning stopped regularly at Malmesbury's or Mrs. Crewe's. Older, unmarried Westminster residents ate out more often than women and married men. The west-end lifestyle that preferred private houses to public ones helps to explain the dearth of commercial establishments in Westminster.

Shops, the element of provincial urban life scholars have devoted the most attention to, are difficult to study using diaries.⁸⁴ Diarists are rarely specific about where they did their shopping. Scholars studying the provinces have used trade directories to plot the locations of luxury shops, but that has never been done for the whole of London and is beyond the scope of this chapter. Most scholarship on London's shopping areas has focused on spaces around Pall Mall and Oxford Street or, to a lesser extent, Fleet Street and the Strand.⁸⁵ These analyses usefully examine how the most fashionable spaces were set up and used, but they present an unbalanced perspective of where

⁸⁴ Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, McInnes, 'The Emergence of a Leisure Town', Jon Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North-West England, C.1700-60* (Manchester, 2004), Stobart, 'Leisure and Shopping'.

⁸⁵ Christopher Breward, 'Masculine Pleasures: Metropolitan Identities and the Commercial Sites of Dandyism, 1790-1840', *London Journal*, 28/1 (2003), 60-72, Jane Rendell, 'Displaying Sexuality: Gendered Identities and the Early Nineteenth-Century Street', in Nicholas R. Fyfe (ed.), *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity, and Control in Public Space* (London, 1998), Jane Rendell, "'Bazaar Beauties' Or 'Pleasure Is Our Pursuit': A Spatial Story of Exchange', in Iain Borden (ed.), *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space* (Cambridge, MA. & London, 2001), Dias, 'a World of Pictures', Claire Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London', *JDH*, 8/3 (1995), 157-76.

London's shops were located. Despite the westwards expansion of the metropolis, shopping areas were more concentrated in the east. A brief survey of a handful of luxury trades found in trade directories (haberdashery; mathematical, musical and scientific instrument shops; perfume sellers; and tobacconists) shows that even in 1820 most shops advertised were still located east of Charing Cross.⁸⁶ A substantial number of shops were located along Oxford Street, but the majority could be found along the Strand, the Fleet, Holborn, St. Paul's Churchyard, and Cheapside. The metropolis supported a vast array of luxury shops spread over a long east-west axis. This shopping vein could be mined by the people living to the north or south with relative ease and shop clienteles probably differed depending on where the shop was located on the east-west axis. Some fashionable women do mention going as far as the City for shopping, but this was the sort of activity saved for special occasions or to acquire particular goods. More often they shopped around Oxford Street, Pall Mall, and the Strand.

The distribution of commercial entertainment venues followed yet another pattern. We can see in Figure 10 the establishments highlighted by John Trusler in his *London Advisor and Guide*.⁸⁷ We can compare Trusler's recommendations with the venues visited by diarists (Figure 11). The majority of commercial venues were located along the eastern edge of Westminster running from what is now Bloomsbury to Lambeth Marsh. The diary evidence suggests why even in London long-term success was not assured for novel ventures. A handful of venues appear in most diaries: the Opera, the patent theatres and the Haymarket Theatre, and the art exhibitions at Somerset House. A variety of other venues appear only rarely, including Astley's, Madame Cornelys', the Argyll Rooms, the Surrey Theatre, the Lyceum, and the British Gallery in Pall Mall. This suggests that elite support was unlikely to underpin more than a limited number of ventures.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ *The London Directory for the Year 1768* (London, 1768), *Post Office London Directory*.

⁸⁷ Trusler, *London Adviser*.

⁸⁸ Pointon, 'Dealer in Magic'.

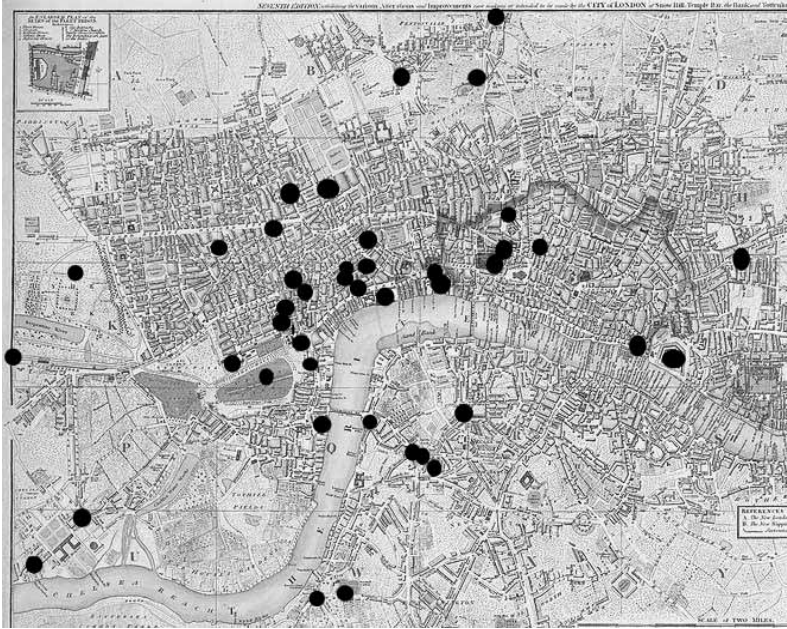


Figure 10 Recreational spaces listed in John Trusler's *The London Adviser and Guide*.

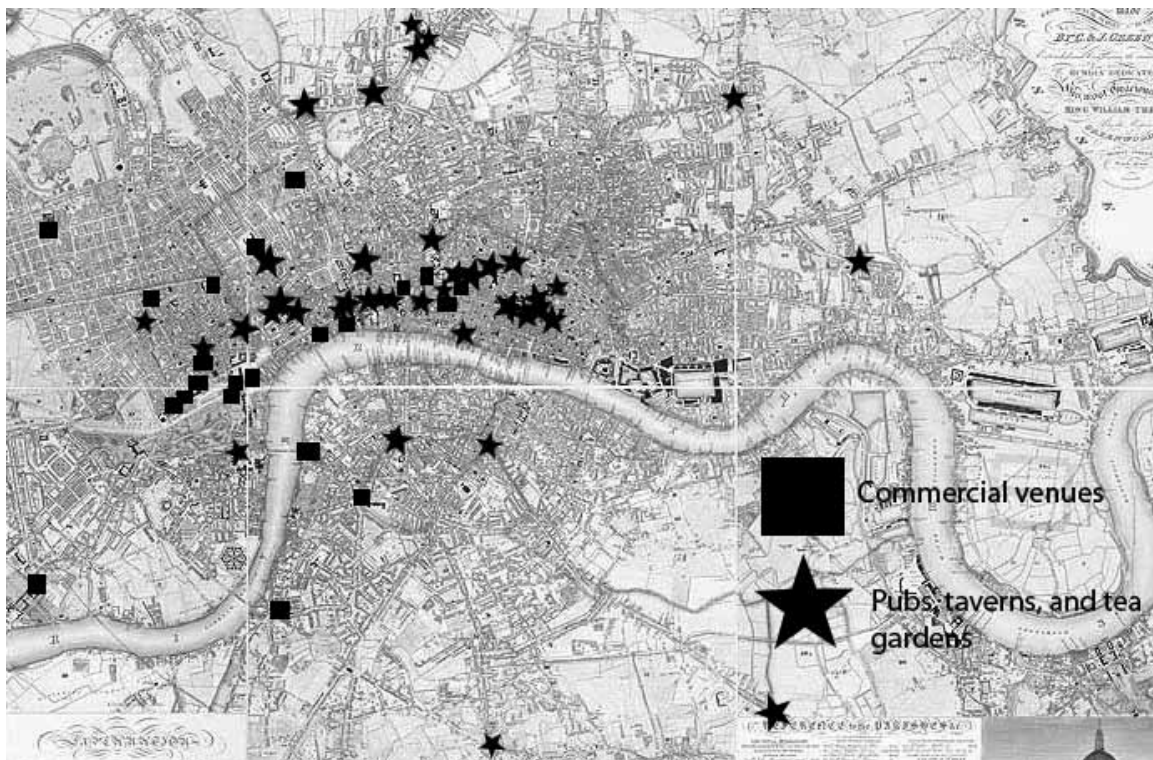


Figure 11: eating and drinking venues visited by diarists compared commercial entertainment venues

Commercial recreational spaces in London fit broadly into three categories, all of which were limited in where they could be located. First were the highest order

functions, the types of ventures that could only succeed in London and even there often failed. Most obvious here are the opera and the expensive concert series that catered to the nobility and aristocracy. The opera was a part of the routine for the gentry and nobility, but the high cost of tickets and the limited appeal of the show meant that only the boxes and the pit filled up and the companies were often in a precarious financial position.⁸⁹ The galleries did not offer polite society as many opportunities to socialize as other areas of the house, but they were too expensive for most of the middling and laboring sorts. Similarly, the concerts that appealed to the social elites were often expensive. Though they generally sold out, they were held in small venues and the interest of the subscribers often dwindled within a few years.⁹⁰ Venues with particular demographics in mind, such as operas and concerts appealing to peers and gentry, could locate themselves close to their targeted demographic. It is not surprising that these are the venues closest to the dwellings in the west end.

Tea gardens, pleasure gardens, and semi-rural pubs can be seen in Figure 11 around the periphery of the metropolis. Unlike most other commercial venues, these spaces were not located close to a target demographic. Ranelagh's location near the most fashionable area of the metropolis was no accident, but many other venues selected locations convenient to populous areas but in spots with a largely rural character (e.g. Islington, Mile End, or Camberwell). These were low order amenities that probably operated cheaply because they paid lower rent and were therefore able to attract a wide variety of people.

Theatre managers had to choose a location where both the fickle residents of the west end who had the money but traveled only limited distances and the City residents who would travel to the theatre but who each individually only did so a few times a year could gain access. Moving west was not considered a profitable choice. Apart from the Pantheon on Oxford Street, which operated as an English-language opera house and in the 1810s as a theatre, no public theatres opened west of Covent Garden until 1835 when the St. James Theatre opened in King Street. Theatres located south of the Strand or east of Covent Garden also had difficulty and some made special overtures to west-end

⁸⁹ Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*, 102-7, 148-58.

⁹⁰ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 12-32, 54-60.

audiences to attract larger and more affluent crowds. The Surrey Theatre, for instance, opened a box office in Westminster in order to facilitate trips to their transpontine theatre.⁹¹ Minor theatres never attracted polite crowds like the patent theatres did; rather they were able to claim greater patronage from the middling sorts and may have had lower operating costs. Even Vauxhall, one of the most successful ventures of the century, tried to encourage more people to make the journey (one and a half miles from Charing Cross) by selling tickets for special events in the parts of town where wealthy people were likely to be: shopping areas, Pall Mall, and the wealthy areas in the centre of the City, e.g. “at Mess. Longman and Broderip's Music-shops in Cheapside and the Hay-market; at Bell's British Library, in the Strand; at Mr. Bick's, opposite the Mansion House; at Messrs. Champante and Co Jewry-street, Aldgate; Mess. Bedcots, Berkeley-square; at Mr. Becket's, Bookseller, Pall Mall; and at Vauxhall-Gardens.”⁹²

Mental maps and individual meanings

Mental maps had an important role in shaping where people thought they could and could not go for recreation in London. Diaries offer indirect evidence of mental maps. A diarist rarely has to explain an area's topography or the significance of particular features. Yet diaries often have suggestive, but ultimately inexplicable, comments about features of the physical world. More than once Elizabeth Tyrrell mentions taking “a walk to the round tree by the waterside” where she would sit with her daughters.⁹³ What was so appealing about this tree? Its shape? Its bountiful shade? The views of the Thames? Its proximity to her home? Or was it the girls' choice? Despite the unrecoverable significance of this and other spaces and places, there are interesting questions to be asked of some of the particularly descriptive diaries about how their authors navigated urban spaces. We can think about the significance of particular spaces and the ways that an individual's place of residence shaped their perspective on the metropolis.

Modes of transportation shaped mental maps in several ways. Routine and familiarity often dampened the significance of routes. Diaries are generally silent about

⁹¹ Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre*, 172.

⁹² Lambeth Archives, IV/162/2/1 'Vauxhall Cuttings'.

⁹³ 1 & 8 September 1809

routes taken unless the route itself possessed some special quality. The New Road, now Marylebone/Euston/Pentonville Roads, was a favorite spot for several walkers, as were the new bridges over the Thames. New surfaces with potentially attractive views drew pedestrians and existing streets may have had a similar pull once they were resurfaced. Riding in a coach could also affect how spaces between stops were experienced. Carriages may have reduced people's familiarity with the metropolis. Streets set up for walking may have been well known while areas that people merely rode through remained relatively blank on mental maps.

Diarists associated particular areas or establishments with work or diversion. I have already suggested that certain areas of town were associated with recreation, for instance the neighbourhood around the theatres or the shopping and dining streets of Cheapside and St. Paul's Churchyard. More personalized associations are also visible. Stephen Montage strictly divided his coffeehouse-going between a work coffeehouse where he had business meetings (Child's) and pleasure coffeehouses where he met friends or sat and drank and perhaps read the paper. These establishments were not necessarily far apart, yet there was substantial psychological distance between them. Some merchants put several miles between their home lives and their professional activities. For Thomas Bridge, his home in Tottenham where he could garden and relax contrasted with his home in Bread Street where he kept a counting house and operated his business during the week. Jacob Hagen likewise divided his home life in Peckham from his working life in his office in Southwark and the Exchange and nearby coffeehouses.

The location of a diarist's home helped to shape his or her mental maps in ways that persisted even after he/she had moved house. Ian Archer has pointed out that Samuel Pepys continued to go back to the taverns and companions in his previous neighbourhood in Westminster after he moved to his office near the Tower at the other end of town.⁹⁴ Samuel Curwen exhibited a similar persistence of behaviour. Despite moving from Holborn on the northwest corner of the City to Brompton several miles to the southwestern, Curwen continued to visit his friends in the City on a regular basis. His walking destinations did shift from areas north and south of London such as Islington or St. George's Fields to the areas to the west around Chelsea. The home was the centre of

⁹⁴ Archer, 'Social Networks', 79.

the recreational world, but it took time to build up a set of companions and hangouts in a new area. Curwen and the young Boswell both walked extensively, perhaps as part of a strategy to get to know the metropolis. By traversing the town on foot both were able to get a sense of the areas and learn more about the opportunities in London, a strategy similar to those for learning early twentieth-century London described by Colin Pooley.⁹⁵

The personal landmarks identifiable in diaries are a reminder that we should be more attentive to non-commercial spaces. The Pantheon or Vauxhall were certainly prominent establishments, particularly in print culture, but individuals created mental maps of their surroundings with idiosyncratic meanings attached to far less obvious landmarks.

Conclusion

As in the provinces, most venues for recreational activities in London were confined to central areas of the metropolis, but unlike in provincial leisure towns different sorts of amenities were not all jumbled together. Parks on the west edge of the metropolis and semi-rural pubs and gardens were remote from the population centres. The strip of commercial recreation spaces on the eastern edge of Westminster ran perpendicular to the band of elite eating and drinking venues further east in the City. A fourth area, made up of shopping streets, overlapped with parts of the band of food and drink venues, but then crossed the area of commercial recreation and continued west into the heart of fashionable London. London's different areas formed centres for different sorts of activities. The locations of these centres forced residents to travel to other areas of the metropolis for different varieties of amusement.

Patterns of leisure in provincial towns required amenities for which there was no comparable demand in the capital. Assembly rooms served as foci of provincial life in several towns, but the presence of a large population of gentry with substantial townhouses capable of hosting parties made them irrelevant in the west end.⁹⁶ Mark Girouard has suggested that assembly rooms in provincial towns declined in importance

⁹⁵ Colin Pooley, 'Getting to Know the City: The Construction of Spatial Knowledge in London in the 1930s', *UH*, 31/2 (2004), 210-28.

⁹⁶ Stobart, *First Industrial Region*, 152.

as townhouses became larger and better set up.⁹⁷ With sufficient space to hold a crowd and enough of the right sort of people in town, it was possible to host large parties and invite only people who would add to the host(ess)'s reputation. Assemblies held in City taverns and villages on London's periphery indicate that in other areas of the metropolis where houses were smaller and the social makeup was more varied there was demand for large spaces that could host gatherings.⁹⁸

The limited sphere of movement of gentry men and women may have helped to fuel the literature contrasting the western and eastern ends of town.⁹⁹ Satires targeting cits and tradespeople who ventured into the West End suggest that it was a boundary that was more frequently crossed by eastern residents. In part, this was the result of entrepreneurs opening venues west of the City in hope of attracting the gentry and knowing that people from the east would travel greater distances. The gentry's lack of knowledge about the City and areas further east also resulted from their use of slow and unwieldy modes of transport that made a trip from Charing Cross to the Tower fatiguing.¹⁰⁰ The unfamiliarity and exoticism that resulted from being unfamiliar with other areas of the metropolis helped to create the impression of a multi-centred metropolis even if individual itineraries were not restricted to sub-metropolitan areas. Transportation difficulties exacerbated the differences in lifestyle between these different residential areas of the metropolis until the arrival of the railroad and the underground.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Mark Girouard, *The English Town: A History of Urban Life* (New Haven, 1990), 123.

⁹⁸ National Archives, KB 1/16/1 and 4, King's Bench, 'Affidavits'. Also Hackney in 1785 (*The Times*, 4 April 1785), Stratford in 1790 (*The Times*, 19 April 1790), Mr. Wilson's Assembly Rooms, Haydon Square, Minorities in 1805, and, the first venue in the west end: the Argyle Street Assembly Rooms, established 1810. See also the Chelsea Assembly in the *London Chronicle* issue 1998 (October 1769) and an assembly at Coachmaker's-Hall, Foster-Lane, Cheapside, in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*; 8 January 1785.

⁹⁹ Peter Gould and W. R. White, *Mental Maps* (Harmondsworth, 1974), chapters 1 and 6.

¹⁰⁰ J. Richardson, *Recollections, Political, Literary, Dramatic and Miscellaneous of the Last Half-Century* (London, 1856), 4.

¹⁰¹ Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 205.

4. Commercialization, spending, and the cost of leisure

Access to money is a crucial factor shaping people's decisions about how to spend their leisure time. Historians' interest in what recreations people spent money on has been primarily in spending as it relates to the commercialization of leisure. The development of commercialized recreation has been one of the most prominent themes in the historiography of leisure since the seventeenth century. As a tool for understanding the past, commercialization has attractions, but also limitations. Peter Borsay, in his synthesis of the historiography of leisure, showed that as a yardstick for gauging change commercialization is an unhelpfully fuzzy concept. Commercialization has been found changing leisure throughout the past four centuries.¹ Leisure seems always to be commercializing yet will never be fully commercialized. The commercialization of leisure has been most effective as a concept in relation to the supply side of the leisure industry. Several studies have demonstrated that advertisements became increasingly sophisticated and information outlets more accessible over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.² Scholars have also illuminated the ways that the intrusion of the market forced artists and providers of recreation to seek out and please new audiences.³

Studies of commercial leisure ventures emphasize the bountiful range of new activities available to customers and the gap between London and the provinces.⁴ As well as increasing the array of "must see" attractions open to the paying public, commercialization made more spaces accessible. The existing historiography has suggested that commercial recreations were open to more people than activities in preceding centuries had been. Allowing access to be regulated by the market, rather than by social connections, opened up spaces to

¹ Borsay, *A History of Leisure*, 19-25. Commercialization has also been seen as a tool for opening up previously restricted recreational sphere to people with money but few connections.

² See for instance Adrian Harvey, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture in Britain, 1793-1850* (Aldershot, 2004), Kwint, 'Astley's Amphitheatre', Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*. Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, 118-26. Clark, *English Alehouse*, 236, McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *Birth of a Consumer Society*, John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997).

³ David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven & London, 1993).

⁴ J. H. Plumb, *Georgian Delights* (London, 1980).

sectors of the population who had money but lacked the networks that would have been necessary to gain access in earlier periods to art or certain types of performance. The court was no longer the centre of culture. However David Hunter and Robert Hume have argued that opportunities for entrepreneurs were far fewer than historians have suggested and that they required noble patronage to survive.⁵

The concept of commercialization has helped historians to draw out the changes in genres, opportunities, advertising, and product placement, but it remains unclear how exactly consumer behaviour changed as a result of those developments. It is rational to suppose that as more venues opened up offering new amusements, people would spend a greater proportion of their money and their time at novel attractions, for instance shifting from spending regularly on food and drink (commercially available leisure goods themselves) to occasional but more substantial spending on trips to theatres or pleasure gardens. Unfortunately the account books in this sample are not well suited to examining change over time. However we can use account books to examine the size and nature of the market for commercial recreations in one period. Using these findings we can consider how commercial recreational venues achieved financial solvency. This chapter does that by looking at the ways people spent their money on recreation. Patterns of spending suggest how people chose and used new, public, commercial venues. Uses of commercial spaces varied over time, between social groups, and through the course of individual lifecycles.

The patterns of spending evident in account books provide a view of commercialization from the patron's perspective. Because few account books that survive from the period provide good evidence of leisure spending, the sample examined here offers examples from people in different subsections of society rather than accounts kept by people of roughly equal status but in different periods. Therefore the evidence is not sufficient for any attempt to quantify the shifting balance between commercialized and other forms of recreation.

⁵ David Hunter, 'Patronizing Handel, Inventing Audiences: The Intersections of Class, Money, Music and History', *Early Music*, 28/1 (2000), 32-49, Robert Hume, 'The Economics of Culture in London, 1660-1740', *HLQ*, 69/4 (2006), 487-533.

Furthermore, the time-period of this study cannot offer an assessment of commercialization as a persistent trend over the *longue duree*. However the account offered here does enhance our understanding of where people's recreational shillings went and how much money went to the newly commercialized spaces. They give us insight into variations in spending resulting from age, wealth, taste, and social position. Furthermore they reveal differences in the ways that money was spent on diversion between different sectors of propertied society.

An approach to spending that quantifies people's engagement with commercial recreation and their patterns of spending allows us to re-assess the markets that attractions appealed to. The patterns of attendance revealed by an examination of accounts force us to re-examine motivations that have been imputed to customers, particularly desires for novelty and social status. Unpredictable personal events, social networks, and individual taste explain patterns of attendance better than do the price of admission or advertisements of new attractions. Finally, records of spending suggest that there were three sorts of market that were potentially in play for leisure entrepreneurs. Some venues appealed to regular attendance from polite society and infrequent visits from a broader public, others attracted a wide variety of middling and labouring Londoners, and a third group of attractions depended on a loyal niche audience to survive. This provides a basis for reconsidering factors shaping the provision of leisure facilities.

Access to goods and services in Georgian England was shaped by access to credit and specie; leisure-time spending was no different. Though less cash-poor than they had been in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Londoners still transacted the majority of purchases in the period covered by this dissertation with credit rather than ready cash.⁶ Tradespeople primarily worked and delivered goods on credit, leaving payment to be reckoned later. Some leisure goods would have been paid for through credit transactions, including food and drink, musical

⁶ Craig Muldrew, "'Hard Food for Midas': Cash and Its Social Value in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 170 (2001), 78-120, Margot C. Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge, 2003).

instruments, and other furniture. Taverns and coffee houses appear to have provided food and drink on credit to some known patrons. Some entertainment venues took credit payments. Subscriptions for concert series, publications, and the opera could be paid for at a later date. Theatres, the opera, pleasure gardens, and public eating and drinking establishments all would have admitted some people for ready cash and it appears that the theatres and pleasure gardens were cash-only operations, except for special events and special people. It is possible that by buying tickets in advance from an outlet (some theatres and Vauxhall offered this service) it would have been possible to acquire tickets on credit rather than with cash, though that would have depended on an individual's relationship with the outlet rather than with the establishment they planned to visit. Asking for cash might have limited the audience to people with access to money, but making events credit-only could serve to restrict the audience to people of particular social standing. In the case of elite concert series, selling tickets for cash through bookshops and ticket outlets reduced the exclusivity of the event by allowing people to obtain tickets without being known to the organisers.⁷

Account books offer limited insight into the balance of cash and credit in leisure spending. The minute detail provided in merchants' account books suggests that merchants paid cash more often than the gentry and nobility, who generally only recorded large sums paid off to shopkeepers who had extended them substantial credit. It is possible that this difference was more apparent than real, however. The difference may reflect two separate practices for recording debts: merchants noted them as they were incurred and the gentry and nobility mentioned them once they had been discharged. Requiring cash payment does not seem to have prevented landowners and other wealthy elites from enjoying recreations of any sort.

Craig Muldrew used account books to quantify individuals' engagement with the market and his caveats about sixteenth and seventeenth-century accounts reflect the problems with accounts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as

⁷ McVeigh, 'The Professional Concert', 3-4.

well.⁸ Merchants and professionals frequently mixed business and household accounts, obscuring the exact extent of the household budget. For instance, Thomas Bridge's accounts are so complex that I have not used them here because separating business payments from personal costs proved impossible. Furthermore, identifying a transaction as specifically relevant to recreation is problematic because accountants rarely declare for what they intended to use the good or service acquired. Laconic labeling also makes determining exactly what was being paid for difficult (e.g. is "porter" a payment to someone who carries goods or a purchase of beer?). Recreational purchases can also be obscured when lumped with other costs as "sundry" or "expenses." Trying to grasp the way household costs might have been divided between husband and wife causes further problems. Amanda Vickery has shown that purchasing for the household was sometimes gendered.⁹ A husband who listed giving money to his wife may have obscured some of the money spent for his recreation. Most of the account books considered here appear to have been the family's only expense accounts, but they may be incomplete as well as unclear.

Recreational ventures and non-specific enterprises

As a basis for examining individual expense records, I divided recreational expenses into two categories: spending at ventures set up to provide a specific service tied to amusement, and spending at establishments that provided some good or service necessary for diversion but that were not set up with pleasure specifically in mind. The first category, recreational ventures (RV), includes the spaces such as theatres, exhibitions, commercially organised gambling, or pleasure gardens that were developed with the intention of offering pleasure. I have also included, whenever possible, the costs associated with these activities, in particular travel costs. In addition, I have counted among leisure ventures establishments offering goods and services clearly catering to new recreational needs and desires, particularly reading material (one of Plumb's hobbyhorses) and

⁸ Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 61-5.

⁹ Amanda Vickery, 'His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England', *P&P*, Supplement (Volume 1) (2006), 12-38.

musical instruments. The entrepreneurs in this category would have seen themselves as selling recreational goods and services, including the man who tuned Jane Johnston's piano and the fellow who sold Thomas Pelham an *hombre* table.¹⁰

People also spent money on goods and services that could be used either for diversion or for other purposes. This category of spending will be labeled non-specific expenses (NSE). Venues included in this category were for the most part not new kinds of venue, but they were not unchanging either. Peter Clark has argued that "commercialization" occurred in alehouses as owners in the eighteenth century advertised in newspapers and attempted to draw customers through new services.¹¹ Yet alehouses and coffee houses have been counted as non-specific because they were part of a long tradition of public eating and drinking. Despite offering new services (for instance selling hot drinks such as tea and coffee or organizing sporting events) and making some attempts to change their image through advertising and gentrification, ale houses retained their basic function: supplying food or drink that might be consumed in the context of amusement or as basic sustenance. Because "commercializing" denotes no more than increasing involvement in the market and therefore can refer to a wide variety of developments, we need to breakdown spending into these more precise categories to analyse patterns of activity in these terms. Though change is not my primary focus in this chapter, one would equally need to break down spending in this way if it were possible to amass sufficient material to analyse change.

Spending on non-specific enterprises is more difficult to identify than spending on recreational ventures. As chapter 6 describes, almost everyone was involved in hosting friends or relatives for recreational purposes. For this reason almost all food spending was potentially a recreational expense. Some special purchases, for instance the purchase of a Christmas goose, indicate that a food acquisition was specifically recreational. But even buying tea and sugar, commodities often consumed socially, was not necessarily a recreational

¹⁰ Johnston, 'Diary'. 16 Jan 1819 British Library, Add MSS 33628, Thomas Pelham, 2nd Earl of Chichester, 'Accounts'.

¹¹ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 267 and 276.

purchase. To avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater, we need to consider all expenses that were potentially recreational including food and drink, furniture for gaming, or horses and vehicles for cruising. Including food and drink biases my approach in favour of NSE spending. I will attempt to correct for this when budgets provide sufficient data (see on page 121). I have not, however, chosen to take this to its logical extreme by trying to understand what part of the cost of housing, fuel, and servants might have been devoted to serving the pleasurable needs of a home. Proprietors of non-specific enterprises are unlikely to have thought they were selling a recreational accessory, though they surely were aware of the varied uses to which their products could be put.

If the evidence were ideal, spending could be analysed with the intention of the spender and purveyor in mind rather than by looking for particular commodities. This methodology would offer a better sense of the extent and texture of change, but the account books rarely provide a basis for doing this. Some establishments were clearly recreation-oriented, but often the venues served customers who came for different reasons. Coffeehouses in particular played a dual role, as meeting places where business was carried out and as venues for recreation. Remember, for instance, that in the diary of Stephen Montage there was a relatively straightforward division between work and pleasure coffeehouses. The different uses of coffeehouses, particularly in the City, were often based on personal preferences or individual connections. Child's, for instance, was one of Boswell's favorite coffeehouses and he went there specifically to read and discuss the news during the same year as Montage went only for York Buildings Company business. Coffeehouses near the Exchange were generally more business-oriented than coffeehouses in St. James's or around Covent Garden, but assuming City coffeehouses never fulfilled a recreational function would be an error.

Patterns of spending

The seven account books analysed here are presented in ascending order from smallest budget to largest. Three hypothetical budgets found in James

Trusler's *London Advisor and Guide* have been interpolated in the description of individual budgets, at the appropriate spot in the ascending order. Each set of accounts is broken down in a chart. In each chart I present the total amount of disposable income, the number of people the budget provided for, recreational venture spending, and non-specific enterprise spending. Where it is possible I suggest a figure for "adjusted NSE spending", calculated by removing the cost of transportation and food from the total NSE spending. I then added 12% of the total cost of food to the reduced figure. Trusler's figures indicate that he thought 12% of food costs were for entertaining. The Earl Spencer's table also has a column for recreational expenses that do not fit into the other categories.

The smallest budget belongs to James Ware and presents the spending of a professional in training. He liked to get out and see the town, but was fairly constrained in his total budget. His total spending was probably similar to James Boswell's though he visited recreational venues more often than Boswell. Ware's room and board costs were paid by his father directly to his landlord, and so he may have been discouraged from eating elsewhere. In one year £129.14s.4 1/2d passed through Ware's hands, but that includes £57.4s.1d of expenses associated with his medical training. His RV spending was surprisingly high: £3.5s spread over 30 incidents or an average of 2s.2d per event. Ware spent 4s or more five times, but the bulk of his transactions were 1s or 2s. He may have been trying to stretch his money to cover as much time as possible. He spent £8.6s.10d on non-specific enterprises, including transport, food and drink, and postage. Ware did not declare any entertaining costs, nor did he mention inviting any visitors to his lodgings. It is possible that his landlord Mr. Welling covered entertaining costs, if he had any.

Table 2 James Ware's spending

Total disposable income in £	Family size (including children,	RV costs in £ (% of total income)	NSE spending in £ (% of total income)
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	servants and dependents)		
72	1	3 (4)	8 (11)

As a woman who existed on the fringes of polite society but lived on relatively slender means, Elizabeth Inchbald's financial situation was not dissimilar from James Ware's. Her annual spending amounted to £121.4s.5d in 1781, though this included professional expenses for make-up and costumes, which cannot be reliably identified and extracted because spending on clothing for costumes is not separated from clothing for personal use. She spent a similar amount to James Ware on transport, food, and drink, except that Ware's total does not include daily meals which he took at his lodgings, thus effectively making his scope for spending greater than hers. However, Inchbald spent very little on recreational ventures. In part this is because she was an actress and so could always watch performances in her own theatre gratis if she wanted to. Her total annual expenditure on RV and the associated transport costs was less than £2. This figure gives us some impression of what Mary Berry and Elizabeth Tyrrell, two women who patronized recreational ventures but were not habitual users, may have been spending. Berry's expenses may have been more, since she patronized relatively expensive concerts, but the frequency with which she indulged in RV spending was similar.

Table 3 Elizabeth Inchbald's spending

Total disposable income in £	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV costs in £ (% of total income)	NSE spending in £ (% of total income)
121	1	2 (2)	25 (21)

Another perspective on the lower edge of polite society can be gained through the accounts of George Herbert, a lawyer attached to Gray's Inn. Herbert's accounts may offer insight into how someone like Stephen Montage or

one of the merchants spent their money. Unfortunately Herbert did not leave a diary and only partially itemized his expenses, lumping small transactions under “expenses” every three days. In the early 1760s Herbert spent £151.10s.2d in one year. Purchases of books and pamphlets were at least sometimes itemized, as were large purchases of alcohol or tobacco. Itemized NSE spending was £5.3d (3.3%). Commercialized leisure was mostly in the form of books and pamphlets. No theatre trips are recorded, nor were they recorded in earlier years of the accounts. It is possible that they are included in some of the larger expense totals, which usually include three days and range from 3d to 11s.3d. In total he spent £19.4s.11d on “expenses”, or about 7s.4d per week. This probably contained something extra besides food and drink. Twenty years later Elizabeth Inchbald would average 5s.2d a week just on food and drink; if his spending was similar Herbert would have had more than 2s per week to be spent on recreational ventures, transportation, or miscellaneous expenses. It probably did not go towards housekeeping expenses or washing as those transactions were recorded in larger lumps about once a quarter. Even without spending on the theatre, Herbert’s rate of spending on recreational ventures is exceptionally high, perhaps because he could channel money to recreation that others would have spent on children or relatives.

Total disposable income in £	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV costs in £ (% of total income)	NSE spending in £ (% of total income)
152	Unclear, probably living alone	11 (7)	<19 (13)

Table 4 George Herbert's spending

Herbert’s book expenses came in bunches towards the end of the year (perhaps because he was settling his accounts with various bookshops), but NSE spending, particularly trips to taverns or coffeehouses (which there is no clear evidence that he patronized apart from a tip to a servant at a coffeehouse more

than a decade before), are hidden in small weekly expenses. Because he did not itemize his expenses it is impossible to estimate adjusted NSE spending (see on page 121). A budget of this kind could have covered the sort of spending that most of the male merchants undertook: a trip to some sort of RV on average every other week and more frequent trips to cheaper NSEs such as coffeehouses, taverns, or restaurants.

Stepping away from individual diarists for a moment, a selection of hypothetical family budgets from John Trusler's *London Advisor and Guide* provide an opportunity to think about how variables (e.g. children) might have led people to restructure their spending.¹² Though it is not clear that his budgets were realistic, they do tell us what one man thought people spent. His figures for RV spending seem exceptionally high, but his suggestions for adjusted NSE spending are in line with diarists' declared expenses. Trusler offered four basic budgets and suggested how variations such as extra servants or children might have affected spending. The household budgets range from £200 to £400. Trusler believed that "entertainment for friends" and "pleasure" made up a substantial portion of the overall budget. If we include pocket expenses, which could potentially be spent on pleasure, the percentages of the total budget spent on RV and NSE entertainment vary from 10.64% to 17.6%. As wealth increased, Trusler assumed that people spent more in absolute terms on food, entertaining, and transport; however this might amount to a smaller percentage of the overall budget. For the wealthiest families Trusler models, pocket expenses, wine, and pleasure added up to £26.6 while entertaining friends cost £20 (12.1% of the total food budget of £165.28).¹³ Trusler assumed that families on smaller budgets did less entertaining. Pocket expenses vary inconsistently: the smallest budget allowed for the most pocket money, followed by a small budget for a couple with no children, and finally two budgets for families with children in which the identical amount was

¹² Trusler, *London Adviser*, 167-77.

¹³ A recent article has demonstrated that wine was a considerable luxury indeed. See Motoko Hori, 'The Price and Quality of Wine and Conspicuous Consumption in England 1646-1759', *English Historical Review*, 505 (2008), 1457-69.

allotted for pocket expenses. The budget with the highest percentage of money going for pleasure was that for a couple with no children.

Table 5 Trusler’s suggested budgets

TOTAL DISPOSABLE IN £	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV costs in £ (% of total income)	Adjusted NSE spending in £ (% of total income)	“Pleasure” (%)
200	7	<30 (15)	4 (2)	-
250	8	27 (11)	-	11 (4)
250	4	38 (15)	<6 (2)	11 (4)
400	8	<27 (7)	20 (5)	11 (3)

Returning to manuscript accounts we come to Charles de Coetlogon, a middle-aged man who lived off annuities. He was far wealthier than any of the account-keepers considered thus far, though for a member of propertied society his budget was still relatively modest. In 1817 he spent a total of £628.33. He spent more of his money on non-specific enterprise than on recreational ventures, but he spread this money over many transactions: £40.12s.6d for coach hire both around town and as part of larger excursions (91 transactions), £21.18s.7d on food and drink (85 transactions), and £2.3s.9d on postage (31 transactions). If Trusler is right that a household usual spent about 12% of their food budget on entertaining, then de Coetlogon spent about between £2 and £3 a year on food for his guests. His adjusted NSE expenses were therefore £15, or 2% of his total budget. The percentage goes up to 10.3% when we include transportation. £12.14s.6d went on goods and services that have been identified as recreational ventures: £5.5s on theatres, the Opera, and exhibitions (15 transactions); £3.7s on books and music (14 transactions); and £1.17s.6d on recreational furniture (3 transactions). Prostitutes offered a pleasurable service and are therefore counted under RV costs. They cost him £2.5s (2 transactions).

Table 6 Charles de Coetlogon's spending.

Total disposable income in £	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV costs in £ (% of total income)	NSE spending in £ (% of total income)	Adjusted NSE spending in £ (% of total income)	Projected recreational food spending in £ (based on Trusler)
628	3	13 (2)	65 (10)	15 (2)	3

It is not easy to extrapolate from De Coetlogon's accounts to those of any other diarists. His income was not especially high, yet he chose not to engage in business and his patterns of activity resemble those of people much higher up the social scale. De Coetlogon lived with two servants and supported a daughter. The number of visitors he had for dinner probably aligns him with a wealthy merchant such as John Thornton, who hosted less often, but in bigger groups, rather than with peers and gentry such as the 3rd Duke of Chandos or Lord Spencer who hosted large parties a couple of times each week. In terms of regularity of visiting RVs, his rates of visiting are similar to those of Samuel Curwen, or low-level gentry like Anna Larpent. But he fits into a slightly different group when it came to NSE spending. De Coetlogon rarely visited eating and drinking venues, putting him in a category with gentry like Earl Spencer. This pattern distinguished him from City residents who commonly visited coffee houses and restaurants multiple times each week. It must have been difficult to follow the lifestyle he did on such a limited budget. His method of making ends meet may have involved scrimping in other areas such as accommodation, transportation, or food. As a man of leisure de Coetlogon had a lot of time to fill, but fairly limited funds to fill that time.

Anna Grenville (from 1822 the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos) provides a good example of an upper-class woman in terms of her spending capacity.¹⁴ In 1807 her accounts itemize the spending of £1839.2s.1d. She spent £1438.14s.1d during the first six months of the year when she lived in London.

¹⁴ Huntington Library, Stowe Collection, ST 110, Anna Eliza Grenville, 'Diaries'.

Unfortunately, teasing out NSE spending is difficult because she used tradespeople's names, which are not easily traceable, rather than commodities to describe her purchases. Her costs, however, must have been fantastic. In 1807 Grenville was in London for at least part of 157 days. In those she hosted 163 people to dinner and dined in others' homes 22 times. She also visited the opera 27 times, easily the greatest frequency of any of the diarists, and went to the theatre 19 times. She also attended a pair of private masquerades and other domestic routs and balls. Her rate of spending must have exceeded that of someone like Lady Mary Coke, who paid to attend the theatre regularly and subscribed to the Opera, but who almost never hosted people to dinner.

Table 7 Lady Anna Grenville's spending

Total disposable income in £	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV spending in £ (% of total income)	NSE spending in £ (% of total income)
1439	No dependants	72 (5)	8 (12)

Not all polite women would have spent as much as Grenville, but the extent of women's spending is hard to flesh out. Women left fewer accounts than men did. Some young women recorded the costs of small purchases of fabric and clothing in their diaries, but mention no other expenses.¹⁵ Some women's bills can be inferred from men's expenses. Lady Mary Coke, for instance, would have spent the same as a gentleman on recreational ventures such as theatre or opera because her rate of attendance was similar, but because she rarely if ever dined in public she would have been spared those expenses. Coke's spending would have been less than that of many others in her social group because she spent next to nothing on entertaining visitors. Mary Coke rarely had people over for anything more than tea. Lady Mary does not seem to have compensated for her low NSE expenses with more trips to the theatres (her attendance at the Opera was probably paid by subscription). While her rate of theatre and opera attendance was high

¹⁵ Chute, 'Diary', Austen-Leigh, 'Diary'.

compared with many in propertied society, it was on a par with other women of her social standing.

The costs of visiting recreational ventures to the future Duchess must have been similar to those incurred by the other landed women in this sample, including Charlotte Grimston, Frances Boscawen, Jane Johnston, or Lady Brougham. Sharing her opera box with a group organised by Lady Watkins Wynn, Grenville only paid 15 guineas a year (i.e. just over half a guinea per opera), a price that was far more manageable than the 300 guineas it would cost to rent the entire box.¹⁶ For Grenville this was less than half the percentage of her total income that Jennifer Hall-Witt argued that it cost to gain a seat at the opera in her study of the opera in Georgian and Victorian England.¹⁷ It appears that a socialite did not rent an entire box, as Hall-Witt suggests, rather groups clubbed together to share the cost and reduce the individual burden. Grenville shelled out £31.17s on the opera, theatres, and pleasure gardens. To understand the full extent of her RV spending we must add £16.5s.6d for music and a piano and some costs associated with attending operatic and theatrical performances and a masquerade. Presents to box keepers at the theatres and opera cost 8 guineas. She also paid £5.12s at a masquerade warehouse in anticipation of Lady Braybrook's masquerade. Thus in total her expenses associated with RVs came to £71.19s.6d, or 5% of her total budget. She spent a greater percentage of her total budget on recreation than any individual except Herbert. Considering that her husband's estates had a gross rental of nearly £65,000, her spending does not seem outlandish.¹⁸ Lady Anna Eliza almost certainly spent far less than her husband, a notorious spendthrift.

A rather different picture emerges from the account book of Jacob Hagen, a successful timber merchant and keen Quaker, whose income maintained a household consisting of himself, his wife, and at least two servants. £2720.18s passed through Hagen's accounts between June 1787 and May 1788. His

¹⁶ Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*, 152-5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102-3.

¹⁸ F. M. L. Thompson, 'Grenville, Richard Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-, First Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (1776-1839)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008).

household spent only 3.2% of his total income on food and drink. In addition to owning a coach, Hagen paid £12.11s.2d for coach fares and turnpike fees. He spent relatively little in coffeehouses and taverns (mostly in relation to trustee meetings for companies and charities) and for supplies for his gardens including plants, soil, tools, and labour. He spent just £2 on books and other recreational ventures. Nothing went to theatres or public performances.

Table 8 Jacob Hagen's spending

Total disposable income in £ ¹⁹	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV spending (%)	NSE costs (%)	Adjusted NSE spending (%)	Projected domestic food spending in £ (based on Trusler)
2721	4	2 (.07)	20 (1)	18 (1)	10

Some of the accounts of George, 2nd Earl Spencer, a man of less wealth and status than Lady Anna Eliza Grenville, survive in the Althorp Collection of the British Library.²⁰ Between December 1782 and the end of June 1783, Spencer paid out £4941.7s .11d. Of that money £740.11s.6d went on leisure, a whopping 15% of his total expenditure. The largest portion of that was £413.8s on gambling losses to other club members, followed by £237.6s in club expenses. It is possible that some of the club expenses were repayments of loans, as he received £519.15s during the same period at Brooks's on his account. I have excluded payments to Brooks's that are described as being for "cash rec'd" in an effort to get at his actual club expenses. His accounts record payments by recipients name and so it is not possible to get a reliable understanding of what services each tradesman was providing, but his household expenses must have been high considering the dinners he frequently hosted. He spent £59.7s on NSE, though £53.10s of that money was for wine (either a single purchase or settling an outstanding bill). Most of the rest of his NSE spending went to coffeehouses (six transactions) or

¹⁹ Excluding business costs

²⁰ British Library, Althorp papers, Add MS 76154, George, 2nd Earl Spencer, 'Account Book'.

the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street (a pair of transactions). These transactions are referred to as reckonings and so reflect several visits' worth of expenditure. One reckoning at the Turk's Head cost £3, but the rest were less than a pound.

Spencer spent even less money on non-club recreational ventures, dispersing £30.10s.6d. This money went towards plays, exhibitions, and books and prints. His spending on commercialized recreation mainly occurred in May and June, though some significant purchases did occur in February and March.

Table 9 Earl Spencer's spending

Total disposable income in £	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV spending (%)	NSE costs (%)	Gambling expenses (%) ²¹
4941	10+	268 (5)	59 (1)	413 (8)

²¹ Here gambling is considered as a separate category because it was disengaged from the market. These losses occurred in card games or wagers with other club members.

	Total budget (all values in £) ¹	Family size (including children, servants and dependents)	RV spending	RV spending as % of disposable income	NSE costs (%)	NSE spending as % of disposable income	Adjusted NSE spending ²	Adjusted NSE spending as % of disposable income	Projected domestic food spending	Other expenses
Ware	73	1	3	4	8	12	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Inchbald	121	1	2	2	25	21	13	11	<2	N/a
Herbert	152	1-2	11	7	<19	13	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
<i>Trusler I</i>	200	7	<30	15	-	-	4	2	4	N/a
<i>Trusler II</i>	250	8	27	11	-	-	-	-	-	N/a
<i>Trusler III</i>	250	4	38	15	-	-	6	2	6	N/a
<i>Trusler IV</i>	400	8	<27	7	-	-	20	5	20	N/a
De Coetlogon	628	3	13	2	65	10	15	2	3	N/a
Grenville	1439	1	72	5	8	12	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Hagen	2721	4	2	.07	20	1	18	1	<10	N/a
Spencer	4941	10+	268	5	59	1	N/a	N/a	N/a	413 (8)

Table 10 combined table of recreational expenses

¹ Excluding business costs where possible.

² No transport and food not for entertaining.

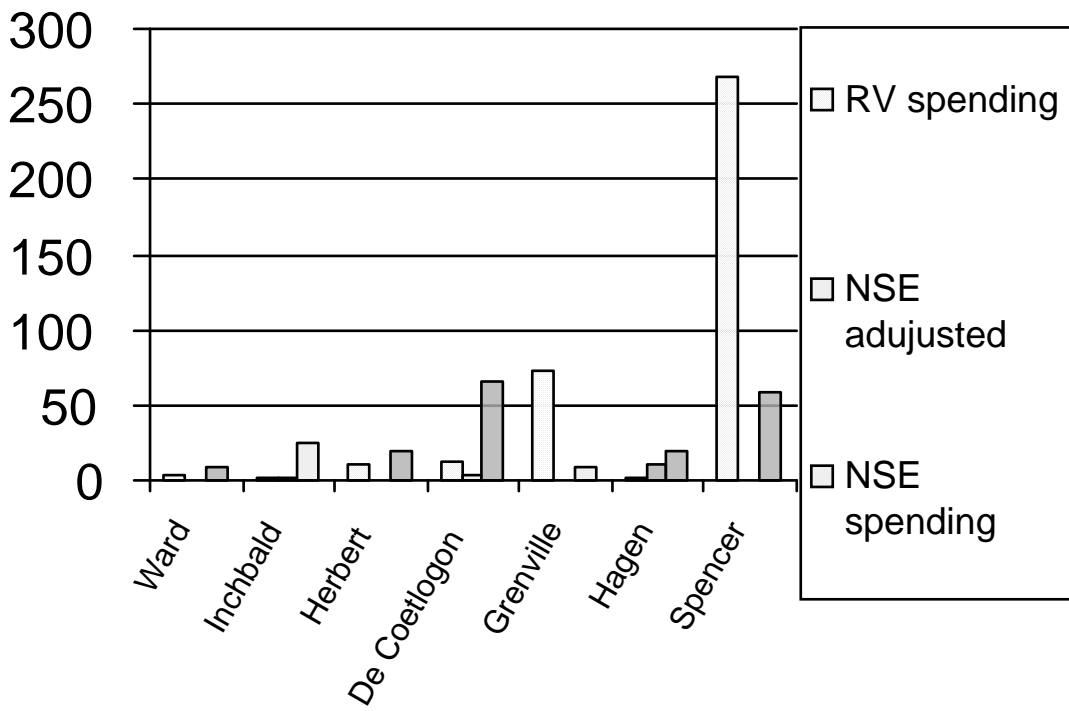


Figure 12 recreational spending in £

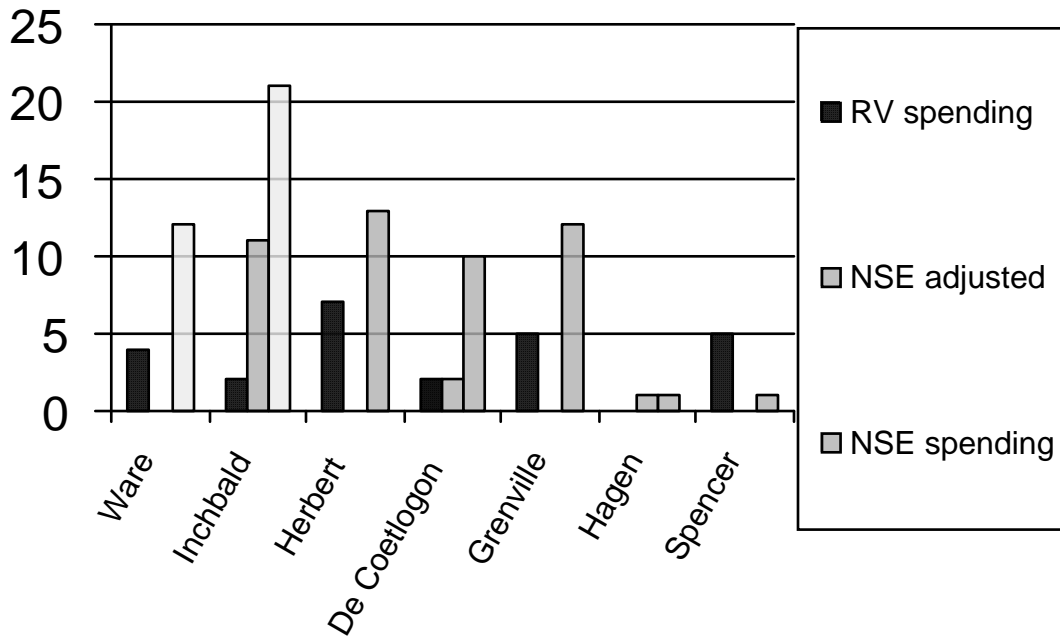


Figure 13 recreational spending as a percentage of all disposable funds

Patterns and variations

Though the data on certain components of NSE, especially food spending, is less complete than the data for recreational ventures, NSE goods made up the bulk of the leisure budgets that can be teased out most fully at all levels of society. Adjusted NSE spending was greater than or equal to RV costs. The availability of non-specific enterprise goods varied little over the course of the year and costs could be reduced or deferred by buying in bulk and by delaying payment to shopkeepers and tradespeople. The costs of keeping servants or maintaining the space where recreation occurred were part of running a household and so acquiring space did not incur extra costs for hosts.

The findings have mixed implications for the commercialization thesis. People with small budgets or who spent small amounts on leisure continued to spend most heavily on NSE. NSE spending is higher than RV spending in all cases where it can be calculated. Furthermore, because the NSE spending totals for Grenville and Spencer do not include the cost of food for hosting, it is likely that their adjusted NSE figures would be higher than their RV spending.

I will now shift from looking at amounts spent to using amounts as a guide to behavior patterns (which in turn shape spending). Spending on commercial leisure spaces (RVs) varied considerably per unit of time depending on the season of the year and the socioeconomic status and life-stage of the accountant. People of elite social status tended to spend (or at least pay) in large lumps on both recreational ventures and non-specific enterprises, something suggested by subscriptions to concerts and the opera and investments in domestic space, furnishings, food, and drink to allow for substantial and fashionable entertaining. This is in part a matter of their having chosen expensive activities and partly a result of their credit worthiness with tradespeople. Occasional splurges on books or trips to theatres do appear amongst merchants' accounts, but they are of smaller value than splurges of the gentry and nobility. Householders at all levels of propertied society may have been inclined to host partly because it was an element of their social role, and partly because they had laid out money to equip their homes with the food, drink, and furniture necessary to entertain. Capital

investment in the home was not optional, whereas spending on subscriptions or recreational ventures was.

Though the sample of account books is small, the patterns of behaviour exhibited by the accountants reflect those that can be documented for larger social groups. The time-use and spending data reveals that diarists fit broadly into two groups. One group, primarily gentry and nobility, had plenty of money and time and therefore were able to visit attractions frequently. Members of polite society engaged in a well-defined recreational routine built around a weekly schedule of levees, assemblies, routs, plays, operas, and concerts. These activities needed to incorporate some variations to avoid being dull, but theatres, opera, and certain concert series counted on consistent support from polite society. At the same time there were variations within the groups. Attendance at concerts was not assumed. None of the accountants examined here mention going to concerts, though clearly some specialised interest groups within this society did provide loyal support for such niche activities. Activities in commercial spaces such as theatres, the Opera, or the Pantheon crowded people's schedules, but they did not replace socializing in private houses. Though trips to public spaces clearly took time away from gatherings in the domestic sphere, socializing in public remained subordinate to the domestic gatherings I will discuss in chapter 6. For instance the impact of famous spaces such as Madame Cornelys, Almack's, or the Pantheon on patterns of visiting and domestic recreation appears was limited to a small group of people during a short period of time.

The other group was hampered by a lack of money, time, or both. We have already seen that members of this group only ventured out from domestic spaces or eating and drinking venues on special occasions. They might visit a play, pleasure garden, or Astley's once or twice a year, but few would have made frequent visits to any of these spaces. People in this group (and tourists) would have gone to the famous attractions once and perhaps repeated their visits with (other) tourists or children, but establishments could not have counted on their repeated patronage. Within this group there would have been special interest groups as well who would have attended lecture series as John Eliot or Job Knight

did, or the debating clubs as Samuel Curwen did. Middling Londoners visited commercial recreational venues as special events that occasionally replaced domestic socializing or with special visitors. The middling sort used public spaces specifically designed for pleasure as breaks from routine forms of sociability.

Because of the seasonal availability of recreational ventures, the winter and spring were the most expensive period of the year for the gentry and nobility, but country house gambling in other seasons meant that the summer and fall could be costly too. On the whole, all levels of propertied society spent most heavily during the winter and spring, though the increase was much smaller among merchants and members of the professions whose did not enjoy cheaper living in the countryside during the summer and autumn. Participating in the full complement of activities in the gentry calendar during the season meant spending more on recreational ventures and forking out money for the theatre, concerts, and other performances between one and four times a week.

We also find variations within the two broad lifestyle groups. Lifestyle was shaped but not determined by wealth. People might pursue lifestyles that seem to have been out of line with their economic status. Whether this resulted from attempting to keep up with friends, was necessary for keeping up appearances associated with a profession, or came out of some other choice or preference remains unclear. It was possible to adapt the lifestyle of the West End gentry and nobility to limited budgets. Charles de Coetlogon emulated many of the gentry practices by living off annuities, visiting theatres regularly, riding around town in hackney coaches, frequently hosting dinners, and possibly keeping a mistress.¹ But he had to cut corners by abstaining from some activities that were *de rigueur* among the people at the top of the social ladder. For instance, he was unable to support the expense of frequent visits to the opera or activities available only at a premium such as concerts. De Coetlogon may have aspired to

¹ His relationship with the frequently mentioned “Jane” remains obscure. She lived separately, but in fashionable areas, does not seem to have been related to him, often borrowed money and did not always repay it, and had occasional rows with him. She does not appear in his will.

gentility as a man who did not have to work for a living, or perhaps he just occupied his time with his favorite things: books, women, and theatre.

Others adopted lifestyles out of line with their income to present an image for potential employers. Elizabeth Inchbald may have needed to present herself as more respectable than her budget could easily allow in order to secure patronage and business support. Inchbald carefully manipulated her budget so as to pursue many opportunities generally only accessible to polite society. Her example shows that maintaining aspects of a fashionable lifestyle on an extremely limited budget was possible with good connections and the right sorts of friends. The way people spent their money and the amount of money people had were related, but not inextricably bound.

Life-stage was another important variable that played a part in differentiating people within broad groups. Middling people with businesses to run or children to support engaged in little spending at spaces set up as recreational ventures. The adult merchant Jacob Hagen had the most austere lifestyle of the bunch, spending very little of a relatively large income on recreation of any sort. While the evidence of other merchants' behaviour suggests that Hagen's abstemiousness was extreme, it also shows that Hagen was different in degree rather than kind. Most merchants and professionals who were family men spent money on recreational ventures infrequently, though unmarried middling people, like the gentry and nobility, spent a high proportion of their money on RVs. Childless men and women had fewer financial responsibilities than parents did and so were able to spend more freely, something that John Styles has also found in plebeian patterns of spending on clothes.²

Motivating the spenders

The patterns of attendance presented in the previous section suggest that elements of our understanding of consumer motivation need revision. Historians have suggested audience members pursued three broad goals at commercial venues: amusement/relief from boredom/novelty, social status bought by cultural

² Styles, *Dress of the People*, 225 and 229-45.

patronage, and personal development. Looking at patterns of behaviour documented in diaries demonstrates that while those goals played a part in motivating spending, none is sufficient to explain the patterns of consumer behaviour.

Novelty could influence a consumer to attend a particular event, but it does not seem to have been important enough by itself to win much patronage. Some diarists appear to have attended performances because of the newness of the offering. George Macaulay attended some performances on their opening night, perhaps his reason for going. In October 1796 he went to Drury Lane to see part of “Bold Stroke for a Wife” and “for the first Time received Richard Cour de Lion ... got up with splendid decorations and well supported truly by Mr Crouder and Shelly.”³ Two months later he saw the premier of “The Shipwreck”, also at Drury Lane.⁴ Macaulay never explicitly says he attended *because* it was the premier, but the holding of a premier may have encouraged him to attend on a particular night. Dozens of plays and afterpieces premiered each year, so clearly a new show was not by itself enough of a reason for Macaulay to go. For people who attended the theatre as part of a routine, new attractions might have livened up an otherwise familiar attraction.

Looking at the repertoires performed and the advertisements for attractions tempers the view that the audience craved only novelty. Playlists blended old and new songs to the apparent satisfaction of the audiences.⁵ Advertisements drew attention to innovative aspects of performances within a familiar framework. Advertisements directed attention to new pieces, new scenes, and new performers, but descriptions of innovations were placed within a program that was predictable and formulaic.

The rarity of appearances by merchants and others who were supposedly aspiring to gentle status at theatres, the opera, and other spaces associated with the elite routine suggests that visiting those spaces is unlikely to have reflected attempts to move up the social ladder. Advertisements often appealed to

³ Macaulay, 'Journal', f. 4.

⁴ Ibid., f. 24.

⁵ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 96-8.

customers by declaring that an entertainment was patronized by the finest of the fine, but the effect this had on potential audiences remains unclear.⁶

Low rates of attendance among the middling population show that prices need to be complicated as indicators of motivation and guides to clientele. The price of admission did have some effect on who could attend or how often they could attend, but price was not the only factor shaping people's decisions. The elite did not automatically prefer expensive activities. The Royal Academy and Vauxhall drew attendance despite being cheap, though by contrast inexpensive attractions such as Astley's and Sadler's Wells enjoyed limited patronage from the gentry and nobility. Despite high prices, Gallini's Rooms and other exclusive concert venues did not attract everyone who valued exclusive socializing, as Simon McVeigh suggests they did.⁷ Some people who were interested in concerts attended, but not a broad spectrum of wealthy people. Diary evidence shows that concerts attracted a small but loyal clientele, suggesting that exclusivity may have been attractive, but concerts primarily drew people with an interest in hearing music. It remains unclear why an expensive activity like opera-going became *de rigueur* for the elite, when others, such as concert going, did not. In the cases of both concerts and the opera, high prices are best understood simply as having been necessary to support the costs of staging the performances.

Table 11 Admission prices to entertainment venues in 1786.⁸

⁶ See also Jon Stobart, 'Selling (through) Politeness: Advertising Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England', *Cultural and Social History*, 5/3 (2008), 309-28. Nancy C. Cox and Karin Dannehl, *Perceptions of Retailing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007), chapter 4.

⁷ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, xiii, 6-7, 11-2.

⁸ Trusler, *London Adviser*, 161.

	Pantheon	Gallini's rooms	Opera	Theatre	Ranelagh	Astley's	Sadler's Wells	Vauxhall	Royal Academy
General admission	5s	5s	-	-	2s.6d	-	-	1s	1s
Boxes	-	-	10s.6d	5s	-	2s.6d	-	-	-
Pit	-	-	-	3s	-	-	3s.6d	-	-
Lower gallery	-	-	5s	2s	-	6d	2s	-	-
Upper gallery	-	-	3s.6d	1s	-	-	1s	-	-

Finally, the fact that lectures and museums existed and sometimes survived for long periods suggests that personal improvement through education may have appealed strongly to some people despite the absence of spending on such institutions from the account books examined here. These account books appear to have been kept by people with fairly mainstream tastes. Few diarists mention going to lectures, and visits to museums or indeed to Astley's are mentioned rarely.⁹ Nevertheless such ventures survived.

Surviving as a leisure entrepreneur

As this account of patterns of leisure spending suggests, the studies of commercial leisure and entrepreneurs only tell part of the story about the relationship between the market and recreation. Historians have tended to assume that a combination of exclusivity and novelty secured the patronage of the wealthy and snobbish. At the same time novelty and inexpensive access to activities that allowed the labouring sorts to emulate the rich offered venues with humbler clienteles the opportunity to flourish. Some recent work has suggested that creating a brand or a public image that sustained public interest was the key, but how successful and unsuccessful brands differed remains unexplored.¹⁰

Robert Hume and David Hunter have argued that historians have exaggerated the ability of leisure entrepreneurs to achieve solvency by appealing to a mass market.¹¹ Both suggest that studies of commercialisation have overestimated the ability of the middling to support new enterprises and argue that

⁹ Eliot and Knight went to lectures. Mackintosh, Curwen, Tyrrell, and Hagen visited museums.

Smith and Larpent mention trips to Astley's.

¹⁰ Corfield, *Vauxhall*.

¹¹ Hume, 'Economics of Culture', Hunter, 'Patronizing Handel'.

aristocratic patronage was essential to the success of a writer, painter, or impresario. While Hume and Hunter provide a useful corrective to accounts of commercialisation that impute too much power to the middle class, their suggestion that all cultural activities depended on the wealthiest Londoners ignores the varieties of market that entrepreneurs depended on.

Historians looking at other areas of production and consumption have gone further towards putting the market back into our understanding of goods and services. John Smail's study of the wool textile industry demonstrates the importance of putting opportunity, competition, and demand into context with the market.¹² Smail argues that producers created products with particular markets in mind.¹³ John Styles has done similar work on product innovation and the ways that producers attempted to satisfy particular markets and create demand.¹⁴ Styles and Smail both rely on entrepreneurs who left records of their plans, a resource that is not available to scholars working on recreational ventures apart from some theatres and opera companies. Therefore, this concluding section will offer some suggestions about how demand shaped the market and suggest ways that entrepreneurs may have intended to carve out a position within the market. We might hypothesize that enterprises stayed afloat through different means, some by appealing to a broad market and some to niche markets.

Patterns of attendance evident in diaries suggest that we can divide recreational enterprises into three categories. Firstly, theatres, Ranelagh and Vauxhall, and certain other mainstream entertainments were sustained by a combination of polite routines that led the gentry and nobility to attend regularly and the occasional visits of lots of less wealthy people. Though Lady Mary Coke visited the theatre almost weekly, many City residents visited only once or twice a year. The gentry and nobility in the west end were the big spenders and the most regular guests at the theatres, but they were not numerous enough to consistently fill a theatre and spent much of the year (even during the theatre season) away

¹² John Smail, *Merchants, Markets and Manufacture: The English Wool Textile Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1999), 150 and passim.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁴ John Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *P&P*, 168 (2000), 124-69.

from the metropolis. The middling and labouring sorts supplemented the limited crowds of gentry during the periods around Christmas and Easter and on a daily basis the audience at the theatres contained a large proportion of people who came to the theatre from the City.¹⁵ The spending patterns found in account books shows that this pattern of mixed audiences at venues had a significant impact on how venues clustered between the City and Westminster as we saw in chapter 3.

For polite society, the Opera and certain theatres and pleasure gardens were spaces of polite sociability where people went to see and be seen as much as to enjoy the entertainment on the stage. Nevertheless, the performances offered did need to change often enough to keep up audience interest. For the theatre, high operating costs meant that the house needed to be kept as full as possible by working new material in often, generally after a run of only two or three days. New plays were plentiful and cheap to obtain and produce.¹⁶

Secondly, places that could not count on patronage as part of the fashionable routine, for instance Astley's, had to have a metropolis-wide appeal in order to remain solvent. Few members of the gentry recorded visiting Astley's in their diaries, yet this venue was able to survive by dint of attracting many different types of people. At the same time, however, all such needed to change their offerings regularly to sustain interest even among the crowds who visited infrequently. Repeat visits from humbler audience members were necessary to sustain the business for more than a couple of years. Several museums fall into this category, as do the panoramas that appeared each year in the early nineteenth century. Marcia Pointon argues that most museums were intended to survive only for short runs. Her case study of James Cox's museum reveals an enterprise that appealed to a broad clientele that visited once or twice before the museum closed and was auctioned off.¹⁷

For the third group, specialist entertainments, solvency was less predictable. Even venues catering to a wealthy audience might not secure sufficient patronage. The persistent financial difficulties of the opera throughout

¹⁵ Hughes, *Drama's Patrons*, 156-60.

¹⁶ Concerts were similarly anxious about staying current. McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 78-96.

¹⁷ Pointon, 'Dealer in Magic'.

the first half of the eighteenth century or the repeated failures of concert series appealing to select clienteles are good examples of this.¹⁸ Once the opera was able to establish itself in the polite routine it was able to depend on consistent financial support, but other ventures such as concert series, Mrs. Cornelys' establishment at Carlisle House, and the Pantheon, collapsed or chased less wealthy clienteles after the novelty wore off.

This chapter has argued for a reassessment of commercialization with the consumer in mind. While historians have certainly shown how new commercial forms of entertainment emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they have done less to show how that phenomenon changed peoples' practices. The emergence of commercial leisure spaces affected the subsections of propertied society in different ways. Ability to pay was not the only factor, rather patterns of living determined individuals' involvement with new trends and spaces. By recognizing that different sorts of people engaged with commercial leisure differently we can see entrepreneurs and their ventures differently. Some historians have argued that we should look for commercialization in a wider variety of places. Not only should we consider leisure entrepreneurs to include pub owners who involved themselves in sport (as Adrian Harvey has described), but also people retailing food and drink who continued to provide a recreational service to the majority of the population (for more the role of pubs in non-propertied society see chapter 8). Account books show that NSE spending remained prominent despite the rise of commercial leisure spaces, though RV spending was significant in most cases. From the consumer's perspective, commercialization meant they had a greater variety of spaces, genres, and events to choose from. However these changes took place against a background of continuity in the ways that choices were made. Domestic sociability was not displaced by activities at commercial spaces. The middling sort did not invade polite spaces after commercialization theoretically increased access. Newspapers advertising did not become the primary way that people made decisions about

¹⁸ Even in the 1780s when the Opera at the Haymarket seems to have been reasonably secure an attempt to set up a second opera company ended in failure. John Clyde Loftis, *Sheridan and the Drama of Georgian England* (Oxford, 1976), 104.

where to go, though they might use information supplied by the press to evaluate their options.

Account books suggest that consumer spending determined the ways that leisure entrepreneurs set themselves up in terms of price and season. Patterns of attendance differed between the money and time-rich residents of the west end and the rest of the population who lacked some combination of time and money. Variations within these groups reveal differences caused by life-stage, gender, and personal preferences. Attendance patterns reveal that the motivations typically imputed to audiences only partly explain behaviour. Neither an interest in novelty, social status, nor personal improvement are evident in the majority of spending choices. Audiences were largely self-selecting; prices were less about excluding the wrong people and more about squeezing as much as possible out of the audience that came.

Carving out a space within polite routines or a niche market among the nobility could be lucrative, but long-term success was not guaranteed. At the same time appealing to a broad section of Londoners might provide some financial stability, but keeping middling and labouring patrons coming back year after year required careful attention to the product being marketed. The innovations in leisure venues involved creative work by entrepreneurs who were limited in their ability to get customers to change their habits.

5. Sociability and recreation

We have seen that people within social classes differed from each other in their preferences and activities, but the reasons behind differences between people of the same class are yet to be analysed. This chapter examines the preferences of individuals and small groups through an examination of the interplay of social networks, leisure, and pleasure. Social networks in Georgian England have rarely been examined systematically despite their importance in shaping individuals' senses of group identity. The club and business connections of the middling sort have received some attention, but our understanding of who people spent time with is impressionistic at best.¹ Historians' interest in the impact of social networks on individuals' patterns of recreation in Georgian England has primarily been confined to broad assertions about patterns of behaviour typical of particular social classes. Assuming that each social class had a typical pattern of behaviour has led historians to describe social classes as recreationally endogamous and to describe activities as obligatory. In his survey of English clubs and societies Peter Clark argued that voluntary societies were a mechanism for social segregation. Organised groups allowed men to avoid crowds, members of other classes, and women.² Merchants have variously been found at home with their wives and children or in the coffeehouse with other merchants, but in both cases they were socializing within their social sort.³ Similarly historians have assumed that the gentry and nobility stuck within their networks, excluding aspiring professionals and merchants as much as possible. Recreation, we are told, was an activity taken with one's social equals. It solidified an individual's reputation and social position by allowing him or her to exhibit the attributes expected of members of their class. The preferences generated within classes seem to have precluded an individual's scope for choice.

Not only was recreation intra-class, but historians have also contended that it was homosocial in terms of gender. Historians have argued that for men reinforcing personal

¹ Robert Morris, *Men, Women, and Property in England, 1780-1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies Amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge & New York, 2005), Jon Stobart, 'Personal and Commercial Networks in an English Port: Chester in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30/2 (2004), 277-93.

² Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), 190-1.

³ Hunt, *Middling Sort*, chapter 2, John Tosh, "The Old Adam", 70-1, Gauci, *Emporium of the World*, 96-7.

reputation meant avoiding unnecessary contact with women. Merchants had to prove their masculinity and build business contracts and so were best served by remaining in the coffeehouse. Their wives, by contrast, were busy with household duties and protecting their honor and therefore remained at home with other virtuous women and their children. For the nobility, masculinity again required men to show their ability to drink and whore. Furthermore the patterns of parliamentary sessions involved a large number of homosocial gatherings. The wives and female associates of gentry and nobles were out in public more often than men were, but they remained insulated in carriages and boxes at the opera and theatre.

Despite these assertions, no one has taken a close look at how recreational networks were maintained on a quotidian basis or systematically looked at the numbers and types of ties individuals had. This chapter shows that social class was not irrelevant to recreational networks, but it is not a sufficiently powerful as a heuristic tool to explain the sorts of people individuals socialized with. Rather recreational networks overlapped with kinship, business, and patronage networks instead of indiscriminately including people of the same class. Furthermore, socializing was not primarily homosocial. By examining the overlaps and divergences in an individual's networks, it is possible to see how individuals related to different sorts of groups. Pleasure and duty are easier to reconcile when the relationships between different networks are carefully examined.

This chapter begins by looking at the sorts of connections people had. By creating a clearer taxonomy of connections and a better sense of how people met each other it is possible to clarify the number of people in a network and how it would be organized. The connections examined here give us a sense of what brought people together and the extent to which people could shape their recreational networks to suit their own interests or changing circumstances. Terms and concepts from network theory provoke questions about the ways people in the eighteenth century thought about their companions. In particular the dichotomy of strong/weak connections (frequent interactions with people of similar status vs. infrequent connections that cover large socioeconomic gaps) and the durability of connections (as tested in diaries that cover periods of several years or more) suggest new ways of categorizing ties between people in the past. We can also compare the number of connections diarists had in order to

rethink ideas about social identity and sociability in the Georgian period. Thus a careful consideration of sociability in late eighteenth-century London gives us a chance to think over how social networks varied between people of different economic positions, ages, and genders. Sociability was often intra-class, but individuals did not socialize with everyone. Other networks came into play and individuals chose how their networks overlapped.

Assessing the distribution of power and authority within individual networks then becomes possible. Historians have demonstrated that several simultaneous hierarchies determined by such factors as wealth, credit, lifecycle position, and gender determined an individual's social status.⁴ Even within particular social groups historians have recognized the possibility for differences in status and power. The situations we find in diaries also give us a glimpse of how people made decisions about activities and how power was negotiated in the context of everyday life. By looking at the decision-making processes involved in choosing recreational activities as revealed by the language of negotiation found in letters and diaries, it is possible to see how hierarchies of power played out on a day-to-day basis. Comparing different social positions with the decisions made opens up insight into agency and its conflict with social power. We find that pleasure and duty were not incompatible as diarists enjoyed activities even when they were not free to choose those activities. However not all duties were pleasures. An analysis of agency helps to refine our understanding of recreation and the opportunities for choice that existed in recreational contexts.

Georgian sources, Georgian terms

As Mark Dawson has pointed out in the case of Samuel Pepys, diaries could function as a sort of social accounting.⁵ When diarists used their diaries to keep track of social debts and credits, diaries contain detailed information about the nature of connections and the frequency of contact. But even when a sort of social accounting was going on, family members, servants, and employees might be neglected because they did

⁴ See among many others Shepard, 'Honesty, Worth and Gender', Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, Henry French, 'Social Status, Localism and The "Middle Sort of People" In England 1620-1750', *P&P*, 166 (2000), 66-99.

⁵ Dawson, 'Histories and Texts'.

not offer social credit. This problem appears in many of the diaries reviewed here. Servants in particular were under-recorded. It is generally difficult to get a sense of the people who were omnipresent in diarists' lives.

Background information on social contacts is another of the great strengths and peculiarities of Pepys' diary, something Ian Archer and Karl Westhauser have exploited to look at social networks, friendship, and kinship.⁶ Unlike Pepys, who recorded detailed descriptions of his connections to the people he encountered, most diarists did not describe how they were connected to their activity partners. Uncovering back-stories for diarists' companions is sometimes an impossible task. Offhand comments, genealogy, wills, and other items in collections containing diaries can provide insight—but not always. I have focused primarily on people whose connections are traceable. This has biased the sample towards people who left wills, who have been studied by other scholars or genealogists, or who were part of a subculture that has emphasized group identity and heritage.⁷ In the last case I am thinking particularly of the Quakers who maintain a strong collection of material in the Friends' House Library including the "Dictionary of Quaker Biography", which collates a large volume of biographical and genealogical information about past members. Wills can make the nature of certain connections explicit, but this sample of diarists left most of their possessions to family members or servants who had been in their employment at time of death. Friends are not generally included in the will, in part because the function of a will was to ensure the welfare and stability of a family rather than to show affection to non-kin activity partners.⁸ The early modern and Georgian tradition was to distribute mourning rings to friends as tokens of remembrance, but even these important tokens do not appear in the wills I have found.⁹ Their distribution was evidently by some other means.

Adding a further layer of complexity to any attempt to understand the nature of individual relationships is the fact that many connections existed on multiple levels. For instance scholars have emphasized that family members were often business affiliates among the middle class. Business helped to hold a family together, just as a family

⁶ Archer, 'Social Networks', K Westhauser, 'Friendship and Family in Early Modern England: The Sociability of Adam Eyre and Samuel Pepys', *JSH*, 27/3 (1994), 517-36.

⁷ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, Canning, *Letter-Journal*, Curwen, *Journal*. Howard, *Eliot Papers*.

⁸ Morris, *Men, Women, and Property*, 98-109.

⁹ Charles Chichele Oman, 'Mourning Rings', *Apollo*, 43/253 (1946), 71-3.

worked together to keep the business going.¹⁰ Patronage and, for some, political interest also served as strong forces for cohesion among social groups.¹¹ It is not generally possible to understand what connection was foremost when partners in recreation shared multiple connections. Indeed, recreation could have been considered the most important of multiple bonds. Just as shared tastes have been shown to strengthen bonds in the modern world, shared diversions probably fortified some business or social partnerships.¹²

Even when diarists described the nature of each of their connections we have to question the precise meaning of the early modern terminology. Naomi Tadmor has demonstrated that the terminology of kinship and connection is not timeless, rather in the eighteenth century “family” often referred to the household family, i.e. the people living together under one roof.¹³ Thus servants might be part of the family in the Georgian context. Relatives were similarly not divided based on genealogical closeness. The emphasis was on the existence of a connection rather than the exact nature of that connection.¹⁴ Upon marriage in-laws became incorporated into the family as sons, daughters, sisters, and brothers.¹⁵ Even “friend” denoted a different sort of bond in the pre-modern world. “Friendship” was a very specific category with a complex set of expectations for behaviour. As Tadmor describes in the case of Thomas Turner, “friends” were only people that one had extremely close ties with. These relationships could be with kin and often involved financial support. Furthermore, “friendship” was maintained by duty or contract regardless of like or dislike.¹⁶ Within the category of friends were “select” friends who were particularly reliable or useful people that Turner could rely on for assistance in difficult times.¹⁷ The functional relationship implied by these terms forces us to question the ways different sorts of connections operated in networks in the past. “Cousin,” a word that was widely used but not discussed by

¹⁰ Morris, *Men, Women, and Property*, 17.

¹¹ Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics'.

¹² Lizardo, 'How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks'.

¹³ Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 123-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 133-7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 169-98.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

Tadmor, suggests a kin relationship though this could also be misleading. For instance John Eliot used the word “cousin” to refer to members of the Marshall family, to whom he had no obvious blood connection.¹⁸ Changes in terminology do not necessarily mean changes in the relationships being described, but the shifts in language mean that the modern sociological descriptions of relationships cannot be used unproblematically to describe past situations.

The functional nature of relationships also makes it impossible to assume that particular groupings were always for pleasure or work. In many cases a particular grouping in a specified location could be an instance of recreation, work, obligation, or some combination of the three. Kin were expected to be friends by providing some service, but they also blend easily into the modern category of friends, i.e. activity partners. Katharine Swett has used the letters of Sir Richard Wynn to review the great variety of relationships that might have been included under the term “friend” in the seventeenth century.¹⁹ Swett reminds us that the rhetoric of friendship was part of its content and one of the essential functions of friendship.²⁰ There has not been a similar detailed study of “friend” in the late eighteenth century. J.M. Bourne suggests a combination of uses for the nineteenth century. Sometimes “friend” was used in the early-modern sense to refer to someone who offered assistance, but in most instances it was in the twentieth-century sense.²¹ Dr. Johnson offered a similar combination of uses. According to his dictionary a “friend” could be a favorer, or one “joined to another in mutual benevolence and intimacy”.²² A friend might be someone who offered assistance, but the term could denote affection too.

Just as the terms used in the past have to be handled carefully, the strength and nature of connections cannot be inferred from the frequency of contacts. In the terminology of network theory, connections that are frequently maintained between people of similar socioeconomic position are “strong” and infrequently maintained bonds across large differences in socioeconomic status are “weak.” A “strong” connection does

¹⁸ See also David Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 113 (1986), 65-6.

¹⁹ Katharine Swett, "'The Account between Us': Honor, Reciprocity and Companionship in Male Friendship in the Later Seventeenth Century', *Albion*, 31 (1999), 1-30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

²¹ J. M. Bourne, *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1986), 79.

²² Johnson, 'A Dictionary of the English Language'.

not tell us anything about what sociologists have termed “closeness.” Closeness is a measure of emotional affinity. James Boswell provides a useful demonstration of how strong connections did not necessarily denote closeness. During the period of his *London Journal*, Boswell spent most of his time with Andrew Erskine and George Dempster. In his diary and in conversation Boswell repeatedly declared they were merely “companions” rather than “friends,” particularly after they played a trick on him.²³ In his diary account, intended for William Johnston Temple, Boswell explained that these men and he were only “cemented” by “fancy” and that it “is only because we are entertaining to one another that we are so much together.” By contrast, only to John Johnston, William Johnston Temple, and William McQuhae could Boswell “unbosom” his “anxious mind” and expect “sympathy and kindness.” Part of his trust in Johnston and Temple resulted from having known them a long time.²⁴ Boswell’s concerns provide a clear example of the difference between a strong connection and a close one. Anna Larpent also informs us of a close relationship that we would not be aware of from the frequency of their interactions. Upon hearing that Mr. Arnold (whom Larpent saw regularly, but far less frequently than many companions) was unwell, she described him as “my first friend after my husband.”²⁵ Frequent interaction and intimate knowledge of another’s affairs (particularly Boswell’s confinement with gonorrhoea in the late winter of 1763) should not be equated with strong emotional bonds and affection. Similarly infrequent interaction cannot be taken as a sign that there was not affection between two people. In this chapter I have followed Boswell’s lead and have used “companion” in preference to “friend” in order to avoid erroneously suggesting closeness.

Personal networks, pleasurable networks

Detailed examinations of social networks reveal how different sorts of networks overlapped in individual lives. Historians have used networks to explain historical phenomena in some sub-disciplines. Artists’ circles and political faction have been examined for decades as scholars looked at the personalities and interactions of individuals. Larger and less rarified networks have drawn attention more recently. The

²³ Boswell, *London Journal*, 191.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 296.

²⁵ Larpent, 'Diary', II:f. 138.

field of Atlantic history in particular emphasizes the transfer of goods and ideas between groups, actors, and regions. The interaction of remote agents has been examined with reference to scientific and mercantile networks. International exchanges of letters between people in scientific fields have encouraged deeper thinking about the conditions under which knowledge or specimens were transferred. At the same time merchants' international connections have been analysed for the light they shed on building economic connections.²⁶ Business historians have also investigated networks used to distribute goods and services, especially in the book trade.²⁷ Questions remain about how long-distance networks operated, and attention to face-to-face networks has been reserved for authors, artists, and cliques of intellectuals.

Historians have begun probing the mechanics of less rarified networks.²⁸ Ian Archer used Samuel Pepys' diary to examine social connections in restoration London.²⁹ Archer shows how Pepys' companions changed from clerks and bureaucrats to the gentry and high-ranking civil servants as Pepys himself increased his wealth and influence. Pepys was also able to "mediate between the worlds of the Court and of the City" by socializing with people above and below him, with kin and strangers, men and women. The case study provided by Pepys is exceptional in its depth and richness and other scholars have rarely produced similar work for later periods to provide detailed comparisons. In *The Gentleman's Daughter*, Amanda Vickery created a social network database from the exceptionally rich papers created by Elizabeth Shackleton. Looking at two years of Shackleton's diaries, Vickery showed that the gentlewoman's contacts were not at all confined to people of equal status. Shackleton welcomed a variety of tradespeople into her home, though generally these people offered a service in exchange for refreshment and a fee.³⁰ Vickery notes the preponderance of kin in Shackleton's social networks, but also points to the frequency of visits from non-kin merchants,

²⁶ Most notably David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995).

²⁷ James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850* (New Haven & London, 2007).

²⁸ Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, 'Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 99/6 (1994), 1411-54, Peter Bearman, *Relations into Rhetorics: Local Elite Social Structure in Norfolk, England, 1540-1640* (New Brunswick, N.J, 1993).

²⁹ Archer, 'Social Networks'.

³⁰ Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 23-9 and 385-6. An examination of William Godwin's social network is now underway. See <http://godwindiary.politics.ox.ac.uk/>.

professionals, and tradespeople. Shackleton's position in what Vickery refers to as "neighbourhood networks" in the northwest meant that she probably had more contact with social inferiors who did not provide her with a service (but who did air grievances before her or rent her land) than people either slightly lower down the social ladder or who spent more of their time in London or traveling.³¹ Nonetheless, Vickery's analysis is a useful reminder that diaries listing only contacts with people of similar status almost certainly ignore the tradespeople, bankers, and merchants that the gentry and nobility would have talked to on an almost daily basis. The extent to which the names that were recorded were pleasure contacts remains open to debate.

Studies of the social networks of merchants and the middle class have emphasized the importance of kin, but they also add business contacts as companions for recreation. Jon Stobart's examination of wills left by merchants from Chester in the early eighteenth century suggests that it was the merchant community, second to the family, that structured merchants' economic worlds. Because of the nature of Stobart's source, the extent of merchants' social worlds remain unclear. Most importantly for Stobart's argument, it was trust built up through personal communication that strengthened the ties.³² Stobart's merchants were all connected by trade and scholars have generally assumed that connections became more circumscribed by status and wealth over the eighteenth century. In the context of Leeds, Robert Morris examined the strategies for managing and distributing property over a variety of connections among the nineteenth-century middle class. Morris and Stobart examine a specific moment in the lifecycle and we cannot take their findings as indications that non-kin or non-business bonds were insignificant in everyday life. Social networks have been examined only in a limited way and attempts to compare and contrast common features and attempts to draw out information about social structure are sadly lacking.

Most work on networks suggests that a single type of bond was supremely important in guaranteeing cohesion, but when we compare different types of networks in an individual's life it becomes clear that this was not typically the case. In the case of Morris' work, the demands of a family's economic stability ensured that the family

³¹ Ibid., 29.

³² Stobart, 'Personal and Commercial Networks'.

operated together. In other words economic demands were sufficient to bring the family together and no other shared connections were needed. Similarly, scientific networks are generally presented in terms of a group coming together with the solitary objective of exchanging information. Yet as Nick Wrightson has shown, simply having common interests was not enough to hold a group together. In Wrightson's account transatlantic correspondents had to trust each other. However face-to-face networks like the ones considered here operated most successfully when the bonds were multivalent, for instance when people were kin, shared religious convictions, and enjoyed the same pastimes. Charity and patronage networks offer further evidence of the importance of multiple connections. Work on patronage is spotty in this regard. J.M. Bourne says little about socializing and recreation in his book on patronage.³³ Elaine Chalus looked at how sociability was used to create and reinforce political connections. She offers a convincing account of how men and women used social and recreational settings not only to discuss politics, but also to create and support alliances.³⁴ Chalus also discusses the ways that women were directly involved in patronage and made claims for support based on kinship, personal connections, and past promises.³⁵ Despite the limited information available on the diarists' contacts, most of the connections are demonstrably multivalent.

Network-size and organization was related to class. Comparing the strong connections of propertied society generates two basic models of social networks. Gentry and members of the elite professions exhibit larger networks than merchants, low-level bureaucrats, and other relatively modest diarists. Merchant Thomas Bridge socialized with a miniscule circle: only fifteen activity-partners are named in a twelve-month period of 1762-3. Bridge does not appear to have participated in any clubs, religious, or civic institutions. Stephen Monteage and Elijah Goff had even smaller networks. Other merchants had larger circles, with larger numbers of kin and often with plenty of co-religionists. John Thornton exhibited a much larger social network. John Eliot, an up-and-coming underwriter, listed forty-four activity partners in the course of his eight-month diary. Eliot's social circle was much larger than Bridge's, but considerably smaller than that found with gentry diaries. Anna Larpent's network extended to over

³³ Bourne, *Patronage and Society*.

³⁴ Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics'.

³⁵ Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, C.1754-1790* (Oxford, 2005), 106-56.

120 people in both 1792 and 1796. Lady Mary Coke's interactions were more numerous still. People with time to cultivate social connections and the social and political influence to maintain those connections created large networks.

Archer's account of Pepys's network suggests that people who were upwardly or downwardly mobile cultivated new connections while abandoning others. Westhauser shows that Pepys periodically cut out certain connections in an effort to improve his social image. Social mobility almost certainly encouraged people to create new connections and caused less useful companions to fall out of the network. As Archer shows, however, assuming that social networks were also functional does not mean that people were cut the instant they were no longer useful; multivalent bonds simply made connections more durable. Thomas Bridge's diary suggests that successful merchants were likely to see changes in their social circle. Beginning as a comfortable, but not particularly wealthy merchant in the late 1750s, Bridge succeeded in accruing a substantial fortune. Changes in his situation led to a variety of social companions entering and leaving his network over the more than forty years of his diary. Though Bridge did not explicitly declare his intention to cut people from his circle, their disappearance may well have been by design rather than by a natural process of growing apart. Without Bridge clearly stating a desire to remove people from his social circle it is almost impossible to tell why certain individuals vanished from his social routines. Activity-partners may have needed an economic function to stay in Bridge's network.

Gentry networks seem to have been more stable than merchants' connections. The turnover in companions over time is neither surprisingly high, nor static. The few people who left longitudinal information show that the companions one interacted with most frequently remained relatively stable over long periods. Comparing Anna Larpent's socializing for 1792 and 1796 we find names the same names at the top of both lists. Mrs. and Miss Fremeaux, Mrs. Beaver, Mr. Planta, and Mrs. Sargent were all among the ten most frequent companions recorded in both years. The later sample introduces some émigrés from France who dominated Mrs. Larpent's time. Of course people from the first list might have died or be hidden behind a married name in the second session. For instance Miss Croftes who visited Larpent more than anyone else in 1792 but who does not appear four years later. Time constraints prevented me from examining all entries

from the intervening years. As we would expect, over time gradual changes become considerable shifts.

Both Chalus and Wrightson echo scholarship on modern networks showing that personal networks and cultural tastes influence each other. An individual's tastes work to build a network at the same time as that network influences taste.³⁶ This is borne out by evidence that a "few years [could cause] great changes" in a network if someone decided to change their lifestyle.³⁷ In the midst of her letter journal Lady Mary Coke decided to "leave the world" and abandon fashionable society. As a result, a comparison of Lady Mary Coke's companions across a seven-year gap reveals more substantial shifts than those in other diaries. Princess Amelia and Coke's sister Lady Dalkeith (Baroness Greenwich by 1773) remained important to Mary's network. Coke's other sister Lady Strafford presumably continued to be a frequent companion but does not appear in the later year because Coke only kept the diary when she was separated from Strafford. Lady Betty Mackenzie rose from the top-middle of the pack to become the second most frequent companion. Many women disappeared from the diary once Lady Mary no longer operated in society. In particular the fashionable hostesses who Mary had regularly interacted with at card parties were no longer mentioned once Lady Mary ceased to attend their functions.³⁸

In terms of numbers and frequency of contact, kin dominated personal networks at all levels of propertied society.³⁹ Kinship served as a bond that created durable connections that were present in almost every social circle. Kin were primarily siblings, parents, grandparents, and children, though aunts, uncles, and cousins made up a large proportion as well.⁴⁰ It is sometimes difficult to tell which people were related by blood or marriage. At least 18% of John Eliot's contacts were connected to him through his

³⁶ Lizardo, 'How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks'.

³⁷ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, IV:163.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, IV:155.

³⁹ Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 23-4.

⁴⁰ This contrasts with the early modern situations when kin networks were allegedly small. However compare Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin'. with Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England, 1450-1800* (Harlow, 2001), 43. The situation in nineteenth-century Kent looks similar to Georgian London. Barry Reay, 'Kinship and the Neighborhood in Nineteenth-Century Rural England: The Myth of the Autonomous Nuclear Family', *Journal of Family History*, 21 (1996), 87-104. Difficulties remain with identifying non-household kin Charles Wetherell and Andrejs Plakans, 'Households and Kinship Networks: The Costs and Benefits of Contextualization', *Continuity and Change*, 18/1 (2003), 49-76.

family. In most cases the number of relatives as a percentage of the total social circle is not as important as the frequency of interaction with relatives. Lady Mary Coke's social calendar was dominated by her mother, sisters, and cousins. Coke's mother and sisters saw her every day for meetings that probably crossed the boundaries between recreation and family business. This is similarly true for most people of the nobility, with the Grenvilles and the Dukes of Chandos being most notable in this sample.

Family was the earliest and most enduring locus of amusement for almost all the diarists considered here. William Burgess' activities were undertaken almost exclusively with kin, and mainly his brothers and parents at that. The example of the Tyrrell family, with two girls and up to five boys at home, shows that boys and girls wavered between playing together and playing in gendered groupings. Some diarists tended to associate with particular siblings, or with siblings rather than parents, as was the case with Lady Brougham. Young, unmarried men may have been particularly likely to socialize with a female sibling as John Eliot did with his sister Mariabella. Mariabella's ubiquitous presence in the diary reflects her importance as a partner for heterosocial activities.⁴¹

Children who had not yet left home were particularly likely to spend time with their mother and siblings. Breaking out of the family circle to find companions who were neither kin nor family friends appears to have been difficult until a child went away to school. Girls who went to boarding school made non-kin friends more readily than girls who remained at home. Young females who remained in the home, such as diarist Caroline Powys, were limited to making friends from their parents' circle. The diaries of Emma Austin-Leigh, Eliza Chute, and Joanna Bonham Carter also reveal girls who were largely limited to their parents' social circle while they lived in London. Most boys from propertied families spent some of their teenage years in boarding schools away from home, but when they were located at home they were very much under their mother's supervision as comments by Anna Larpent and Elizabeth Tyrrell demonstrate. Larpent instituted intense schooling when the boys were at home, subjecting them to extensive language training and quizzing them on the classics and history. Elizabeth Tyrrell was happy to have her sons home, but she was also happy that they never stayed for extended

⁴¹ No potential suitors for Mariabella ever appear in John's diary or in the family letters and Eliot Howard suggested that Mariabella's authorship of an "Essay on Deformity" indicates that she had some sort of atypical physical appearance. Howard, *Eliot Papers*.

periods. Sending boys away offered them the opportunity to be socialized in a homosocial environment, but it did not liberate them from their mother's supervision as Anthony Fletcher has suggested.⁴² Parents and siblings are certainly the easiest relatives to identify. As far as they can be identified cousins, aunts, and uncles feature prominently in several social circles, but nowhere near as often as parents and siblings. The Eliot and Knight networks feature unusually frequent interaction with cousins, aunts, and uncles.

Parents saw their children more often than we might expect from the accounts of childhood and parenting arguing that children were irritating burdens to fashionable life. Joanna Smith, aged nine, mentioned being at a party for 300 people thrown by her parents up until midnight when the guests went to supper.⁴³ Children under the age of ten were explicitly mentioned as being present at the Spencers' dinner table, and children as young as twelve made journeys to the theatres and other amusements with parents. Mary Ayrton listed friends of the family and friends of her mother alongside a collection of other Misses she knew from school in a list of "friends and acquaintances in 1786" when she would have been about thirteen.⁴⁴

The eighteenth century has been seen as a period of strong impulses to both homosociability and the conjugal family.⁴⁵ The diarists considered here reflect this duality in their daily lives. The extended family made up the largest and most important part of the personal networks of most men and women, but men retained connections with other men forged for a variety of reasons. School and university were important periods for forging connections, with university friendships being prominent at least through men's twenties. Canning and Hobhouse in particular stand out for their close ties with people they met at the universities. Sources for studying the durability of university connections have not presented themselves and both Canning and Hobhouse did not maintain their diaries into middle age.

Merchants and professionals had few, if any, school or university friends, but

⁴² Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*.

⁴³ Smith, 'Diary', 27 May 1802.

⁴⁴ British Library, Ayrton Collection, Add MSS 52351, Mary Ayrton, 'Pocket Book Extracts', f. 3.

⁴⁵ Westhauser, 'Friendship and Family', Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, Harvey, 'Barbarity in a Teacup?', Marie Mulvey Roberts, 'Pleasures Engendered by Gender: Homosociality and the Club', in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, Tosh, 'The Old Adam'.

most did socialize with business partners. Stephen Monteage does not appear to have spent any time at all with the other men from his office, but he may have been particularly antisocial. Thomas Bridge and John Eliot both engaged in recreational activities with business associates and Jacob Hagen and Elijah Goff both dined or drank coffee with business colleagues in gatherings that crossed the borders between recreation and business. Gatherings with business colleagues were not always sexually homogeneous. Work connections could lead to gatherings with colleagues and their wives. Thomas Bridge hosted business associates and in at least three of the meetings, those with Mr. & Mrs. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Bagshaw, and Mr. and Mrs. Willis, interacted with their wives as well.

Neighbours are often hard to identify as such, but few people meeting the description appear as companions. Elizabeth Inchbald at one point mentions talking to a Mr. Baker out of her window.⁴⁶ Inchbald only mentioned interacting with Mr. Baker on three other occasions that year: once more at the window, once for some supper, and once when he came to visit. Companions might well live nearby, but some other connection—kinship, business, or institutional—was necessary to bring neighbours together. This leaves unanswered questions about how members of propertied society interacted with the people who lived around them. Neighbours may have been greeted, but not mentioned in diaries, or ignored completely by people who spent most of their time inside the house rather than around it and who were able to come and go in a coach rather than passing neighbours on foot. Evidence from the Old Bailey suggests that the lower classes associated with neighbours more frequently than other classes did. Victims of crimes testified at the Old Bailey and claimed to have been visiting neighbours when they were robbed, though they appear far less often than victims of crime who were visiting family or interacting with co-workers at the time of the crime.⁴⁷

This evidence suggests that we must re-evaluate the functions of neighbourhoods.⁴⁸ The bonds of neighbourhood evident here do not suggest a tightly knit community, but rather close connections with people with whom one shared space

⁴⁶ Inchbald, *Diaries*, II:61.

⁴⁷ OBP, James Phealen, Thomas Mullins, Theft: Simple Grand Larceny, 24th April, 1790 (t17900424-94), OBP, Ann De Beaupain, Theft: Simple Grand Larceny, 25th June 1761 (t17610625-15).

⁴⁸ David Garrioch and Mark Peel, 'Introduction: The Social History of Urban Neighborhoods', *JUH*, 32 (2006), 663-76.

contrasting with only occasional interaction with people who lived within a few streets. As chapter 3 showed, people in propertied society did not have visiting relationships with everyone on their street, even in the more socially homogeneous areas of the west end (see on page 99). It may be that other venues, for instance church or the street itself, served as the meeting point for a geographically defined local community, while visiting in homes was restricted only to neighbours who were strongly connected. Given what diaries reveal about churchgoing and street socializing, however, it seems likely that individuals and households had only a small number of strong links within their neighbourhood.

For those people who actively participated in a religious community, co-religionists became important activity partners. Devout Quakers and Anglicans, particularly Evangelicals, associated with others of their faith. John Eliot's social circle primarily consisted of other Quakers and Jacob Hagen was deeply involved in the Quaker community in his area, visiting many of his "friends." This was not merely a reflection of the insulated Quaker community. John Thornton socialized heavily with other Evangelicals, particularly others who lived near him and who were also part of the "Clapham Sect." Elizabeth Tyrrell often mentions having people in her pew who she also dined and visited with. Anglicans also may have partly seen church-going as a community activity that allowed them to socialize with friends and companions and that was independent of religious belief. Even for people with less status at stake, attending Anglican service may have been as much about maintaining position in the community and making business connections as it was about building a relationship with God.⁴⁹ Nor did going to church necessarily mean that people made friends. Samuel Curwen went to the Essex House Chapel twice on Sundays, but does not mention having made any lasting contacts in the congregation.

Common interests and institutions that grew up around those interests could facilitate other sorts of bonds; some lasted throughout life, but others proved more transient. Connections formed on common interests, including Masonic brotherhood, support of English goods (the Antigallican Society), or political ideology (Brooks's), do appear, but they seem to have been short lived or characteristic of the networks of people

⁴⁹ Rubinstein, *Men of Property*, 145-63. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 254.

such as Samuel Curwen who had few strong connections. Even Curwen interacted with few of the men he met at Masonic meetings outside the lodge. Diarists were not as heavily involved in clubs as Peter Clark suggests they should be.⁵⁰ Clark argues that clubs were the primary focus for men outside of the home. The diaries suggest that for a few men this was true, but for many male diarists clubs were just one of several activities. Indeed some diarists had no affiliation with clubs at all. Men who were not obviously involved in clublife include the Dukes of Chandos, Charles de Coetlogon, John Eliot, Elijah Goff, Jacob Hagen, Job Knight, and Stephen Monteage. Except for Eliot and Knight (who were Quakers) all were older men who may not have needed activities outside of home and work to occupy their time.

For many men clubs were important, but the nature of the bond between club members remains under-analysed. Informal groups who dined together once a week or once a fortnight were common and often brought together people who were already a cohesive group. Thomas Birch participated in four of these dining clubs and these appear to have been of long standing: Sundays at Mr. Stanhope's (later at Lord Willoughby's), breakfast on Monday at Lord Roysson's, tea on Wednesday with a group who met in a different house each week, Thursdays at the Mitre. Lady Mary Coke dined fortnightly at the home of Mr. William Morrice with a group of companions.⁵¹ Participation in these informal clubs may have strengthened the bonds of the group by ensuring they met regularly, but in none of these cases did they first meet at the club. Club members who did not know each other previously seem to have been content to spend time together at the club, but did not come together outside of it.

Rarely a second bond could develop for co-members of a club. Samuel Brasbridge became close with a Mr. Owen whom he had known at one of his clubs, but only after Brasbridge had saved Owen's life one night on the Thames.⁵² Without some such emotional bond, or some other link, club colleagues limited their contact to club meetings. Clubs may have provided a stronger sense of cohesion lower down the social scale as they became institutions of mutual economic support rather than just a group of

⁵⁰ Clark, *British Clubs*.

⁵¹ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, IV:166-7.

⁵² Joseph Brasbridge, *The Fruits of Experience; or, Memoir of Joseph Brasbridge* (London, 1824), 16.

people with shared interests.⁵³ Club associates could go in the other direction, becoming less trusting and close. Curwen had a snuffbox stolen when he left it on a table at a Masonic lodge meeting, apparently by one of his brothers.⁵⁴ With trust problematic between members in the group, it is unsurprising that bonds founded on club connections were weak. More than just club fellowship was necessary to colligate a group outside the club's walls. Age may have been a factor: young people seem more willing to form connections with strangers than older people.

Greater trust could be formed between people who had recommendations from a mutual associate. Socializing could help create the trust necessary for patronage, but it was not essential.⁵⁵ The major hostesses were not the most important distributors of political patronage, nor were they often married to men in the most powerful positions.⁵⁶ Not all patrons were willing to facilitate social events. Some recipients of patronage warranted social attention, others did not. Boswell's attempts to obtain a commission provide examples of three sorts of patrons. Lord Eglinton, the Duchess of Northumberland, and the Duke of Queensbury all received attention from Boswell and responded in different ways. None provided Boswell with his commission, though the extent to which that was due to his father Lord Auchinleck's intervention against his son's plans remains unclear. Eglinton appears to have eagerly embraced his young countryman as a sociable companion. Boswell was frequently in Eglinton's company throughout the period of the *London Journal*. The Duchess of Northumberland invited Boswell to routs at her home. These were not public events, yet such invitations demonstrated no deep bond between Boswell and Northumberland. Northumberland, Boswell tells us, treated him with a cold politeness. The Duke of Queensbury cordially received Boswell and promised to make some requests on his behalf, but showed no interest in developing their relationship further. Northumberland's role as a hostess makes her invitation to Boswell unsurprising. Eglinton presumably enjoyed Boswell's

⁵³ McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *Birth of a Consumer Society*, 218-30.

⁵⁴ Curwen, *Journal*, 716.

⁵⁵ Donna T. Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige: Female Charity in an Age of Sentiment', in John Brewer and Susan Staves (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London & New York, 1995), Edith Sedgewick Larson, 'A Measure of Power: The Personal Charity of Elizabeth Montagu', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 16 (1986), 197-210.

⁵⁶ Judith Schneid Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class, and Politics in Late Georgian Britain* (New York & London, 2003), 100-1.

company and cultivated a relationship for that reason. Age may have discouraged Boswell's potential patrons from inviting him into their society. Northumberland was more than twice Boswell's age and Queensbury almost triple it.

Having mutual friends may have allowed two people to form a semi-durable bond originating in a common interest. The amateur musician John Marsh provided examples of people with whom he spent time solely on the basis of a shared interest in music. For instance he was introduced to a Mr. Glover whom he later accompanied to see an organ in Essex.⁵⁷ Mary Berry became close with Mrs. Damer through mutual friend Horace Walpole. Lady Mary Coke's diary reveals a collection of women united as much by similar status and a common love of sociable gatherings, particularly in the season, as by political/business interest. Once Coke stopped going to card parties several times a week her association with these women rapidly dropped off.

As the forgoing discussion has suggested, most recreation was taken in the company of both men and women. Only for young men who had left home but who were not married did homosocial recreation predominate, and even then most men socialized with women on a regular basis. The presence of a wife at home changed patterns of socializing for most men.⁵⁸ John Wilkes is an obvious exception. He was married, but estranged, and treated his daughter like a housekeeper and hostess. In most circumstances having a wife meant either spending time at home with her or, more usually, changing patterns of socializing so that she could be included. Wives took time away from men's homosocial relationships, but no diarists express anxiety that they might not be spending enough time either with their wife or their friends. So while wives and male friends might be said to have been in competition, it does not look as if it was an antagonistic relationship. Rather heterosocial patterns of recreation were reshaped to include wives.

Relations between the sexes were not totally companionate in Georgian London, however. For married men there was variation in the ways that wives were portrayed in journals. Some diaries suggest more uneven household relationships than others. William Bray and Thomas Bridge rarely wrote about their wives. This probably relates

⁵⁷ Huntington Library, John Marsh journals, HM 54457, XVI:f. 27.

⁵⁸ Swett, "The Account between Us", 25. Brasbridge does express guilt at having spent too much time away from his wife when he was first married Brasbridge, *Fruits of Experience*.

to the function they envisioned for their diaries as accounts of their business or public life, but it is also suggestive of their attitude towards mixed-gender sociability. John Wilkes and Thomas Birch clearly kept their diaries as records of *men* they met at public venues and people with whom they dined. Wilkes does record some of his love interests and his daughter's presence at meals, but his focus was mainly on men. Women acted as hosts more often than men did, but Wilkes was the only diarist who records a woman presiding over an all-male gathering.

Instances when male diarists explicitly expressed a preference for all-male company are rare, but not unknown. Samuel Curwen was greatly relieved when the appearance of a Mr. Greene allowed him to leave the heterosocial card table and dash off to his "more agreeable weekly rendezvous the Crown Ale House Lodge."⁵⁹ Even with marriage it might take time for a man to partake regularly of amusement with his wife. Joseph Brasbridge claims that for years after his second marriage he spent the majority of his time with club associates. Only after he resurrected his business as a silversmith and gave up a life of drinks and clubs did he begin to take more interest in his wife and children.⁶⁰ Desire for time with the lads should not be read simply as a diarist's lack of interest in his wife. Thomas Moore enjoyed being in London and was certainly a man about town: he sang flash songs, watched boxing matches, and was friends with Byron. But the surprise arrival of his wife "delighted" him and led him to cancel his evening's arrangement before he "went to the Coach to meet" her and after tea "took her to Astley's and saw the High-mettled racer...."⁶¹

Some women's diaries provide another point of view on marriages where the husband was often away or rarely mentioned. Elizabeth Tyrrell and Catherine Mackintosh both mention their husbands being in other places more often than they discuss them being at home and interacting with the family. Mental homosociability is sometimes evident in accounts of gatherings. Mary Berry prioritized the women she met, often grouping (and dismissing) the men present as "their husbands."⁶² People who were at gatherings looking for people of the opposite sex could prioritize people differently.

⁵⁹ Curwen, *Journal*, II:748.

⁶⁰ Brasbridge, *Fruits of Experience*, 3-4, 152, 255.

⁶¹ Moore, *Journal*, 209.

⁶² E.g. 19 February 1808

Modes of writing might have allowed diarists to privilege one gender or another, but diaries do not provide strong evidence for arguing that either gender lived in primarily homosocial worlds. Heterosocial amusement was more common among particular age groups, but exclusively homosocial diversion was limited to particular pleasures or events in morally dubious public spaces such as coffeehouses or eating houses.

As we might expect, certain activities were undertaken in homosocial crowds and others were not. Partners for activities were sometimes chosen because they had a particular bond, but often companions were recommended by their age, gender, and disposition. There do not seem to have been consistent rules for determining appropriate partners for particular activities, nor were there more than general patterns in group size. Meals could be homosocial or heterosocial. Public meals did not generally involve women, but meals at home could be either all-male or mixed. Gatrell, among others, has suggested that after-dinner drinking divided women from men as all men remained to drink healths while women retired to another room.⁶³ This pattern certainly existed, but the diaries of George Canning and Joseph Farington in particular include instances of men retiring with the women or women remaining. The rules of dining were probably more flexible than some historians have wanted to believe. Gatrell sees the women's retiring from the room as a way of setting up a homosocial space within the home where men could behave badly. Few diarists mention drinking too much, either in the form of anecdotes of their own drunkenness or by commenting on hangovers, but the accounts that exist do not suggest people were prudish. Several female correspondents commented on men who arrived at events drunk.⁶⁴ The complaints were not about drunkenness as such, but rather they were directed towards antisocial behaviour fuelled by alcohol. Being drunk was generally regarded with mild amusement, but it was not appropriate to show up "disguised in liquor" or to get sick.

Public spaces might call for homosocial or heterosocial groups depending on the venue and the occasion. Pleasure gardens, theatres, the Opera, and shops were visited in groups of different sizes that could be either mixed or homosocially male or female.

⁶³ Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 121-3.

⁶⁴ Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 115, Fremantle, Campbell, and Fremantle, *Wynne Diaries*, 447 and 456, Harriet Granville, *Hary-O: The Letters of Lady Harriet Cavendish, 1796-1809*, eds George Leveson-Gower and Iris Leveson-Gower Palmer (London, 1940), 43.

Most companions tended to be of a similar age, though children might go with parents or older women might chaperone younger ladies. For both men and women of the *beau monde*, theatres or the Opera could be visited alone or in small groups just like a visit to a private house.⁶⁵ People could expect to meet people they already knew and so even women did not need to arrive in a group. Theatres, concerts, pleasure gardens, and the Opera were all heterosocial public spaces where women and men (of broadly similar social position) mingled and passed each other. The companions one chose to travel to commercial venues with were often close family friends, but the sociability that diarists recorded at performances indicates that having a traveling companion did not limit one's options for socializing.

A few activities had particular types of groups associated with them. Claire Walsh has examined the groups that ventured out to shop. Her findings that women shopped in groups while men shopped alone are partly supported by diaries, which show groups of women shopping together.⁶⁶ However men offer less evidence of how they shopped. Boswell does report shopping with a group of women, but other instances of men shopping with women do not appear.⁶⁷ The culture of fashionable men's shops in the Regency period may have encouraged shopping in small groups, though this is not recorded.⁶⁸ Certain other shops may have had a club-like atmosphere. Godwin frequented Joseph Johnson's bookshop in St. Paul's, which he and a group of radicals treated like a club.⁶⁹ Coffeehouses, public houses, and other drinking establishments were spaces where male diarists primarily interacted with men. Women were not excluded from metropolitan drinking establishments, but the rate of propertied women visiting them appears to have been low. Supping at the pleasure gardens or the fashionable mixed-sex club at Almack's were notable exceptions to the pattern of all-male public dining.

These descriptions of different sorts of bonds indicate that social position and life-stage worked together to shape the balance between different sorts of activity partners. Certain people seem to have become hubs for recreational networks as they grew older,

⁶⁵ Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*, 24, 102-7, 193-6, and passim.

⁶⁶ Walsh, 'Shops, Shopping, and the Art of Decision Making'.

⁶⁷ Boswell, *London Journal*, 110.

⁶⁸ Breward, 'Masculine Pleasures'.

⁶⁹ Beth Lau, 'William Godwin and the Joseph Johnson Circle: The Evidence of the Diaries', *Wordsworth Circle*, 33/3 (2002), 104-9, Carol Hall, 'Joseph Johnson', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

but it was not a part of the lifecycle that came along for all men or women. A man who was at or near the top of his social group in terms of wealth and prestige might bring people together. Earl Spencer certainly functioned in this role, as did John Eliot at a younger age and for a more modest group. Yet most of the diarists were not hubs. Some adult males who headed a household brought together sons and daughters with their families, but few men played a wider role as facilitators of sociability.

The person at the centre of a social network still had to visit others and accept invitations from lesser connections. Social relationships were more reciprocal than those recorded by Samuel Pepys a century earlier.⁷⁰ Even the most highly regarded people both paid and received visits in eighteenth-century networks, though people in the best position to host tended to do more hosting. The prominence of women as hostesses adds another layer of nuance to our understanding of social visiting. For at least the gentry and nobility, women saw more visitors and did more visiting than men, but women visited other women most often. Men visited less, but visited both men and women.⁷¹ Men visited women of all ages, and probably visited more women than men for recreation because women hosted mixed-gender gatherings. Few instances of courtship appear in the diaries I have examined, but women were more likely to host potential suitors than go visit them, something that was also a feature of late Stuart domestic life.⁷²

The choice of partners for different activities involves a complex of motivations including preferences about companions, propriety, and family obligations. The choice of activity could partly determine the companion, but the companion sometimes determined the activity as well. Neither decision was independent of other factors. Diaries provide little insight into how particular individuals were selected for different activities. Some patterns of age and gender can be discerned: the elderly were unlikely to be invited out riding or to late night activities and women were not taken for public consumption of food except at pleasure gardens or semi-rural pubs and tea gardens. It is possible that little thought was given to choosing an activity partner beyond the selection of an available character whose health and gender allowed it. Finding someone who was free to take time for amusement may have been difficult enough. Whether diarists had

⁷⁰ Westhauser, 'Friendship and Family', 526-8.

⁷¹ Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics'.

⁷² Melville, 'The Use and Organisation', 238.

preferred riding or bowling partners is difficult to say from the limited evidence presented in the diaries.

Status variations within networks

The evidence I have been able to gather about networks suggests that network connections did not generally cross large gaps in status. The extent of status variation within an individual's recreational network depended on that individual's social status. Members of elite social groups exhibit networks that were larger, but more limited in their socioeconomic variation. Gentry and nobility were most likely to interact with those similar to themselves, especially others with titles. This is particularly pronounced for titled people over the age of thirty because friends of a similar age were more likely to have come into their hereditary title. Earl Spencer, the Dukes of Chandos, Lady Mary Coke, and Lady Anna Eliza Grenville primarily socialized with people who also had titles, not least of all because their families had large numbers of titled members. Younger people who would later succeed to or marry into titles or be ennobled (James Boswell, John Cam Hobhouse, Thomas Pelham, Mary Anne Eden [later Lady Brougham]) did not tend to keep such rarified company, though this is probably because they socialized with people who had not yet inherited or been granted titles though they may have expected to.

Social class was relevant further down the social ladder too. As Ian Archer showed for the friends and companions of Samuel Pepys, family members were by no means equal in financial or social position.⁷³ But Pepys represents a special case. Having risen from a middling status to wealth and connection, Pepys left many social connections behind as he aged. Most of the diarists in my sample did not follow such a dramatic trajectory. Some were successful business people or became wealthy over the course of their lives, but the majority occupied relatively stable positions. For most people the lifecycle involved some variations in wealth and status, but large changes were not the norm.⁷⁴ There is little indication that the kin recorded differed from their diarist relatives in social status. There are no explicit descriptions of the financial standing of

⁷³ Archer, 'Social Networks', 87-90.

⁷⁴ Muldrew, 'Class and Credit'.

kin in diaries. Nor do wills make explicit reference to financial status, though some wills imply financial status. Elizabeth [I] Tyrrell left her entire estate to her daughters Ann and Elizabeth, both described as spinsters.⁷⁵ Two sons appeared in person to agree to the will, suggesting that the family had agreed to the distribution of money. Perhaps the two unmarried, female daughters had few other prospects for financial support, while the sons were already well established. John Eliot's practice of hosting his cousins, even those who were significantly older than him, suggests the relative poverty of some of his relations, but most of these same cousins were able to go riding with him. Did someone else provide the horses? Unfortunately even glimpses like these are rare.

Organizations or connections that brought people together across class boundaries generally did not bridge large gaps in social status. In this sample it was religion that was most likely to encourage recorded connections with people of different social positions. Jacob Hagen's participation in a committee for visiting other Quakers in August 1787 put him in touch with people from a variety of social backgrounds. These were social visits, but they were bound up with Quaker doctrine and the importance of visiting and community-building. In contrast to the Quaker situation, it seems that Anglicans were less likely to become connected with social inferiors through religious worship. Elizabeth Tyrrell [both mother and daughter] noted down the friends and family who were invited into the pew at service or where Elizabeth [I]'s children sat when then entered other pews. Her attention to detail gives the impression that only those who were known to the family joined them in the pew. Others who also paid for pews (e.g. James Ward and the Dukes of Chandos) presumably restricted entry to family, friends, and associates as well. Samuel Curwen had less control over his pew and so sat with different people each week. He makes few remarks about the status of the people who sat near him, offering only comments like "well dressed Scotch Lassie."⁷⁶

The household might encourage certain types of cross-class interaction, but the durability of those connections remains in doubt. In particular, people who lived together often formed close but short-lived bonds. As I discuss in chapter 6, lodging often meant sharing space and spending time with a landlord or landlady. Newspaper advertisements

⁷⁵ PROB 11/1835 (4)

⁷⁶ Curwen, *Journal*, 685.

seeking accommodation or searching for inmates describe the sorts of qualities desired in potential applicants, suggesting that sociable interaction was desired. It is important not to exaggerate the extent of this phenomenon. The majority of advertisements in *The Times* do not mention expectations for the relationship and it is unsurprising that people seeking accommodation would declare themselves to be amiable or respectable. Nevertheless, many advertisements do list interests the advertiser hoped to share with a successful applicant. The specificity of the advertisement about common interests, such as “social retirement, music, [and] books”, or requests for “cheerful society”, indicates that advertisers were looking for people with whom they could have a relationship and who would be a significant part of their recreational life.⁷⁷ Though a journalist cited by Leonore Davidoff was almost certainly wrong that landladies kept lodgers “just” for society, we can see that sociability was an aspect of keeping a lodging house over a long period.⁷⁸

Landlords and landladies expected some sort of interaction, but that did not mean that lodgers were similarly included. Samuel Curwen got on well with his landlord and landlady, Mr. and Mrs. Counsel. He particularly enjoyed spending time with “Mrs. C”, whom he described as “an amiable character”.⁷⁹ They took walks and went to the theatre together, besides spending most evenings indoors playing cards. For Curwen, his landlord and landlady served as a surrogate family, replacing the wife he left in New England when he fled to escape persecution. Curwen continued to visit Mrs. C years after he had moved out and relocated to the other side of town, perhaps because he lacked other connections in the metropolis.⁸⁰

Master-servant residential relationships did not preclude socializing either. Apprentices might socialize with their master as Edward Binyon, an apprentice linen draper, did. Binyon frequently dined and occasionally took walks with his master.⁸¹ Binyon’s servile position did not rule him out as a companion, perhaps because his

⁷⁷ *The Times*, Friday, Feb 15, 1799; pg. 1; Issue 4410; Thursday, May 04, 1797; pg. 1; Issue 3886; 1 July 1819.

⁷⁸ Davidoff also thinks the journalist was misguided. Leonore Davidoff, 'The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century England', in Sandra Burman (ed.), *Fit Work for Women* (Oxford, 1979), 89.

⁷⁹ Curwen, *Journal*, 672.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 826 and 836.

⁸¹ Binyon, 'Diary', Binyon, 'Diary of a London Quaker'.

servility was part of the lifecycle and not a permanent marker of status. Servants, by contrast, were rarely recorded enjoying recreation with their master or mistress in diaries. A handful of servants appear in the diaries of Thomas Bridge and Elizabeth Tyrrell, but only Stephen Montage mentions interacting with servants to any great degree. Montage was apparently close with his non-resident housekeeper, Mrs. Rubidge, as he recorded having conversations with her about her life and the wellbeing of her husband and son. They also went to the theatre together.⁸² Mrs. Rubidge and her son “little Joey” joined Montage on short excursions, traveling with him, his friend Mr. Leadbetter and Miss Kitty (perhaps another servant), to Tooting to dine.⁸³ Even Mr. Rubidge, who does not appear to have worked for Montage, entered into Stephen’s social circle: on Michaelmas Day they walked together and drank tea in Montage’s house. Montage’s descriptions of the conversations he had with Mrs. Rubidge suggest that he asked all the questions, but this may reflect his writing style rather than the actual mode of their interactions. Montage's intimacy with his servants is unusual and perhaps resulted from his lack of kin. Montage never mentions a wife or children, though it is not clear whether he was a widower or a lifelong bachelor.

Sustained inter-class contact generally came through participation in clubs and societies. Social butterflies such as Thomas Birch, John Wilkes, Samuel Curwen, and John Marsh were more likely to have recorded companions of higher and lower status, at least partly because their networks were so substantial. By participating in meetings with people of similar interests, certain diarists came into contact with large groups of people, most of a similar social status, but some higher and lower. Scientific networks incorporated a wide variety of different people. In the context of gardening networks members of the nobility came into contact with merchants and members of the professions as well as professional gardeners who, despite having an interest in a polite pursuit, would have had the status of tradesmen. Nevertheless the skills and attributes of tradesmen and the knowledge, connections, and financial resources of the upper middling sort were useful to the gentry and nobility.⁸⁴

⁸² Montage, 'Diary', 21 February 1763.

⁸³ Ibid., 15 May 1763.

⁸⁴ Benjamin Heller, 'Recreation and the Making of Gardening Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century London', in Felix Sprang and Anja Hill-Zenk (eds.), *Leisure and the Making of Knowledge in the Eighteenth*

Some patronage connections crossed sizable social gaps and people invited objects of charity into their homes. Anna Larpent socialized over tea with a Mrs. Bontein and described her as an object of charity. Larpent provided Bontein with needlework to sell.⁸⁵ Bontein's position was clearly subservient (and Larpent consistently made this clear in her diary), but Larpent still brought her in. Associations with people who were seeking or dispensing patronage or charity offered one way in which socioeconomic differences could be bridged.

Just because people's social circles were not diverse does not mean that they did not encounter strangers and members of different classes in the context of recreation. Temporary companions in the theatre will be considered in chapter 8, but we also find temporary encounters in other settings that led diarists to socialize with people of different status in a recreational setting. While eating, drinking, and being merry, James Boswell met a man whom he treated as an object of charity. The man told his story of misfortunes (though the stories may have been untrue as Boswell was attacked by his neighbours for encouraging a worthless man when he attempted to give him a few shillings later in the week).⁸⁶ In public settings encounters with other sorts were also possible. How close the contact would have been is more difficult to evaluate. On 20 April 1790, Elijah Goff "dined at the London Tavern with the Duke of Glouster [sic], his son Prince William with several noblemen and a very numerous company on the anniversary of the London Hospital." While Goff's description initially suggests that he had dined in close proximity to the duke and prince, it becomes clear from the rest of the sentence that, in fact, he was just part of a large gathering patronized by the royals.

Cross-status contact generally seems to have been limited in duration and restricted in location to clubs, theatres, and similar venues. On a day-to-day basis recreation created few weak bonds (i.e. connections over a large gap in social standing). Except to the extent that people from different levels of society enjoyed going to the theatre or being a part of the same audience, there is little evidence that recreation created connections that would alleviate social conflict.

Century (Leiden, forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Larpent, 'Diary', I:f. 37.

⁸⁶ Boswell, *London Journal*, 119.

Social position, agency, and choice

Though cross-class sociability was not prominent in diaries of propertied society we cannot assume that all recreation occurred with companions of equal status. People in the same class were not of the same social position. Logically an individual's social position and prestige should have determined how much input they had into group decisions about what activities to pursue. A member of a clique who had more social credit or wealth might be expected to assert control in a society as strictly hierarchical as Georgian England supposedly was. Others might then be deprived of choice and, possibly, pleasure as well. Yet the relationship between social status and agency is not easily described: daily life saw neither the suspension of hierarchies nor perpetual rank-pulling. Historians have pointed to the difficulty of understanding the ways that social structure and ideology actually shaped interaction. Phil Withington has recently suggested that our understandings of society should be revised to include a better sense of how interactions had dynamics and varied over both the course of a lifetime and the duration of an evening.⁸⁷ As Withington argues, social structure was enacted and potentially transformed by interactions. Participants in incidents cannot be treated as representatives of their social group, thereby reducing the interpretive value of the incidents. Withington's solution is to look more carefully at the language that was used to describe social interactions, and as a result, to understand interactions through the early modern concept of "keeping company". Company could describe organised gatherings, unorganised gatherings of people who knew each other, or chance meetings with strangers. Withington uses the concept of company in part to discuss social boundaries, but he is also interested to show how individuals' agency led them to operate within the boundaries of "objective factors".⁸⁸ Withington examines a particular vignette and shows how individuals used their social positions to shape the world as best they could. Similarly, Phyllis Mack has pointed out that historians and social theorists have found it difficult to create definitions for agency that do not conflate the concept with autonomy.⁸⁹ This is an important distinction, because agency and a sense of duty could

⁸⁷ Phil Withington, 'Company and Sociability in Early Modern England', *SH*, 32/3 (2007), 295.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 302.

⁸⁹ Phyllis Mack, 'Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency: Reflections on Eighteenth-Century Quakerism', in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (Houndmills

lead people to surrender their autonomy. At many points this dissertation focuses on how people navigated the elements of the world they could not control, but in the context of this chapter I focus particularly on strategies for making decisions and creating consensus employed by companions.

Early modern scholars have tended to analyse agency from external descriptions of events. Diaries, however, provide both descriptions of incidents that offer opportunities to consider how actors in the past confronted their world and language that we can use to examine how participants thought about their positions. A close look at the language used to describe interactions and the way sentences were structured provides an opportunity to track the negotiation of status relationships.⁹⁰ These negotiations provide insight into the ways that duty, obligation, and pleasure interacted, and show that free choice was not essential to pleasure. Instead I show how people might find enjoyment while discharging duties.

There may be something in the psyche of diarists that leads them to place themselves in positions of authority. Rarely do we glimpse diarists admitting to being someplace at the instigation of others. Anna Larpent commented after a “disagreeable” evening at “tiresome” and “Blackguard” Astley’s that she “went [there] to oblige others.”⁹¹ Comments like this one are rare. In other instances people acquiesced without suffering through such a terrible evening. Usually surrendering decision-making responsibilities to someone else did not disqualify an activity as recreation because it was nonetheless enjoyable and provided the additional satisfaction of pleasing others. The person who was higher up in the social scale or who acted as a hub in the network did not dominate negotiations over recreational choices between companions.

The language of obligation took several forms. Henry Stanhope often “attended” his mother both on family business and to amusements like Merlin’s Exhibition.⁹² He could also “attend” male colleagues such as Captain Posslett who breakfasted with him. The use of “attended” suggests that Stanhope was joining these people on expeditions that they had already planned.

& New York, 2005).

⁹⁰ Laura Ahearn, 'Language and Agency', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30 (2001), 109-37.

⁹¹ Larpent, 'Diary', II:f. 140.

⁹² Huntington Library, HM 750 v.1, Henry Edwyn Stanhope, 'Memorandum Book', 12 April and 14 March 1788.

To do something that was the “desire” of someone else was to do as they asked. This construction is widespread in diaries. Joseph Farington, a professional painter, built up a familiarity with others’ wishes over time. His position in the Royal Academy and as a professional painter often led him to do things “by the desire” of other people. Sometimes these activities were not strictly business. He was introduced to friends of his friends by desire, for instance.⁹³ Others diarists pursued more obviously recreational activities by the desire of their friends. James Ware did things by desire of his landlord Mr. Wellings including going to the menagerie at the Tower and taking in a play at Drury Lane.⁹⁴ One of these events sounds like he was set up on a date. On 8 December 1773 Ware “went by desire of Mrs. Wellings with Miss Durants to see the curiosities in the Tower.” Curwen also provides evidence of his landlady pressuring him to play cards.⁹⁵ Often activities were done by the particular desire of a friend. Bridge desired his friend Kirkman to ride with him, and Curwen was desired to do things by a handful of friends and acquaintances.⁹⁶ The use of “desire” suggests subservient relationships. Neither Curwen nor Bridge dictated their desires to people who desired something of them.

Other vocabulary also indicates decisions about activities that were not mutual. A “promise” was often extended to creditors or customers by tradespeople. Jane Johnston got a tradesman to promise to come to her house.⁹⁷ Thomas Bridge repeatedly promised to pay business associates and creditors and specified a day (and sometimes a time) to pay. In the context of recreation promises involved an obligation for some future activity that was not supposed to be ignored. The obligatory nature of these agreements is instanced by Samuel Curwen’s comment on February 9th, 1780 when he recorded that “Mr. Dalglish calling on me, claimed my promise to accompany him to Greenwich Hospital.”⁹⁸ Curwen may well have enjoyed his day out at Greenwich Hospital, but it was not an activity chosen by him. Following up on a previous commitment did not

⁹³ Farington, *Diary*, 5225.

⁹⁴ Surrey History Centre, Ware family of Tilford, Farnham, 1487/103, James Ware, 'Diary', 8 & 12 December 1773.

⁹⁵ Curwen, *Journal*, 732.

⁹⁶ For instance Ibid. 720, Bridge, 'Diary', 8 April 1762.. Other diarists who use “desire”: de Coetlogon, Inchbald, Ward, Pelham, Tyrrell, Thompson, Moore, and Mackintosh.

⁹⁷ Johnston, 'Diary', 4 February 1819.

⁹⁸ Curwen, *Journal*, 727. See also 701, 724, 755. Macaulay and Bridge also use similar language. Bridge, 'Diary', 18 March 1762, Macaulay, 'Journal', f. 51.

remove an activity from the realm of recreation, but it did remove some of an individual's immediate autonomy.

An "invitation" could carry the expectation that the potential guest would accept the offer. Nonetheless most diarists were happy to be invited and some considered it a great compliment. Boswell's invitations from Eglinton, for instance, were a matter of particular pride upon the arrival of the former in London in November 1762. Pleasing a patron was an attractive proposition for Boswell. Invitations were often extended to people who were new in town by people who had connections with them. James Ware similarly was invited to three different people's houses in three days when he arrived in London for the first time.⁹⁹ Despite the initial obligation to accept an invitation to dinner in order to create a connection or reinforce an existing one, diarists continued to mingle with and received (and accepted) invitations from their early inviters.¹⁰⁰ Invitations could be turned down without negative consequences. George Canning, always a busy guy, had to turn down an invitation from Lady Stafford to come to dine at Whitehall, but when his other plans were put off he was able to take up the invitation after all.¹⁰¹ Invitations had to be treated seriously, but they were not generally impositions.

Accepting an invitation had implications for the long-term development of an individual's social network. Policies for handing out invitations to parties are unclear, but parties could be thrown in competition with other parties in order to force people to declare an allegiance to a particular political faction.¹⁰² Politics did not necessarily get in the way, however. Canning socialized with both Whigs and Pittites upon his arrival on the political scene.¹⁰³ Gatherings among the *beau monde* came in two varieties. Select gatherings were by explicit invitation only, but other balls and routs may have been open to anyone who was well connected enough to know the hostess and have been invited once.¹⁰⁴ These two different types of parties suggest different mechanisms for determining who would go to an event. For select gatherings an invitation (and acceptance) was evidence of closeness. Larger balls and routs were treated as signs of

⁹⁹ Ware, 'Diary', 28-30 September 1773.

¹⁰⁰ Other inviters: Stanhope, Berry, Coke, Macaulay, Tyrrell, Farington, Brydges, Ward, Curwen, Thompson, Mackintosh, Moore.

¹⁰¹ Canning, *Letter-Journal*, 126.

¹⁰² Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics'.

¹⁰³ Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 104.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 97-8.

status and connection with a social elite. Both of these indicators of status and connections might be greeted with pleasure.

“Appointments” were arranged meetings that could be for either business or pleasure. Like promises they could deprive people of some of their autonomy at the time when amusements were undertaken. However appointments had to be agreed to and appointing a time could be used by friends to negotiate when and where an activity should take place. On 28 February 1762, Thomas Bridge sent to his friend Kirkman to know if he would ride out. In response Kirkman appointed to meet Bridge at the stables at 10.30.¹⁰⁵ By suggesting the activity but allowing Kirkman to set the time and place it was possible to come to a mutually acceptable arrangement.¹⁰⁶

Other sorts of obligation could operate alongside the wishes of friends and family. Lady Mary Coke provided evidence that motivation could be seasonal. In the summer of 1767 Coke recorded in her diary that “as it [was] the last Opera, I...promised Ly Ailesbury to go.”¹⁰⁷ In this instance it was the nature of the event rather than the character of the person who asked her that led Mary to promise to go to the opera. Lady Mary’s language reveals a variety of reactions to her friends’ desired activities. She reminds us not to assume that a companion’s request always engendered the same response. The same people whose invitations she readily accepted on some occasions might have to “desire” or “beg” in other instances.¹⁰⁸

Consent was not implied by a friendly or companionate relationship. Making companions happy or satisfying oneself by finding people to spend time with could be enough to make inconvenience worthwhile, but emotional satisfaction was not always sufficient. William Hickey would do things because his friends asked even if he did not enjoy them. He wrote that he “never was partial to” “the Dog and Duck in St. George’s Fields, or to Bagnige [sic] Wells and White Conduit house” and that “nothing took [him] to them but company.”¹⁰⁹ However for others, financial compensation might be necessary. Samuel Curwen obliged his companion W.C. to pay for his tea in exchange

¹⁰⁵ A similar incident occurred on 27 December 1762

¹⁰⁶ Other diarists who appointed things to be done or who did things by appointment: de Coetlogon, Berry, Brydges, Pelham, Thompson, Moore, Mackintosh, Knight, Canning.

¹⁰⁷ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, II:31.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. Lady Frances Scott (II:148) and her sister Lady Strafford (II:171)

¹⁰⁹ William Hickey, *Memoirs of a Georgian Rake*, Roger Hudson and John Lawrence (eds.) (London, 1995), 49.

for going to the Dog and Duck in St. George's Fields, a rough venue that Curwen strongly disliked.¹¹⁰

Within the context of specific gatherings we can see people negotiating decision-making processes. "Keeping company" can allow us to think a bit about how unorganised groups of social unequals interacted, as does Larry Klein's model of a society based on politeness. In Klein's conceptualization of the concept, politeness worked as a ubiquitous force that moderated all social interactions, between equals as well as between different sorts. Neither Withington nor Klein offers insight into how negotiation took place. Rather both suggest that people knew the boundaries that constrained them and did what they could within them. The descriptions of negotiations found here give evidence of the ways that boundaries fluctuated and were repositioned in different circumstances through negotiations. The negotiations we see here using "appointments," "invitations," "promises," and "desires" were smoothed by polite expectations for interpersonal reactions, but they also reveal that people did not always know how to react. People had to be willing to bend to those around them. Diarists' activities shifted back and forth along a continuum between free choice and obligation as they negotiated what activities to pursue and how they would go about them. The duration of a relationship, nature of a bond, and type of activity all affected the nature and extent of the negotiations that went on. However duties and obligations did not come at the expense of enjoyment. Indeed people may have gained pleasure by pleasing those around them. Models of appropriate behaviour and methods of engaging companions for activities succeeded in bridging the limited gaps between activity partners and creating opportunities for pleasure and mutual decision-making rather than conflict or domination.

Recreational networks and the structure of society

Most individuals operated within a fairly limited social group. Outsiders appear regularly, but core groups of companions are evident in all of the diaries. We can visualize these core groups as nodes within larger webs that determined an individual's overall number of contacts. The size of the core groups varied from just one or two companions in the case of Job Knight or Elizabeth Inchbald, to up to twenty in the case of

¹¹⁰ Curwen, *Journal*, 665.

social butterflies such as John Wilkes or Thomas Birch. People operating among the *beau monde* might have had four or five frequent companions, but encountered hundreds in a period of a couple of months. The presence or absence of members of the core group of companions can offer insight into the nature of particular occasions. For example, a diarist operating without any of his or her normal companions suggests a special occasion or some sort of extenuating circumstance.

It is dangerous to build up these limited conclusions too much. Given that evidence and research time have both been limited, it is impossible to determine social standing of activity partners with any certainty on a large scale. Nevertheless, in the case of these diaries it seems that the importance of kinship and business affiliation in shaping recreational networks meant that social networks limited activity-partners to people of similar status and group affiliation. The similar status of recreational companions helps to explain how obligation could function without precluding pleasure.

Sociability played a crucial role in recreational life and interpersonal communication found its way into almost every diversion. Eighteenth-century Londoners lived in a city that provided an intensely social life—the frequency of social interaction meant personal interests and desires had to be carefully balanced with the needs and interests of friends, colleagues, kin, and family. Community was maintained by frequent interaction and careful decisions. Despite the self-interested nature of recreation, diversions undertaken at the behest of another was not necessarily unpleasant. The mutual nature of recreational decision-making may have made connections across large gaps in the social hierarchy difficult to negotiate, besides the initial difficulty of meeting people from different backgrounds. London life involved interacting with a vast number and variety of people, but the nature of society and the construction of social networks made lasting relationships across socioeconomic boundaries difficult to maintain.

6. The sociable domestic sphere

Chapter 6 of this thesis is currently not available in ORA.

7. Escape from dullness: language, taste, and recreational values

Diaries record the outcomes of decisions made each day, but the evidence provided by most diaries can only offer limited insight into the mental processes behind those choices. Diarists providing deeper insight, such as Anna Larpent, George Canning, James Boswell, and Lady Mary Coke, are exceptional in the quality of their comments on their daily selections. This dissertation has used those and many other diaries to describe the most salient patterns in recreation for Londoners. But charting the activities people engaged in does not provide all of the pieces in the decision-making puzzle, and we need to dig deeper to understand how amusement satisfied aesthetic or cultural needs. The values behind decisions in the past are difficult for historians to pin down, particularly when purchased durable goods provide the only evidence. Amanda Vickery and John Styles have pointed out that in many instances goods were consumed without the consumer having any choice; in other cases the range of choice may have been small or someone else may have done the choosing.¹ Furthermore it is often difficult to tell whose taste was being expressed when goods were consumed or used in the household.² The elements I have identified thus far provide only part of the picture in terms of what attracted people to particular selections.

As John Styles and Amanda Vickery point out in the introduction to *Gender, taste and material culture*, the exact meaning of “taste” both in the Georgian period and today varies enormously from text to text. Broadly, “taste” referred to aesthetic judgments tied to morality that allowed individuals to show refinement when engaging in the potentially morally dangerous act of consumption. Exhibiting good taste was an act of presenting oneself in a way that was appropriate to one’s social position and life station.³ Settling on a particular recreational activity also involved a series of choices. Since amusements were ways of occupying free time they potentially carried ideological baggage. As I discussed in the introduction, prescriptive literature devoted attention to the problems of using time wisely. Some of the people discussed in this chapter, particularly Anna

¹ Styles and Vickery, 'Introduction', 20.

² Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 164-83. Berry, 'Prudent Luxury'.

³ Styles and Vickery, 'Introduction', 14-7.

Larpent, were explicit about their concern for the morality of their actions and the propriety of particular uses of time. In most instances concerns about morality rarely figure. Rather, it was the success or failure of events as amusements that caused people to record reactions.

Other historians have used letters to find the values behind purchases of household decorations. Hannah Greig uncovered the social capital that could be acquired through the tasteful display of goods in the homes of the *beau monde*.⁴ Similarly, Amanda Vickery used the letter-book of a wallpaper firm to compare the language employed to describe particular patterns with the patterns themselves, thereby providing insight into the physical characteristics of objects that had particular values ascribed to them.⁵ It is impossible to compare the description of a party with the actual party as Vickery is able to do with wallpaper, but people's judgments of transient events still offer a reaction to an event and insight into the thought-processes behind that reaction. Value judgments on actions and conversation have received some attention, particularly for the insight they offer into women's participation in social, political, and intellectual life. Kathryn Gleadle has examined the judgments people made about conversation in her investigation of women's participation in civil society.⁶ The provincial diaries of Katherine Plymley present an account of the values associated with good and bad conversation in the domestic setting in the late eighteenth century. For Plymley, visitors had to demonstrate the polite ability to discuss a wide range of topics in informed detail.

Most often, historians have focused on people's taste in objects. This obscures taste in activities and, as quickly becomes evident, ignores the aesthetics of sociability. Expressions of taste also allow us to examine the importance of politeness as behaviour. Helen Berry and Larry Klein have demonstrated that ideas of polite behaviour varied from setting to setting and as one moved up and down the social ladder, but more careful attention to the aesthetics of sociability highlights the variations in expectations between different people within socioeconomic groupings.⁷ The importance of an adequately

⁴ Hannah Greig, 'Leading the Fashion: The Material Culture of London's Beau Monde', *Ibid.*.

⁵ Amanda Vickery, "'Neat and Not Too Showey': Words and Wallpaper in Regency England', *Ibid.*.

⁶ Kathryn Gleadle, "'Opinions Deliver'd in Conversation': Conversation, Politics, and Gender in the Late Eighteenth Century', in Jose Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2003).

⁷ Helen Berry, 'Rethinking Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Moll King's Coffee House and the

sociable collection of guests was a primary concern. Indeed, social interaction affected how physical settings were experienced. One object of this chapter is to describe the aesthetics of sociability in the eighteenth century, the sorts of attributes of a party or of a conversation partner that made them successful. Aesthetic judgments about sociability were based on shared notions of politeness, but also demonstrate conflicting expectations about the appropriate manner of fulfilling polite norms. Furthermore, though the attributes people praise were facets of polite behaviour (e.g. an easy and engaging manner), “polite” is a term very rarely used in conjunction with recreational activities or behaviour at gatherings of propertied society. Rather, being “polite” meant exhibiting some or all of a complex set of attributes. These attributes allowed people to be pleasant social companions. The importance of being an engaging companion was universally accepted, but the attributes that made people entertaining varied considerably.

To analyse sociability and its importance to recreation in more depth, this chapter looks at vocabularies employed—at assessments of things as good or bad, dull or entertaining—for insight into the values embraced by people demonstrating their good judgment to correspondents. In this context individuals expressed taste by selecting from a group of widely used words that articulated approval or disdain for events. To pin down the rhetorical vocabulary I expanded my source base to include a large number of letters. Letters provide richer, more descriptive language and express normative judgments more often than most diaries. Like the diaries, these letters are primarily sourced from propertied society. The letters that I have uncovered with descriptions of recreational events tend to have been written by female members of the gentry and nobility.

Letters examined in this chapter were identified in a handful of ways. First, I searched the holdings of archives and record offices for ‘London’ with creation dates between 1760 and 1820. This sort of search throws up a vast amount of material. Within those results I looked for personal, social, family, and miscellaneous letters, as opposed to political or business letters. Particularly useful among the results of this search is material that has not been widely examined by historians of London, both in obscure archives in the metropolis and in record offices outside London. I also chased up

Significance Of "Flash Talk", *TRHS*, 6th ser., 11 (2001), 65-81, Klein, 'Politeness for Plebes'.

references in secondary literature on the theatres and opera. This led me in particular to a variety of printed editions of letters rich in comments about cultural life. Finally the British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries online resource (<http://www.alexanderstreet2.com/bwldlive/>) was searched using keywords identified through the other sources. These keywords included both institutions such as gardens or the Opera and descriptors such as 'fatigued', 'full', or 'empty'.

The linguistic turn and its accompanying attention to changing relationships between words and their referents has led scholars to give greater respect to the specific words used by individuals in the past and how usage changed over time. Speakers and writers operated within a system of descriptive, critical, and prescriptive literature that provided them with a set of loaded terms to employ in their daily speech. An examination of letters describing social and cultural activities quickly reveals certain words that present themselves again and again. The expectations held by the gentry about the core functions of parties and performances come to the fore in descriptions included in letters.⁸

Cultural commentators from the period may provide the richest source for descriptions of why activities, spaces, or people appealed, but the banal and stereotyped writing that appears in letters provides an opportunity to get a sense of more common vocabularies and motivations. Jeremy Black points out that contributors to critical debates often restricted their attentions to a miniscule part of the total production of the period.⁹ Black's point is that within any period buildings and objects were produced in a wide variety of styles, making chronologies and periodizations problematic. The vocabularies of theatre and party-goers show us that metropolitan theatre-goers desired a different complex of qualities from theatre critics. These vocabularies can also be read against the grain for a better understanding of the variations in meaning they conceal.

Normative judgments reveal that different people had different ideas about what behaviours fulfilled the objectives of pleasurable sociability. Thus, despite a common language, behavioural expectations varied across a single socioeconomic group, thereby complicating attempts to understand what sorts of activities provided pleasure.

⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 5.

⁹ Jeremy Black, *A Subject for Taste: Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2005), 192.

Descriptive vocabularies and normative judgments challenge the assumption that a particular activity was seen as recreation for all involved and undermine the assumption that entire subsections of society had a shared sense of taste or pleasure. This further complicates attempts to infer values from class or behaviour.

The material here also sheds light on a question asked by Styles and Vickery: can people exhibit taste when they had no choice?¹⁰ In this chapter the evidence shows that we cannot assess taste based on what people chose to consume. Indeed value judgments generally had to be made after the commentator took part in the event. The initial decision to attend an event, even when it was expected to be unsatisfactory, need not reflect the commentator's own free choice. Rather a reputation for good taste could be preserved through comments made after the event.

Mission: recreation

Recent attempts to explain the appeal of leisure activities in the eighteenth century have focused on the malaise caused by surplus leisure time and the constraints placed on that time by expectations of propriety.¹¹ Karin Wurst's study of pleasure and the formation of middle-class identity in late eighteenth-century Germany argues that for women the primary objective of recreation was relieving boredom caused by idleness, monotony, and monogamy [yes, monogamy].¹² This goal was achieved through novelty, titillation, and fantasy. In a related but less controversial vein, Peter Borsay has argued that the late eighteenth-century fashion for seaside bathing can be partly explained by the desire for experiences evoking strong emotions – in this case arising from the rugged natural setting linked to understandings of the sublime.¹³ Apparently mundane lives, limits on women's activities identified by articulate social commentators, and the aesthetic vogues for the Gothic and the sublime suggest a widespread desire for variety

¹⁰ Styles and Vickery, 'Introduction', 20.

¹¹ An under-explored demand for recreation was the need for temporary relief, e.g. Anna Larpent 19 January 1790 being amused by a book while her child was ill Larpent, 'Diary', 1:4a. or Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 98.

¹² Wurst, *Fabricating Pleasure*.

¹³ Peter Borsay, "'Waddling to the Waters": The Rise of the Seaside Town in Georgian Britain [Conference Paper]', *Urban Living: Society, Culture and Politics in the English Town, 1700-1850* (Northampton, 2007).

and excitement. Recreation, it seems, offered the chance to escape routine and tedious lives.

A closer look at individual lives complicates this reading by de-emphasizing novelty and excitement and stressing sociability instead. Diary evidence suggests that some propertied women are unlikely to have been as bored as historians think they must have been. Given heavy rounds of visiting, the availability of books for reading and household needlework, and the obligations associated with running a household (plus estates in some cases) and raising children, the amount of time left unfilled may have been surprisingly small. This does not mean that women enjoyed these activities; nor do diaries suggest that women's lives were filled with variation. Anna Larpent's diary is filled with a constant refrain of "as usual". Timings—rising, breakfast, dinner, tea, bed—were often "as usual" as were household duties like educating her children. The phrase indicating lack of variety appears in the diaries of Elizabeth Tyrrell and Lady Mary Coke as well.

But to say women alone faced routine and repetition would be false. Men also lived within the bounds of routines; the phrase "as usual" appears in the diaries of John Eliot, George Canning, Job Knight, and George Macaulay. Though they were less bound by household duties and freer to occupy their time as they wished, the men in this sample were nonetheless busy with business, religious, community, and, in several instances, parliamentary obligations. Men had many more opportunities to break the monotony, but it was still a part of their lives.

Writers of letter journals tried to capture for their readers a sense of the tenor of daily life, often invoking clichés about boredom or the quiet of London life. In 1763 Amabel Grey, normally a resident of her family's estates in Bedfordshire, wrote a series of letters to her mother while Amabel and her sister were living in St. James' Square with relatives. The diversion from a monotonous routine that sociability provided is demonstrated in two of Amabel's letters. On April 12th, Amabel wrote "In general, our mornings are pretty well occupied, with our Masters, & with walking: but indeed the Evenings are very long, and very dull."¹⁴ School work and regular morning walks kept the girls busy, but when left to their own devices in the evening, with just family, books,

¹⁴ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/51/9 Amabel Grey, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother. 12 April 1763'.

and needle work to entertain them, they were less satisfied. Yet just a week later Amabel cheerfully wrote “My history is grown more animated, for my Friends are all got well again, & have visited me.”¹⁵ With evening visits resumed after a hiatus, the tedium of life was broken and the girls were diverted with nightly visits from a handful of ladies. Nevertheless a few days later Amabel had found reason to complain again: “I wish very much to be there, for tho’ our Friends come to see us, & we have various kinds of employment yet I assure you that the days are somewhat heavy and dull.”¹⁶ Here Amabel is perhaps trying to flatter her mother by suggesting that life without her is dull, but her account also reveals that even a full schedule and regular visiting could be insufficient to keep young women happy. It is hard to imagine that Amabel was used to a busier schedule in the country. Perhaps living in the home of relatives where her own possessions were not available to amuse her limited Amabel’s ability to pass the long winter evenings with pleasure.

Other commentators declared that London’s attractions were less pleasing than those of the country house. In a letter to Anna Grenville, Isabella FitzRoy wrote from Euston Hall that the amusements of London were “very insipid after the more agreeable pleasures of Society in a house in the Country”. The key to a pleasing autumn in the country house, according to FitzRoy, was to gather a “large party of near Relations.”¹⁷ Country living was marked by intimate companions and agreeable sociability, rather than a packed schedule of events.

“Dull” was one of the most widespread complaints about parties and companions in letters and diaries. “Dull” referred to particular settings and companions that were not sharp or brilliant—to entities that were not entertaining. For this reason it also served as a synonym for boring. Sarah Spencer wrote to her brother in 1808 that, though she was happy to give him an account of her activities, “the dull sameness of them” made her wonder why he would want one.¹⁸ The lack of interest might bore, even if time was spent properly. Anna Larpent moaned that on 17 February 1792 “It was a dull day

¹⁵ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/51/10 Amabel Grey, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother. 19 April 1763'.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Grenville, 'Letters to Her', Box 6 (6) from Isabella FitzRoy, February 20 1811.

¹⁸ Sarah Baroness Lyttelton, *Correspondence of Sarah Spencer, Lady Lyttelton, 1787-1870*, ed. Maud Baroness Leconfield Wyndham (London, 1912), 7.

enough. But it was rightly spent.”¹⁹ Without excitement life was dull, but it could be morally justified.

Parties without sufficient people (or sufficiently clever people) could be disastrous events. A breakfast party to Fulham was negatively described by Miss Berry: “there were too few people, which made it dull. Our party was conducted to breakfast by Miss Macdonald into a Summer House, where the other convives [sic] were the Dss of Beaufort, Ly Harrowby, Ld A Hamilton, Ed Montagu, Ly Anne Hamilton & the Eldest Beckford a less sociable party can hardly be supposed.”²⁰ Dullness of guests was not a complaint lodged only by women. Lord Glenberrie complained of a dull dinner at the Duchess of Portland's: “the company mostly Irish commoners, many of whom I had either never seen or had forgot.”²¹ Again Anna Larpent contributes with a complaint about an “Evening party at Mrs. Pepys. very dull indeed. Old Cats. & stiff men.”²² Again and again boring people made for dull parties.²³ Even youths were concerned. Of the three comic inventions listed in one issue of the Graham family's *Family Chronicle*, two focused on ways to animate people at a party: one through electric shocks, the other by spiking the punch with laughing gas.²⁴ Being dull could be a temporary attribute as well, referring to a bad mood or temporary depression. Elizabeth Inchbald often described herself as dull when she could not maintain her usual vivacity.²⁵

The wrong sort of conversation or awkward dynamics also created temporary dullness. Anna Larpent, constantly alert to the threat of a dull day, complained about a gathering where the company “Play'd at vingt un. Sadly dull. I almost slept from ennuie. No Conversation but on the silly game.”²⁶ Likewise Larpent found social dynamics could dampen the spirit of an evening despite the presence of lively people. One evening at the Fanshawe's there was a “dull party...[with] some sensible & some agreeable people, but there was ye want of harmony, of ease.”²⁷ As a catchall reaction to events,

¹⁹ Larpent, 'Diary', I:f. 38a.

²⁰ Berry, 'Diary', Add 37731, ff. 12-3. Larpent, 'Diary', v.I, 12 March 1790.

²¹ Glenberrie, *Diaries*, 199.

²² Larpent, 'Diary', I:f.11a.

²³ Granville, *Hary-O*, 66, Lyttelton, *Correspondence*, 121.

²⁴ Lambeth Archives, Graham papers, IV/4/178, 'Family Chronicle', 9.

²⁵ See also De Coetlogon, 'Diary', 25 February 1818.

²⁶ Larpent, 'Diary', I:f. 39a.

²⁷ *Ibid.* I:f. 40a.

“dull” could express disappointment without necessarily spreading blame or precisely identifying the problem.

Novelty was sometimes the solution to dullness, though it seems that the degree of novelty in people’s lives was generally low. Correspondents rarely compliment events on their novelty or on being surprising. Modern biopsychology has demonstrated that there is a limited range of novelty that people find attractive. Too different and people are turned off. Too close to what people know and they will not notice.²⁸ People liked a new play, or a new play paired with a familiar afterpiece. Many plays or musical pieces maintained interest for decades, presumably continuing to address relevant questions and to offer amusing humor. Similarly, a party which generated unfamiliar groupings appealed to people even while the attributes desired in individuals were unchanged. A correspondent described her reaction to a party of 1752 as having been “diverted with the jolly good-humour’d mob I was in, & the odd dispositions & Sets we were often thrown into....”.²⁹ Not only were new people a source of interest, but odd juxtapositions diverted people as well. The acceptable level of novelty appears to have been fairly low; ideally it was like something familiar, but with a small twist.

The appeal of gently taxing activities is further demonstrated by the ambivalent uses of “fatigue” to describe one’s condition following a busy day of visiting and shopping. In most cases fatigue referred to a state of utter exhaustion, sometimes also referred to as “over-fatigue.” But in other cases fatigue was the mark of a full and active event; it was an indication that it was time to stop.³⁰ The mental exhaustion of a visit to a museum, for instance, wore out Elizabeth [I] Tyrrell in 1809. As she described it, she “Went with George and Edward to see the British Museum, saw a new gallery of very fine Antique sculpture figures &c. came away very much fatigued.”³¹ The party returned home to lunch and continued their day in a less intellectually taxing manner. Mental fatigue was the goal to be achieved. Similarly, a performance that raised anxiety and kept people’s attention would please the punters. A 1759 letter to Lady Grantham described a new offering at the theatre thus: “The Three first Acts are allow’d to be very

²⁸ Marina Bianchi, 'Consuming Novelty: Strategies for Producing Novelty in Consumption', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 28/1 (1998), 3.

²⁹ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9a/6/, 'Extracts of Old Letters to Miss T-L-B-T', 79.

³⁰ Burney, *Evelina*, 63 and 82.

³¹ 8 March 1809

fine. There is more attention kept up, more Anxiety raised, & a greater rapidity of distressful Situations than in most (perhaps any) of the modern Plays....”³² The correspondent criticized the quality of the play, but granted that it was exciting. The stress of being kept on edge was seen as a relief from milder, more routine pastimes throughout the period.

Physical effort that did not leave one over-fatigued was a sign of a successful use of time. Mary Berry returned home one night after a 2.00 supper “having no headache & *not at all over fatigued* with my day's hard work” [my emphasis].³³ Indeed the right sort of physical fatigue was a pleasure. An account of a masquerade at Vauxhall in the *Morning Chronicle* of 28 August 1812 described the supper as offering the revelers, who had been dancing all night long, “strength and spirit for the renewal of their mirthful fatigues.”³⁴ Once one became fatigued, nothing amused and everything tired people, but engaging in activities up to the point of fatigue and exhaustion was an important way of enlivening daily life.³⁵

An entertaining person was a crucial antidote to dullness. Individual criteria determined whether a person or conversation was entertaining or amusing. Some people sought information on fashionable clothes, as suggested by the extensive descriptions of garments and styles found both in letters and in newspaper records.³⁶ In other cases it was gossip that was desired. A letter from the Wrest Park archive reveals one visitor to Ranelagh who was gravely disappointed, for “a most inglorious Assembly it was, One of those dismal Sets of Faces which constitute ‘There not being a Soul there, nor a Creature that One knows.’ All the Intelligence I picked up, was that your Friend the Inspector [Dr. Hill] had been exceedingly beat there the night before by an Irish Captain....”³⁷ For this writer gossip was social capital, but unfortunately that night Ranelagh was bankrupt. More intellectually minded people, or those for whom gossip or fashion would not have

³² BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9a/3/28, 'Extracts of Letters to Lady M Grantham'.

³³ Berry, 'Diary', Add 37732, f. 32.

³⁴ 'Vauxhall Cuttings'.

³⁵ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, II: 337.

³⁶ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/97/78, 'A. Yorke to Marchioness Grey', Graham Family, 'Family Chronicle', 63 and 65.

³⁷ 'Extracts of Old Letters to Miss T-L-B-T', 82. This was reasonably big news. See *London Daily Advertiser*, 8 May 1752, issue 371 and 9 May 1752, issue 372, *Covent Garden Journal*, 12 May 1752, issue 38, *General Advertiser*, 13 May 1752, issue 5481.

provided the opportunity to advance, could seek out intellectual stimulation. Anna Larpent was one such character. One afternoon she "...Received the two Mr Thurslys[es.] William the youngest is just arrived from St. Vincent. He gives an unpleasant idea of the Country, this circumstance rendered the visit amusing."³⁸ Hearing about a foreign and exotic land was enough for Mrs. Larpent to enjoy herself.

Reactions to individuals similarly varied from person to person. George Canning's first meeting with the jurist Erskine provided him with a moment to reflect on how varied the reactions might be to one man. "I had been taught to expect in him a very great bore, one who talked on no subject but himself, and on that all day long. He does talk of himself, to be sure, and I can easily conceive that to meet him often might be tiresome—but for once I liked him much more than I had been prepared to do—and thought him entertaining, and exceedingly good-humoured."³⁹ Being entertaining in some form was key. Eugenia Wynne "was tolerably happy as [she] had a great deal of [her future husband] Campbell's company and conversation—he is amazingly clever and entertaining..."⁴⁰ Entertaining people took many different forms, but the quest to avoid dull people and parties was universal.

Looking at the ways demands for amenities at parties changed over the lifecycle shows that simply finding an antidote to dullness was not everyone's primary objective. A woman, particularly one in search of a husband, could be frustrated with a party where there were too many women.⁴¹ Other women were affected by a gender imbalance too. Mrs. Calvert complained of a dinner at Lord Limerick's where "there were ten petticoats and only five men, which made a very dull dinner."⁴² The presence of men was an important feature of any gathering that hoped to break the monotony of female-dominated morning visiting. A gender imbalance could be the fault of poor organization, or it could be indicative of the strong pull a hostess had on men. Lady Mary Coke, for instance, commented after an evening at Lady Harrington's that "We had but few Ladys at Lady Harringtons; Gentlemen there never is any want of at her Assembly."⁴³ The

³⁸ Larpent, 'Diary', I:f. 53a.

³⁹ Canning, *Letter-Journal*, 116.

⁴⁰ Fremantle, Campbell, and Fremantle, *Wynne Diaries*, 450.

⁴¹ Berry, 'Diary', Add MS 37732, ff. 86 and 92.

⁴² Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 330.

⁴³ Coke, *Letters and Journals*, II:10.

presence of gender-balance appears to have been an important element of an entertaining company at mixed gatherings. Further along in the lifecycle parties might have become wholly inappropriate. Women whose children were grown no longer had a clear role at parties and thus derived less pleasure from them or had to find their pleasure elsewhere. As one woman wrote as she excused herself from a large gathering in favor of a smaller one: “Balls are very cold & dull for old People.”⁴⁴

The words of approbation found in letters reflect the desire for moderately exciting events. A successful party was described in terms that do not express ecstatic enthusiasm. Rather, writers stick to words such as “pleasant” or “agreeable.” The importance of “pleasant” experiences comes through in many letters and diaries. “Pleasant” activities gave delight, pleased the senses, and were upbeat.⁴⁵ Samuel Johnson’s vague, but largely positive definition is supported by the variety of uses encountered in letters and diaries. Conversation might be described as “pleasant”. Thomas Pelham, for instance, spent a Sunday afternoon in February 1794 with his friend Windham. They “walked together above an hour on ye parade in very pleasant conversation.”⁴⁶ The association of the word pleasant with conversation was widespread. Harriet Cavendish, for instance, craved to return to town to go to a play, both because “they are reviving all the good old plays and [it would give her] the chance of pleasant society.”⁴⁷ Anna Larpent likewise filled up many an evening with pleasant conversation with her friends and family.⁴⁸ Pleasant events might occur in more active situations too, again offering something pleasing and not dull. William Beckford, for instance, said of a party at Devonshire House that “[t]here were pleasant moments full of excitement of busy life”⁴⁹ Pleasant gardens and walks were also to be found.⁵⁰ William Windham

⁴⁴ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/63/20, 'M. Jeffreys to the Marchioness Grey'.

⁴⁵ Johnson, 'A Dictionary of the English Language'.

⁴⁶ Pelham, 'Diary'. Add MS 33630, fol. 35. Windham also describes conversation as pleasant William Windham, *The Diary of William Windham, 1784 to 1810*, ed. Cecilia Baring (London, 1866), 136, 140, 201, 359, and 376.

⁴⁷ Granville, *Hary-O*, 124.

⁴⁸ Larpent, 'Diary', I:ff. 5a, 39, 39a, 43, 44a, 47, 58a, 62, 85.

⁴⁹ Bodleian Library, Beckford MSS, MS.Beckford.c.18 William Beckford, 'Devonshire House Fete', f. 17.

⁵⁰ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/51/4, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother', L 30/9/51/5, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother', L 30/9/51/11, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother'.

used pleasant to refer both to conversation and to walks, rides, and journeys.⁵¹ Activity could be pleasant and even on occasion pleasantly strenuous.

Like “pleasant,” “agreeable” hardly sounds like the way to describe an exciting evening. Meaning pleasing or suitable, it suggests merely that an evening or companion was not off-putting.⁵² Yet it was a common way to describe companions who were suitable for various events or evenings where the activities did not disagree with the participants.⁵³ The importance of agreeable companions reinforces that sociability was a crucial attribute and an important part of polite sociability involved making oneself acceptable to others. Lady Lyttelton attributed the success of a dinner thrown at her house to everybody having been “in very good humour” and having “made themselves agreeable.”⁵⁴ The modest terms of approbation for sociable gatherings reflect the general low-key tenor of the period, surprising given the vogue for sentimental and romantic literature at the same time.

The word “fine”, whose association with sentimental thesauri led to ridicule, appeared regularly until the end of the century. “Fine” served as an all-purpose compliment for both appearances and all-round quality throughout the period. Young Amabel Grey hammered the language home in a letter: “Thursday we went to Lady Gower’s to see the Venetian ambassador’s Entry which was really *finer* than we expected. First there came the footmen, then the Drummers & Trumpeters on Horseback, then the Pages & Equerries, all dressed in the *finest* Liveries, & mounted on *fine* horses [my emphasis].”⁵⁵ Fine denoted high-quality objects and settings as well as socially elite groups. After a ball at Mrs. Fitzherbert’s in 1816, Mrs. Calvert wrote that it “was the finest of the fine—Lady Jersey and all her set—the Dukes of York, Clarence and Kent.” She continued: “we got very tired of it although so fine. To say the truth a less fine place would have been pleasanter.”⁵⁶ In this context the fineness of the event probably refers to the snobby and showy attributes of Lady Jersey’s set. Parties with attributes that were too fine were subject to ridicule.

⁵¹ Windham, *Diary*, journey: 113, 126, 272, Ride: 120, walk: 24.

⁵² Johnson, 'A Dictionary of the English Language'.

⁵³ Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 265. Huntington Library, Porter Papers, Box 9, Anna Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 378.

⁵⁴ Lyttelton, *Correspondence*, 6.

⁵⁵ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/51/11. 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother'. 26 April 1763

⁵⁶ Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 265. See also *The Morning Chronicle*, 8 July 1816, issue 14721.

A contrasting set of meanings relates to the possibility that fine things were too delicate rather than too elitist. Excessive delicacy was as much a danger as indelicacy. For instance Lady Louisa Stuart complained of a “German harper, whose music was so fine that, to my unpolished ears, it sounded as if he had been tuning the instrument all the time instead of playing upon it.”⁵⁷ Similarly, the Earl of Bath complained of Mr. Webb’s *Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry*. “If they are fine, I am sure they are so very fine, as to be beyond my comprehension.”⁵⁸ While “fine” served as a compliment throughout the period, already by the early 1760s it was also used to mock excessive refinement and delicacy associated with sentimentality. In general, limited change in vocabulary may mask changes in meaning that are not readily obvious, but at the same time it warns against inferring too much change in daily life from changing fashions in literature, art, or dress.

Similarly “fashion” could be either good or bad. It could indicate a foible of contemporary society or refer to someone’s admirable attributes. Jane Porter exhibited the variable meaning of “fashion” to her sister Anna Maria. Describing a man, she wrote that he was “quite the man of fashion - good fashion I mean - not the see-saw fashion, good for nothing but contempt.”⁵⁹ A man of fashion could be expected to be “lively” and sociable. Boswell associated men of fashion with people who were lively or otherwise pleasant.⁶⁰ But people could be pleasant companions without being “a man of fashion.” Mrs. Calvert described Lord Althorp as “not handsome” or “a man of fashion, but he [seemed] very good-humoured and pleasing.”⁶¹

Words like “pleasant” and “agreeable” suggest the importance of terms pulled from the vocabularies of guides to politeness, but there are words that one would expect but which rarely appear. Importantly, the words typically associated with displays of politeness such as “polite” or “complaisant”, almost never enter into the letters or diaries. Similarly “easy” appears occasionally, but as a primary objective of polite behaviour we

⁵⁷ Louisa Stuart, Alice Clark, and Caroline Portarlington, *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio* (Edinburgh, 1895), 294.

⁵⁸ Huntington Library, Montagu papers, Box 40, Elizabeth Montagu, 'Correspondence'.

⁵⁹ Huntington Library, Porter Papers, Box 29 Jane Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 1467; Box 13 Anna Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 606.

⁶⁰ James Boswell, *Boswell: The Ominous Years, 1774-1776*, eds Charles Ryskamp and Frederick Pottle (New York, 1963), 96.

⁶¹ Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 45.

would expect to encounter it far more often. When people are described as having ease it was a positive characteristic; the ease of various guests reflected positively on the host or hostess.⁶² Adjectives are prominent, but particular adverbs do not recur frequently.

Some other adjectives appear infrequently, but when they do appear they sometimes connect polite vocabulary with terms and attributes not typically associated with politeness. “Jolly” or “good-humoured” sometimes appear with such words as “pleasant”, but in other cases they appear with “vulgar” or other adjectives that do not typically overlap with polite activities. In the eyes of Mrs. Calvert “a good-humoured, vulgar woman of low extraction” could work her way up to the position of “fashionable” hostess.⁶³ Similarly “fashionable youths” could go hand in hand with “good humour” and “distinguished personages”.⁶⁴ People demonstrating polite attributes might be jolly or good humored (or even vulgar!), but they seem to have been valued even when they were not accompanied by polite behavior.

While these findings do not undermine current views about the importance of politeness in Georgian England, they do indicate that we need to be attentive to a complex of words that were associated with a set of behaviours acceptable to the segment of society sometimes described as polite society. Allowing our understanding of eighteenth-century society to be too sharply focused on a particular term threatens to obscure the complexity of people’s expectations for behaviour. While politeness is a convenient term to describe a complex set of social behaviours, it threatens to isolate eighteenth-century studies by making work on the period seem facile and esoteric from the perspective of other regions or periods. As a catchall term, polite may have seemed too vague to be a useful adjective. Correspondents wanted more detail about how a particular person measured up to a set of polite ideals, rather than simply whether or not they were polite. An individual may have appealed because they blended easy politeness with more lively good humour.

The terms used can give us some ideas of where different individuals found amusement. A party or a person was successful if pleasant. For those attending an event, the extent to which it turned out to be pleasant determined whether they were enjoying

⁶² Porter, 'Correspondence', POR 1078, [20?] Mar 1804, Jane Porter (d. 1831) to Jane Porter (1776-850).

⁶³ Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 47.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 314. See also Granville, *Hary-O*, 234.

the event. A successful party was a pleasure, an amusement. Unsuccessful parties, where the company was not appropriate or the setting did not suit, represented leisure without pleasure.

In the heat of the crowd

It was not enough simply to have interesting people at a party, but it helped. An event containing the correct people altered how people perceived the space where the event was housed. The descriptions given by Londoners of spaces and attendances at parties could be mocked by people who viewed London society from a different perspective. As one man sarcastically commented: “The World Complains that London is as yet very dull & stupid; there are however, crammed hot & stuffy Assemblies every night, & I do not know what People can want more, except something so superlatively crammed hot & stuffy as to suffocate them at once.”⁶⁵ He may have been satirizing the complaints of “The World”, but he nonetheless highlights competing meanings of “dull” or full. For this young man, the presence of lots of people should indicate a lively party and a dull party could be improved only through the addition of more people. By contrast fashionable Londoners would have advocated replacing part of the party with better people.

He did hit on two common complaints: heat and crowds. Sarah Lyttelton described the party at Lady Cholmondeley’s on 10 May 1808 as “the best assembly” held up to that point in the year. “There are seven large rooms opening one into the other, and magnificently furnished; so there never can be a crowd, and one walks round and round, meeting every person one ever can meet by candle-light in London, all walking comfortably in cool air, which makes it quite a different thing from a common party, and much better.”⁶⁶ A successful party was crowded, but not too crowded; full of people of the correct set; beautifully furnished; and comfortable in temperature. Contrast Lady Cholmondeley’s party with Harriet Wynne’s comment that she “disliked [Mrs. Bartolozzi’s concert] very much... the company detestable and the heat insufferable”. She continued “after that I went in another sort of crowd at Ly. Westmorlands' ...It was a

⁶⁵ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/18/47/22, 'To Tom from His Brother, Whitehall, April 9, 1809'.

⁶⁶ Lyttelton, *Correspondence*, 13 and 121.

good assembly but too full—met many people I knew.”⁶⁷ A crowded party, just like a fatiguing day, was a threshold to be approached as closely as possible without exceeding it. The presence of the correct people—particularly people one already knew and liked—among the crowds was the key. Fanny Burney, for instance, commented on a room at Ranelagh that “was extremely crowded” but she “saw few people there that [she] knew, & none that [she] cared for.”⁶⁸

The presence of large crowds at operatic performances was more important than a good performance, in part because patrons encountered the crowd before they came into contact with the performance. Lady Mary Coke always commented on crowd size before the quality of the opera itself in her diary entries.⁶⁹ Jennifer Hall-Witt’s recent work on the opera in Georgian and Victorian culture has argued for the relative importance of the social side of the opera at the expense of the work being performed.⁷⁰ The opera presents a special case, providing what Hall-Witt describes as a club-like “subscription culture,” but her concept of a “sociable aesthetic” offers a way of thinking about other events in eighteenth-century polite culture.⁷¹ Just as the crowd and conversation took precedence over the music and scenery at an opera, the people at a ball or rout were more important than the rooms where the gathering was held. In the context of assemblies and routs the crowd helped to create the impression of the built environment. Not only did too many people make rooms too crowded or too hot, but they also shaped the way the buildings themselves were perceived.

An enormous house where people could not possibly be crowded showed the splendor and wealth of the host or hostess. Mary Berry commented after a gathering at Devonshire House attended by “a vast number of people” that “the Dss may be more than satisfied—All assemblies in Dev. House good as there cannot be any crowd.”⁷² With the superior facilities of one of the grandest houses in London, the Duchess could not help but succeed. A superior setting or a superior hostess could develop a cachet and a social

⁶⁷ Fremantle, Campbell, and Fremantle, *Wynne Diaries*, 447-8. Simon McVeigh assumed that complaints about hot and crowded concerts simply reflected the small, oversubscribed venues. McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 57.

⁶⁸ Burney, *Early Journals and Letters*, I:146.

⁶⁹ Coke, *Letters and Journals*.

⁷⁰ Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*, 18-42 and passim.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷² Berry, 'Diary', Add 37732, f. 39.

importance that few others could hope to imitate. The Honorable Frances Calvert provides a glimpse of the triumphant hostess and what she might be most proud of. She said that her ball “went off most famously. They danced quadrilles, and though I had nearly 150 people, there never was a crowd.” Furthermore “[e]verybody was in good humour, and the Company select, and, as the 'Morning Post' says: ‘Composed of the most distinguished personages, the most fashionable youths of both sexes.’”⁷³ What more could one hope for? Oh yes, one thing: “Fanny and I went last night to Lady Mansfield's I got nothing but compliments about my ball. I am almost tired of the subject.”⁷⁴ Almost. Many other commentators support Calvert’s concern both about numbers and order. Harriet Wynne commented in positive terms on a party that may have been similar to Calvert’s. “L[ady] Temple's was very full and the temporary room extremely well managed. All London was assembled and most of the Prince's [sic] attended. ... The supper was a scrambling one but considering the number of people it was very well managed. ... I saw everybody I knew.”⁷⁵ Lady Temple had all the right people and organised them well. A good party was “very pleasant...and not too full”.⁷⁶ Too much crowd hampered socializing and thus prevented the key objective of many parties.

As these quotations demonstrate, the setting was seen in relation to the crowd. A populous party that was not cramped showed off the quality of the rooms. A badly organised event prevented people from enjoying the sociability or scenery. A visitor to both the Union Masquerade and a party organised by Boodle’s at Ranelagh in the spring of 1802 contrasted the “horrible cram...uproar & confusion” of the Union with the “greatest order at the door, & greatest magnificence within” Boodle’s party. The crush at the Union Masquerade left those in attendance without any comment upon the costumes of the crowd, the quality of the food or drink, the prettiness of the decorations, or indeed any other comment besides the displeasure caused by the poor organization.⁷⁷ The “social aesthetic” of a party meant that even with a fine setting if the crowd was ill-managed people came away unhappy. Though none of the letter writers explicitly link

⁷³ Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 314.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 314-5.

⁷⁵ Fremantle, Campbell, and Fremantle, *Wynne Diaries*, 453.

⁷⁶ Granville, *Hary-O*, 13.

⁷⁷ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/18/47/26, 'Baroness Grantham, and Frederick John Robinson, Earl of Ripon to Grantham, Bern, Switzerland'. His account of the masquerade appears to have been typical. See for instance *The Morning Chronicle*, Wednesday, June 2, 1802, Issue 10307.

their reactions to ideas about politeness, many of the descriptions echo the attributes other scholars have associated with polite ideals. Pleasant good humor, magnificence, and order all reflect polite ideals for behaviour, objects, and sociability.⁷⁸

Not all gatherings were vehicles for conversation, however. Some used the space for dancing. The Wrest Park archive provides a useful example of the sort of reaction engendered by a well-run niche gathering. “Mrs Robinson had one of the best Balls I ever remember her to have given: two sets danced the whole Eveng with more room than usual, every body very pretty behaved & satisfied.”⁷⁹ A well apportioned space with a group all interested in the same thing made it possible to enjoy an event without much conversation. A singular purpose helped to keep down crowds as Lord Bruce pointed out about a ball organised by Lady Langham “wch I hope will be a good one as she confines it chiefly to Dancers therefore it will not I trust be so crouded.”⁸⁰ A ball with a select purpose allowed people to pursue a pleasurable activity without crowds of people in attendance simply because they felt socially obliged.

Card playing was probably as ubiquitous as dancing, though other forms of gambling rarely appear despite the plentiful comments about the dangers of gambling in prescriptive literature and social commentary. Card parties were a regular part of Lady Mary Coke’s routine until she withdrew from society, and it is likely that most parties involved some card playing. Yet there is surprisingly little comment on what made a card party successful. The quality of the conversation may have been an important factor and conversations described in letters may have occurred at or around the card tables. Coke tends to discuss card games in terms of the amount of money won or lost or whether she was invited to play at the table of a socially significant woman. Few commentators mention the skill levels of their competitors or partners, nor did the tables provoke the sorts of aesthetic comments that dancing or mingling did.

Unfortunately few hosts or hostesses describe how they hit upon a successful model for a party. In part this results from the need to make effective hosting look effortless. Emphasizing the mental and physical effort involved in creating a brilliant party would have given the lie to the hostess who demonstrated easy skill. Some people

⁷⁸ Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation'.

⁷⁹ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/18/47/25, 'Baroness Grantham to Grantham, Vienna. 14 May 1802'.

⁸⁰ Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 1300/3192, 'J.E.B. Bruce to the Earl of Ailesbury, 3 May 1794'.

described how easy a particular party was to organise, particularly when they were simply at home on an evening and people came to play cards. The type of event may have been determined by the organiser's social aspirations and the amount of space available. People with substantial space, but who were happy to receive people in their circle for a low-key event, or those who had limited amounts of space gathered modest numbers of people. For people with space, status, and/or aspirations, a rout with vast numbers of people was the only option.

Occasionally comments offer illuminating insight into the ways buildings could be manipulated to improve spaces. In his diary John Marsh described alterations to his south-coast home: "Having frequently lamented that when we enlarged our Drawing [Room] in 1787 & remov'd the Door farther from the Fire place, we had not at once remov'd it quite to the bottom of ye Room, we...set about it, ...thus making ye Room much more comfortable & comodious [sic] for placing the Card Tables at our Routs."⁸¹ The Bluestockings were extremely attentive to the impact of room arrangement on sociability. Emma Major has described how Elizabeth Montagu thought Elizabeth Vesey's drawing room made people more conversable.⁸² Hosts and hostesses sought to ensure that their rooms possessed different attributes depending on the objective of the party.

In situations when conversation was not the object, the setting sometimes became the most important element, thus overcoming the social aesthetic. Betsey Fremantle attended Lady Salisbury's to hear Dragonetti's concert in May 1807 where she found the rooms "ill calculated for music and it was so hot and crowded I heard nothing but found the assembly very good and pleasant."⁸³ Despite not being able to hear the music she had come to enjoy, Fremantle at least enjoyed the company who shared those hot and crowded rooms with her. Sociability was not the sole purpose of every event, but it could save a bad party that was aspiring to loftier goals.

The boundary between the crowd and the setting became further confused when the word "brilliant" came into play. In usage, "brilliant" referred to almost any aspect of

⁸¹ Huntington Library, John Marsh journals, HM 54457 XIV:76-7.

⁸² Emma Major, 'The Politics of Sociability: Public Dimensions of the Bluestocking Millennium', *HLQ*, 65/1-2 (2002), 178-9.

⁸³ Fremantle, Campbell, and Fremantle, *Wynne Diaries*, 482.

a gathering. Mary Berry, for instance, commented on a ball at Lady Shaftsbury's that was "upon the whole both with respect to numbers, lighting, Company dress & dancing one of the most brilliant I ever saw in London."⁸⁴ In other situations we find brilliant in reference just to the people who lent their quality to the surroundings. Emily Cowper celebrated the upcoming season by declaring "the Opera is likely to be brilliant, [with] all the old subscribers taking boxes".⁸⁵ For some observers the people who chose to attend determined the quality of the entire event.

The qualities of the individuals that made an event brilliant remain unclear. For Berry it was the size, dress, and movement of the people present, whereas Cowper suggests that the quality of the company made the difference. A socially elite crowd may have been brilliant no matter how they dressed, but a group with a good reputation probably also dressed opulently. In his novel *A Winter in London*, Thomas Surr described the crowd at a concert as "a small but brilliant assembly" only to comment later that the gathering had only really attracted B-list people.⁸⁶ Here it seems that the fashion of the group overpowered its social prestige, making them brilliant through dress, but not brilliant through reputation. Though novel garments and ostentatious hairstyles attracted particular notice in the 1760s and 1770s, the language used to refer to the impression made by a well-dressed group changed little between the 1770s and the 1810s. The moralizing and critical concern of the early years of George III's reign that has attracted historical notice declined, but the language of description changed little as fashions became simpler towards the end of the century.⁸⁷ The interchangeability of the subjects, the quality of their conversation, and the beauty of their garments show that an atomized analysis of one aspect of a gathering, such as clothes or decorations, deprives us of a full understanding of the meanings of events for participants.

Writing their position

Thus far I have hinted at a division in society along gender lines. Women's letters and diaries, both published and in manuscript, provide more frequent and more

⁸⁴ Berry, 'Diary', Add MSS 37732, f. 29.

⁸⁵ Emily Palmerston, *The Letters of Lady Palmerston*, ed. Tresham Lever (London, 1957), 73.

⁸⁶ T. S. Surr, *A Winter in London; or, Sketches of Fashion* (London, 1806), II:36.

⁸⁷ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven & London, 2004), Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*.

descriptive references to assemblies and routs. In part this may be the fault of archivists and editors. At the same time that men's letters were selected (as they may still be) for their comments on political and economic matters, women's letters have been preserved or published for their comments on fashionable life, love, family, and other interests associated with women. The selection process may well obscure the variety of the original corpus in order to give the anticipated readers what they're looking for. But the preponderance of letters written by women to women in the sample suggests that there is more in this imbalance than just manipulation of the archives. The rarity of letters on these topics written by men intended for men becomes even starker when one recognizes that most of the letters written by men quoted above were intended for a female readership.

It is not that men did not have access to these vocabularies. We find "pleasant" widely used in the diary of William Windham, for instance, and Boswell making regular reference to "dull" evenings. Newspapers employed a similar style, most of them being written by men. The words were used in the same senses that we have already seen. Boswell complained about people who were uninteresting or parties with a poor crop of conversation as dull.⁸⁸ Likewise, Canning recorded dull gatherings but took less notice of the numbers, temperature or even the quality of theatrical performances.⁸⁹ Some words not commonly used to describe mixed parties, come up in the context of homosocial male gatherings, for instance "hearty" meaning lively and jovial.⁹⁰ On the whole, male-authored ego documents are less forthcoming than those drafted by females.⁹¹

This points to divergent gender roles at parties and in high society at large. As the usual organisers and hosts of mixed gatherings, women were likely to have been more aware of successful parties and attuned to the characteristics of those events. Amanda Vickery has pointed to the greater attention paid by women to interior design for similar reasons.⁹² It paid to know the language of compliment and dismissal and to use them appropriately. The letters from young women in the Wrest Park archives or the *Family Chronicle* kept by the children of the Graham family of Clapham show the ways that girls

⁸⁸ Boswell, *Ominous Years*, 97, 105, and 114.

⁸⁹ Canning, *Letter-Journal*, 12 and 14 February 1794.

⁹⁰ Boswell, *Ominous Years*, 108.

⁹¹ Chandos, 'Diary', 22 March 1763.

⁹² Vickery, 'Home'.

in their teens might practice the vocabularies of fashionable gatherings to the point of excessive repetition.⁹³

On a less practical level these letters may reflect the role of woman as unspoiled arbiters of taste that men sometimes projected on to them. Robert Jones alludes to the power given to women as arbiters of taste by cultural commentators, but never draws out how women might have expressed aesthetic preferences in practice.⁹⁴ The descriptions of parties may provide a semi-trivial instance of that power being put into women's hands. David Porter argues for a similar appeal behind chinoiserie whereby women could stake out as their specialty an area of art that circumvented the usual male-dominated interests in classical art and connoisseurship.⁹⁵ Domestic gatherings with their crowds and decorations evidently fell under the rubric of appropriate matters of female interest.

This notion of a division in social roles is further supported in letters by comments reflecting the divergence between men and women in their motivations for visiting London. Lady Anna Grenville received a letter from Lady Isabella Fitzroy complaining that "I will not bring myself to imagine our not going [to London] at all as though I do not now feel disposed for the gaieties of London I should regret being the whole year out of the way of them & seeing my friends & I should much regret not meeting with you."⁹⁶ This way of describing her involvement with London was typical of women's letters and provides a counterpoint to men's letters focusing on parliamentary sessions and government business as the reason to spend time in the capital. Historians have characterised the social season as an outgrowth of the parliamentary sessions, but one would not know this from reading women's letters about their visits which discuss sociability first and politics second.⁹⁷

The social and aesthetic function of news carried in letters has repercussions beyond the gendered difference in the ways taste was expressed amongst the gentry and

⁹³ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/51/11. 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother'. 26 April 1763, L 30/9/51/12, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother. 3 May 1763', L 30/9/51/13, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother. 10 May 1763', L 30/9/51/14, 'Amabel Grey to Her Mother. 17 May 1763', Graham Family, 'Family Chronicle'.

⁹⁴ Robert Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Analysis of Beauty* (Cambridge & New York, 1998), 85, 209, and passim.

⁹⁵ David Porter, 'Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35/3 (2002), 406.

⁹⁶ Grenville, 'Letters to Her', Box 6, folder 6.

⁹⁷ See however Lennox et al., *Life and Letters*, 291.

nobility. As I mentioned early in this chapter, merchant letters rarely offer insight into recreation or reactions to it. The limited instances that do appear reinforce the manner in which information on particular aspects of parties was useful for the gentry. Samuel Douglas' letter-book contains a few references to sociable gatherings, but only to people the respondent knew and usually when some other business also made the gathering important such as a gift or a particularly important holiday or occasion. For instance in February 1788 he "...dined with Mr Galbreath & the family[. O]nly after dinner I delivered the Picture to Miss Katty at the Table ...at the same time we had the pleasure to drink to the good health of its original...afterwards we were sweetly entertained...by Miss Katty on the PianoForte accompan[d sic]...[by] a full chorus by all the Children down to little Peter..."⁹⁸ This was a special occasion that demonstrated to the recipient that his gift had been gladly received and celebrated. For merchants the importance of the event lay in observing polite expectations in terms of behaviour and the expression of gratitude rather than evaluating its quality as compared with other events of the season. Furthermore, smaller social circles and less frequent visits to the opera or theatre meant that the range and regularity of events to be commented on was reduced. This suggests that the social cachet of parties and commercial attractions declined if they were not activities that interested everyone in a group and thereby created topics of conversation that reinforced other bonds.

This limited example also suggests different languages that could be employed to speak positively about parties. Miss Katty "sweetly entertained" the party. Other mercantile letters use a language of sociability, of "agreeable" ladies at a "Grand ball", "good Company", and "festivity & Conviviality"⁹⁹ The language does not seek to imitate the descriptions of the gentry, nobility, or newspapers and forces us to question the extent to which elite vocabularies were adopted by the middling. Differences between gentry and middling in the vocabulary they used in letters reflect the differences in values other historians have identified. Taste and vocabulary was not used to "[smooth] out social upheaval," as Robert Jones has argued, but rather marked out the differences in values and interests between social groups.

⁹⁸ Huntington Library, HM 47404, Samuel Douglas, 'Letterbook', 15 February 1788.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 10 January, 15 February, and 6 February 1788.

Posturing, obligation, and the demonstration of taste

We have seen women and men criticize gatherings, hosts, and other individuals for disappointing their guests. A variety of criteria for how a pleasant evening should play out have appeared: the diaries of Edward Thompson and Anna Larpent and Fanny Burney's journals reveal a desire for intellectual capacity amongst their companions that is not as obvious in other women's letters. This reflects their individual expectations. Rather than having a shared set of expectations about how entertaining people should behave; members of the same socioeconomic group expressed individual criteria that were not determined solely by their social milieu.

Education gave people a shared set of terms to use, but only partially defined those terms. An upper-class education set people up to appreciate particular cultural goods that served as markers of elite status. Most obvious in this regard are the opera or, for men, classical art and literature. When we look at exclusive or expensive cultural gatherings, objects, and performances, many of the arguments presented by Pierre Bourdieu about the social basis of taste ring true for the earlier period.¹⁰⁰ An education in the language and values of politeness gave people a shared terminology and criteria, but idiosyncratic upbringings and individual personalities present us with different interpretations of those words and criteria. All the people writing to describe an event would have aimed to produce an account that judged the event based on a well-established rubric of qualities, but as the language reviewed here demonstrates, even though the linguistic boxes to be ticked were widely the same the criteria that had to be met before the boxes would be ticked differed from person to person.

Expressions of taste are further complicated by the behaviours of the people who spoke or wrote them. Eighteenth-century diarists and letter writers often expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their routines, but the interaction between these statements and future choice of activities is often difficult to explain. For all of the failings writers attribute to events, some found themselves patronizing those gatherings and performances month after month, year after year. In some cases, it is clear that pointing out a negative aspect of an event did not provide a sufficient reason not to return. Betsey Fremantle attended the concerts at Lady Salisbury's, despite passionately

¹⁰⁰ Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

disliking them for their uncomfortable room and inaudible music, because of the crowd that was present. Less easily explained is George Macaulay's presence at the theatre, where he often knew no one and loathed the plays performed. Similarly Lady Lyttelton complained about going to Caroline Lamb's for a gathering. As she wrote: "it is very particularly against my wish for many reasons. First because I know it will, must, be a very ill-managed, strange, dull party...."¹⁰¹ Yet Lyttelton had no choice. Anna Larpent likewise went to numerous gatherings at the Fremantles' and Jeffrey's houses despite complaining that they would be dull evenings, often with odd people too.

Comparing positive and negative statements with subsequent attendance patterns demonstrates that complaints about private gatherings had little bearing on future behaviour. Besides those listed above, James Boswell, Lady Mary Coke, and George Canning also demonstrated strong disapproval for events of a kind they attended subsequently. It is possible that some of these gatherings were hit or miss—sometimes enjoyable, other times not. Lady Mary Coke reacted to the opera differently from week to week. But for others it was not a case of bad luck, their attendance was required for one reason or another. For George Canning, his dislike of aristocratic parties did not mean that he could escape them: they were an important site for networking and improving his political standing. No matter how tedious it was to sit at Mrs. Villiers and make conversation, it was a necessary evil. Others had less to gain from attending an event that had previously been bad, but a better alternative was not always available. Boswell's disappointing evenings at aristocratic parties during his *London Journal* instance this. Where else could he fashionably spend his evenings mingling with titled people, eating, and drinking for free? Similarly, Macaulay went to the theatre despite consistent disappointments because he enjoyed good theatre and there were nowhere else even offered an outside chance of good theatre.

When people had little choice about how they spent their evenings it was necessary to consume unsatisfactory products. Mrs. Calvert commented on attending "a very select, but very dull party at Lady Sefton's." She had gone for the "honour and glory of it, as it was very fine."¹⁰² Presumably what was fine were the socially important

¹⁰¹ Lyttelton, *Correspondence*, 7.

¹⁰² Calvert, *An Irish Beauty*, 156.

names on the guest list or the setting. To build up her reputation and, apparently, self-esteem, Mrs. Calvert had attended a party that was disappointing. She defended her decision by pointing to the “honour and glory” of being present, but honour and glory were not enough to provide pleasure. Without alternatives these diarists and letter-writers found themselves without much choice, but they could still demonstrate taste by making secondary exhibitions of taste—taste not reflected in their actions, but revealed by their posturing after the fact. For much of the population secondary exhibitions of taste are not visible. When taste is judged from the point of view of purchased goods, it is rarely possible to glimpse what people thought of those goods once they got them home (or even before they bought them). A good that was not acceptable, but the only one present might be purchased without question. Yet as we see in these egodocuments, taste could be demonstrated after purchase by complimentary or negative statements by consumers.

In some ways, spaces and activities chosen reflected individual taste. Reactions used formulaic language, but common expressions mask varied responses. Even though young people grew up developing a particular vocabulary, they used it to express individual preferences and reactions. At the same time, an individual was often limited in the sorts of activities they could choose to undertake, forcing them to find other ways to express their taste. Written and spoken preferences about activities involved more than just posturing or parroting others, but demonstrating an awareness of widely shared taste was important. As more individual variation in the reactions to activities becomes clear, but the language used proves to be formulaic, recreational activities become difficult to identify as pleasure and choice becomes tough to pin down.

A more attentive examination of the language used to discuss events demonstrates the importance of sociability. People were expected to be friendly and engaging; politeness was not a buzzword in this context, but many of the positive qualities exhibited in social settings were related to what historians have characterised as polite ideals. Still it is important to note that recreations were not usually explicitly evaluated as more or less “polite”, perhaps because politeness was taken for granted. The significance of sociability and the qualities of people in the crowd helped shape the ways physical surroundings and events were understood. The prominence of women’s judgments and

knowledge of upper-class parties presents us with further evidence of women's social and cultural roles. The opinions and knowledge possessed and distributed by women were crucial to navigating London society. Demonstrating good taste, even when words contradicted actions, was crucial to status within a variety of social groups.

8. As go the polite, so go the plebeian?

Through the first seven chapters of this dissertation a picture of recreation in London has emerged. People spent most of their time in the domestic sphere, but also visited coffeehouses, theatres, and other establishments in specific areas of the metropolis, and enjoyed a variety of amusements that are familiar from other histories. Yet some of the spaces that have been seen as most representative of eighteenth-century London, such as the tavern and the gin shop, are less visible. In part, this can be attributed to the source material that I have used: diaries written by London's wealthiest and most socially important residents. This chapter provides a plebeian comparison to the picture of propertied society provided thus far in the hopes of more fully drawing out the extent and variety of recreation in London. In order to explore the constraints on choice operating for labouring and middling Londoners and the ways that they negotiated those constraints, it asks two questions. First, what sorts of activities can we find labouring Londoners doing? Were the gin shop and the tavern typical of plebeian life or less common than other histories have suggested? Why are the routines of lower middling and working Londoners different from the routines of propertied society? Secondly, when diarists and labouring Londoners used the same spaces, what did they do there? How were spaces shared and to what extent did people come into contact with different sorts? This second line of inquiry provides an opportunity for reconsidering social interaction in London caused by recreation and the leisure networks first examined in chapter 5. The spaces considered here suggest that metropolitan spaces were stratified in the behaviours people exhibited, but in many instances mixed in terms of the socioeconomic backgrounds of their patrons.

Popular leisure, that is, the diversions of the labouring poor, first came to prominence as a subject of study in the early seventies with Robert Malcolmson's path-breaking book on popular recreations.¹ In response to his argument that industrialization destroyed a vibrant labouring culture leaving a vacuum that was filled with commercial recreations only in the mid-nineteenth century, other historians, most notably Hugh Cunningham, demonstrated not only that a vast array of amusements continued to

¹ Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1973).

entertain workers through the period known for industrialization, but also that a variety of new recreations emerged. Entrepreneurs created numerous commercial spaces catering to people at this social level.² Other historians have since demonstrated both the continuities with previous eras and the development of new forms of entertainment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; there is little doubt that there was no dearth of amusements for the labouring poor.³ Likewise, the poor did have some time to indulge in diversions. Voth's work on time-use shows that working people had leisure time that could be used for amusement and, as I outline in the first part of this chapter, a variety of activities filled that time.

Other debates have raged over the relationship between the recreations of different socioeconomic groups. Emerging in the context of the Marxian emphasis that dominated the historiography of social life in eighteenth and nineteenth-century England in the 1970s, analysis of popular recreation focused heavily on conflict related to sports and leisure. The history of social and political conflict was prominent in many of the records of popular pleasures, either because they were records of attempts to curtail practices deemed disorderly or immoral on religious or social grounds, or because the records celebrated or memorialized traditional pleasures that were seen as threatened. The importance of recreation as a scene of protest and class conflict was debated, both because some saw the conflict as exaggerated and because others believed that recreation was not the place where class solidarities were formed and therefore that, even if it was a source of conflict, it was of secondary importance.⁴ More recently historians and literary critics have seen recreations not as a cause for conflict, but as a discursive space where class identities and values were marked out. Melanie Dawson has argued that games played by the American middle class in the nineteenth century provided a medium for reinforcing a sense of class-identity built around shared values.⁵ This certainly may be true of a sample of recreational activities, but many other pleasures served to create solidarities other than ones of class. As I have shown for propertied society, chosen

² Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, C.1780-C.1880* (London, 1980).

³ Emma Griffin, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005).
Harvey, *Beginnings of a Commercial*.

⁴ Golby and Purdue, *Civilisation of the Crowd*. Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Class Expression Versus Social Control? A Critique of Recent Trends in the SH of 'Leisure'', *HWJ*, 4 (1977), 168-70.

⁵ Dawson, *Laboring to Play*.

leisure activities provided important opportunities for self-fashioning and allowed the creation of social relations that were not bound to class or economic position. This chapter extends the analysis of the sorts of groupings visible in recreational settings to popular leisure and to consider the ways in which recreation served as a primary space for the creation of social identity. It reveals a behaviourally stratified recreational world where distinctive subcultures and self-regulatory mechanisms tied to individuals' taste, residential location, and socioeconomic status created divisions in the types of activities and spaces used by different sorts of people. A patron-centred perspective again helps us to analyse the divisions and unities in London society and offers insights into the overlaps between different sorts of people within the metropolis.

Other scholars have used taste to try to understand the social and economic motivations of people in past societies. Consumption, in particular, has been seen as an activity that brought eighteenth-century society together. Neil McKendrick's work in the early 1980s made emulation a primary motivating force in eighteenth-century consumption and behaviour.⁶ Early work focused on the development of a consumer society and the ways in which a pay-to-play system opened up a variety of activities that had previously been restricted to people with the proper connections. The emulation model of cultural diffusion, which proposed that elite fashions were aped by social inferiors, was shaped by complaints made by cultural commentators in the eighteenth century and has proved a resilient explanation for working-class and middling behaviour. Later historians revised this model both by demonstrating ways in which the cultural elite borrowed from their social inferiors and by arguing that the adoption of elite fashions was not emulation, but appropriation.⁷ By using the behaviours and goods of their betters for their own purposes, plebs created different meanings for those goods and behaviours. Recent work by John Styles has added further nuance to the argument, showing how the consumption of fashionable clothes and accessories was tied into the life cycle and social needs at different life stages.⁸ Styles also reviewed evidence suggesting that fashions for particular fabrics among labouring people overlapped with elite fashions in unpredictable

⁶ McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *Birth of a Consumer Society*.

⁷ Golby and Purdue, *Civilisation of the Crowd*, Roger Chartier, 'Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France', in Steven Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Berlin & New York, 1984).

⁸ Styles, *Dress of the People*.

ways. Similarly, this chapter looks at how the trading and working classes chose to spend their time. In looking at time-use of plebs and comparing it with patterns visible in propertied society it is possible to re-examine debates on cultural transmission and the relationship between taste and socioeconomic group. By looking more closely at shared spaces and activities it is possible to get a better sense of the taste of the lower and middling sorts.

Looking for the recreations of the working class is one thing, but finding them is more difficult. This chapter makes use of the Old Bailey Sessions Papers (www.oldbaileyonline.org) in an attempt to piece together patterns of diversion from scraps of evidence. In the first part of this chapter I have sampled nine sessions in each of three decades, the 1760s, the 1790s, and the 1810s, in order to construct a picture of plebeian recreation. I have sampled across the year in order to compensate for seasonal variation. So I have looked at the January session for 1760, the February session for 1761, and so forth. This sampling method provides between 900 and 1,350 cases per decade. It provides a glimpse of many activities that might be otherwise difficult to track down with keyword searches (e.g. walking). In the second section I have used the full-text search function of the Old Bailey Online to target cases mentioning specific activities within the period 1760-1820.

The Old Bailey trials provide a vast amount of evidence of the daily lives of the labouring poor, but using this evidence is obviously subject to various caveats. First, the trials were published with several objectives in mind. Though the cases might entertain readers, City authorities did not want to offer potential defendants ways of escaping punishment. Indeed if anything they were intended to act as guides to effective prosecution.⁹ Robert Shoemaker has recently reviewed the publication history of the proceedings and has shown that the printed transcripts were frequently inaccurate or abbreviated. Trials resulting in acquittals were one hundred words shorter on average than trials leading to convictions.¹⁰ Secondly, while the random sampling method of the first section of this chapter seeks to catch all sorts of amusement, it will only turn up plebeian recreation that was mentioned in the context of a trial. This will obviously lead

⁹ Shoemaker, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings', 565.

¹⁰ Ibid. 567.

to certain activities, particularly drinking, being overrepresented. Other sorts of amusements in less compromising situations do appear as people were the victims of or witnesses to crimes while doing innocuous things, but it is likely that activities undertaken at home are under-represented. Other spaces used by the working classes for self-improvement and rational recreation, for instance coffeeshops and libraries, may be under represented as well, for they fail to appear entirely.¹¹ Likewise cook shops do not appear, despite supplying food and drink for most of the population.¹² It is also difficult to separate recreation in taverns and public houses from quotidian eating and drinking. I have attempted to restrict recreational drinking to instances when a person spent an extended period of time in the pub, more than half an hour if a time is mentioned and more than one drink if quantity is described. I have tried to eliminate instances when an individual entered the pub merely to have a quick drink. Entering a pub during the course of the working day did not mean that a person was at leisure. Similarly, I have not counted people who entered a pub, ordered a drink and then stole the vessel as someone seeking amusement. Sometimes opportunistic thefts did come during periods of recreation, but I have tried to avoid counting people who were moving about town with thieving in mind as being at leisure. Unfortunately, few other sources provide the sort of insight into plebeian recreation that the Old Bailey papers do. Coroners' inquests into accidental deaths provide occasional glimmers, for example of people at fairs or theatres, but again, the sample tends to present people out of the home and often drinking.

The lack of source material offering glimpses of the common people at play has made it difficult to get a sense of what people got up to. Robert Malcolmson's note on the primary sources he used in *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850* categorizes his sources; his nomenclature is still applicable to recent works on popular recreation. He divides his sources into five categories (in no obvious order): "(1) tracts, pamphlets, essays, sermons, and books which bear on recreational topics; (2) local studies; (3) diaries, journals, memoirs, autobiographies, poetry, and other literary sources;

¹¹ David Magee, 'Morals, Intellect and Popular Periodicals in Early Nineteenth-Century London' (Oxford University DPhil Thesis 2008), 260 and following. The first mention of a coffee shop in a published trial was in 1814. OBP, John Davis, John Leary, Theft, 30th November 1814 (t18141130-24).

¹² Cookshops only begin to appear in the proceedings regularly in the mid-1790s though they happen not to appear in my sample. Roger Scola and W. A. Armstrong, *Feeding the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester, 1770-1870* (Manchester, 1992).

(4) Parliamentary papers; and (5) newspapers and periodicals.”¹³ Malcolmson’s decision to class poetry and literary sources along with egodocuments is curious in itself, though of course recognizing the conventions that shaped egodocuments is as important as recognizing those that shaped novels. All five categories Malcolmson creates provide useful information, but they also decontextualize recreations in various ways. Category 1 comprehends a heterogeneous group of documents including both pamphlets denouncing particularly activities and works like William Hone’s *Every-day book* or Joseph Strutt’s *Glig-gamena Angel-oeod, or, The sports and pastimes of the people of England*, which sought to record popular recreations under threat.¹⁴ These sources draw our attention to the particularly contentious areas of recreation, even though it is likely that most recreation was not contentious for the majority of the population. Many of the local studies and the antiquarian accounts of activities also emphasize unusual or occasional activities without providing a sense of routine. Voth’s work on daily routines shows that there was time for recreation other than on St. Monday or in annual festivals and it is quotidian amusements that one does not learn much about from these sources. The sources that potentially provide a sense of individual taste and daily routine, working-class autobiographies—most prominent in the historiography is Francis Place’s—tend to have radical content or present a story of upward mobility and differentiation from the rank and file working class. A further problem is that men wrote most of the surviving working class autobiographies.¹⁵

What did working people do?

Sampling official records created with other purposes in mind offers the best opportunity for surveying what working Londoners chose to do. The records provide insight into labouring and middling people, though members of propertied society do

¹³ Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations*, 174.

¹⁴ Joseph Strutt, *Glig-Gamena Angel-oeod, or, the Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*. (London, 1801), William Hone, *The Every-Day Book, or, Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusement* (London, 1826).

¹⁵ A recent article has drawn attention to the ways that working class autobiographies differentiate male and female experiences. For men learning was important self improvement that others might seek to enable. With women, reading and learning were frowned upon as unnecessary distractions from household work. Women were expected to find pleasure in their household duties. Kelly Mays, 'Domestic Spaces, Readerly Acts: Reading(,) Gender, and Class in Working-Class Autobiography', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 30/4 (2008), 343-68.

appear as well. As one would expect many of the victims of thefts are people with property to steal, though by no means all victims were wealthy. Table 15 presents the findings for each nine-year sample of Old Bailey trials. It represents each instance of an activity, but does not reflect the number of people involved. So a group of five people in a pub is just one instance of public drinking, but a single (hypothetical) individual who dines with a friend, drinks in a pub, plays shove halfpenny there, goes to another pub to drink, and then goes to the theatre would be counted five times.

Chapter 6 demonstrated that the domestic sphere was, in terms of time and number of events, the most important recreational space for propertied society. Given that even middling people were often limited to just one or two rooms, it is not surprising that we find most recorded plebeian leisure activity taking place away from people's homes.¹⁶ Pubs and alehouses offered people without the financial resources for capital investment to equip a house for hosting (particularly in terms of food and drink and furniture) opportunities to enjoy eating and drinking in company without having to treat others. Only 13 instances of drinking tea or alcohol or eating meals in people's homes were found in the sample from the Old Bailey out of 172 events. A further 2 mentions of visiting also appear. Activities undertaken at home alone are probably underestimated, since recreational activity is usually mentioned in testimony about meeting or watching someone in a public space. It is possible that labouring people were limited in what they could do at home not only by limited space and entertaining facilities, but also by lack of means to acquire the materials necessary for entertainment. Unlike propertied people, their means to buy books, sewing supplies, or other recreational technologies was highly circumscribed by their economic situation.

¹⁶ Guillery, *Small House*, 30.

Table 14: Plebeian activities recorded in testimony at the Old Bailey

	1760	1790	1810
Alcohol (domestic)	1	3	1
Animal sports	2	-	-
Assemblies and shows	2	-	-
Club (generally in pubs)	1	-	3
Coffee house	2	2	1
Dining out	2	4	3
Drinking (pubs)	28	22	22
Fairs	2	1	3
Gambling	2	-	-
Meals (domestic)	1	1	2
Bagnio/New Hummums	-	2	-
Prostitutes	5	2	4
Pub games	-	2	1
Public events	2	1	3
Singing (pubs)	1	-	-
Smoking (in pubs)	1	1	1
Tea and pleasure gardens	3	-	-
Tea drinking (domestic)	1	1	2
Theatre	2	1	8
To see the king/ prince regent	-	1	1
Visiting	-	1	1
Walking	2	2	1
Watching sport	1	1	1
Window shopping	1	-	-
Other	-	2	2

Lacking space in the home for activities, the most obvious place to turn was the public house, and indeed we find a preponderance of people mentioning recreational visits to public houses. Some activities were presumably carried on in the street including chatting with neighbours, listening to ballad singers, or rough-and-ready gambling, but none of these activities appear in the sessions papers. The relatively large number of instances of public house and tavern visits reflects the importance of the pub in middling, artisan, and labouring life, but the effects of alcohol on behaviour nevertheless probably exaggerate the comparative dominance of pubs and taverns. Inebriated people were easy targets for thieves and ruffians, and they were more likely to take unnecessary risks like stealing when they were likely to get caught or going home

with prostitutes and others who later robbed them. Nonetheless, the large number of instances of public-house drinking supports Peter Clark's belief that the public house fulfilled a number of needs among the working classes.¹⁷ Furthermore, we have already seen Job Knight going out for meals and tea on a daily basis when his lodgings did not offer space to prepare food. The need for public drinking and eating spaces, and the apparently regular use made of them by trading men and (to a lesser extent) women complicates the picture of restrained families delicately upholding thrifty middle-class morals portrayed by historians such as Margaret Hunt.¹⁸ Besides drinking, we see some of the ancillary activities that went on in alehouses including gaming, smoking, singing, and eating. The public houses provided space for many of the activities that propertied society would have done at home including gambling and gaming, smoking and gossiping. And yet it is also striking that the establishments Clark believes serviced the low end of the market when alehouses became too pricey and respectable, dram and gin shops, are never mentioned in any of the cases in the sample.¹⁹ Night cellars, some of the most impoverished drinking establishments in the metropolis, likewise do not appear. It is not surprising that we do not find propertied or middling society in such humble places, but thieves are not being sought in them either. People do discuss drinking gin in these cases, and it may be that gin shops and night cellars shared names with public houses or that when testifying in court people feared that talking about drinking in a gin shop would damage their reputation (though they were willing to admit to getting drunk on gin and picking up prostitutes, two other disreputable but legal activities). Some of the establishments are described as "low" houses, but the titles of gin shop or night cellar are never ascribed to them.

Domestic spaces and the surrogate domestic space of the public house saw the majority of reported plebeian recreational activities, but there are obvious differences between a favorite pub and the space in one's home. For one, unlike homes people did not necessarily patronize the same houses every day. Instances do appear of people regularly patronizing the same pub. Groups of co-workers appear as we would expect

¹⁷ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 132-8, 229-31, and 315.

¹⁸ Hunt, *Middling Sort*.

¹⁹ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 239.

and other individuals and groups frequented particular venues as a matter of course.²⁰ For instance John Wilks, the keeper of the Cock Inn in Aldersgate Street, claimed to have seen a man called John Brinklow, on trial for theft, in his establishment in company with Richard Fuller, who later turned King's evidence.²¹ Similarly James Aylett, keeper of the Blakeney's Head in Norton Folgate, could say that he knew the two men on trial because "they had frequented [his] house about three or four months."²²

Evidence from the Old Bailey shows people drinking close to home, others are near their workplace, and a further group made choices that are not obviously related to either. For instance, Joseph Barton, a master bookbinder who lived in No. 2 Playhouse Yard, Blackfriars, spent Whitsun Eve drinking near his house at the sign of the Hope, Vine Street, Blackfriars.²³ Others can be seen drinking much farther from home. Catherine Sankey, who resided at Holywell Mount, near Shoreditch, was drinking at Newgate and at The Cock in the Corner on Ludgate Hill.²⁴ Extenuating circumstances may have led people to drink far from home. William Unitte, a Marylebone bricklayer, was robbed at the top of Arundel Street in the Strand after being paid and drinking in a local pub.²⁵ Unfortunately workplace data is even less frequently recorded than residence. For some, the alehouse may have served as an extension of the workplace, rather than a replacement for the domestic parlour.

The gender breakdown of individuals recorded in public drinking establishments gives us another reason why we cannot simply say that the public house was a replacement for the domestic parlour. Table 16 shows the number of men and women mentioned as being present in a venue that sold alcohol in the sample of Old Bailey trials I examined. I have excluded the owners, their families and any servants from the tally, and I have tried to weed out people who were present in the pub only to steal or women

²⁰ OBP, John More, Theft: Simple Grand Larceny, 22nd October, 1766 (t17661022-17). OBP, Thomas Brotherton, Theft: Grand Larceny, 8th April 1812 (t18120408-63). Co-workers: OBP, James Geary, Theft: Housebreaking, 6th July 1763 (t17630706-55). OBP, Bridget King, Theft: Theft from a Specified Place, 9th December 1767 (t17671209-3).

²¹ OBP, John Brinklow, Francis Parsons, Theft: Grand Larceny, Theft: Pocketpicking, Theft: Grand Larceny, 6th July 1763 (t17630706-24).

²² OBP, John Smith, Richard Hayward, Violent Theft: Highway Robbery, 8th April 1812 (t18120408-71).

²³ OBP, Elizabeth Hambleton, Violent Theft: Highway Robbery, 1st July 1795 (t17950701-32).

²⁴ OBP, Francis Hubbard, James Jones, James Armstrong, John Bailey, James Savage, Peter Douglas, James Frere, John Carryl, Killing: Murder, 29th March 1792 (t17920329-26).

²⁵ OBP, Judith Pye, Theft: Grand Larceny, 13th January 1790 (t17900113-59).

who were there to pick up men who would pay for sex. These last two groups are not always easy to pick out. Both theft and prostitution appear to have been opportunistic activities for some who engaged in them. Some men mention meeting women in the street, going to public houses with them and then going to their homes afterwards. Sometimes they mention paying, other times not. It is likely that some of these meetings were not financial transactions, though others probably were but not described as such because it might weaken the man's case.²⁶

Table 15: Men and women in public drinking establishments

	1760	1790	1810
Men	43	33	39
Women	15	3	4

The gender imbalance is striking, though again it may be a reflection of source material rather than practice. Jennifer Melville found a proportion of men to women similar to my findings for 1760 in her sample from the 1690s (roughly 3:1 or 4.4:1 depending on the sample).²⁷ The shift to a male-dominated public drinking sphere in the half century after 1760 also works with Peter Clark's chronology suggesting that, after a century of increasing respectability (in contrast to disreputable gin shops), the alehouse's reputation declined in the final third of the eighteenth century.²⁸ The numbers here are too small to offer strong support to Clark's argument and we cannot be certain what sorts of establishments the deponents were visiting, but the evidence is suggestive nonetheless.

The presence of men and women in public houses has been a matter of concern for several historians and none entirely resolve the issue. The general consensus seems to be that public drinking spaces were male-dominated, but that women appeared in them. For the late Stuart period, Jennifer Melville has argued that alehouses were the place to find the men who were absent from the domestic sphere.²⁹ Women were at home at the same time as men were in the pub. Melville found women in pubs with men, something that Peter Clark, Anna Clark, and Catriona Parratt find as well.³⁰ My sample supports the

²⁶ Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *Tales from the Hanging Court* (London, 2006).

²⁷ Melville, 'The Use and Organisation', 243-4.

²⁸ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 200-15 & 225.

²⁹ Melville, 'The Use and Organisation', 239.

³⁰ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 225 and 311, Catriona Parratt, *More Than Mere Amusement: Working-Class Women's Leisure in England, 1750-1914* (Boston, 2001), 28-9, 120-1, and 127-8, Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, 28-9.

consensus that women generally entered pubs with men or in groups of women.³¹ The reason for this is unclear. Peter Clark and Catriona Parratt have pointed to the literature that decried women's presence in public houses as morally suspect, particularly when unaccompanied.³² This prescription seems to have been followed in practice, but women may have been absent from pubs because they had less time for recreation and more obligations around the household. With household duties to attend to and children to mind (no mentions of children in public houses appear), it may have worked out that women who entered public houses alone often *were* prostitutes. Other women needed an occasion to go in. Those occasions came in the company of men or other women.

As has been seen, there were some notable differences between the spaces used for recreation by propertied society and by people lower down the social scale. The prominence of public-drinking venues for working Londoners is reminiscent of the importance of domestic recreation for propertied society. But the alehouse was not a substitute, it was male-dominated and overwhelmingly adult. This determines the sorts of activities that went on there and how different customers related to each other. More importantly these features of tavern-culture led people to be socialized differently as they grew up. Children in polite and propertied families, of course, spent a great deal of their time away from parents, either under the supervision of servants or at school, but diaries of parents, particularly Elizabeth Francis or Elizabeth Tyrrell, and children, for instance William Burgess or Emma Smith, reveal that families were frequently together at home; children were around at many of the recreational activities that went on in the domestic setting during the day. The differential access to the central recreational space in

³¹ Mixed men and women: OBP, John Hatchman, Eleanor Theft: Grand Larceny, Theft: Receiving, 18th September 1765 (t17650918-62), OBP, Elizabeth Turpin, Sarah Robinson, Theft: Pocketpicking, 18th September 1765 (t17650918-67). OBP, Anne Pattey, Theft: Pocketpicking, 22nd October 1766 (t17661022-2). (Also a woman drinking alone), OBP, Henry Peake, Theft: Grand Larceny, 22nd October 1766 (t17661022-47), OBP, Anne Myers, Mary Goodwin, Theft: Grand Larceny, 9th December 1767 (t17671209-17), OBP, Francis Hubbard, James Jones, James Armstrong, John Bailey, James Savage, Peter Douglas, James Frere, John Carryl, Killing: Murder, 29th March 1792, OBP, Mary Wakeland, Mary Barton, Theft: Theft from a Specified Place, 5th December 1798 (t17981205-3), OBP, James Garvey, Jane Garvey, Violent Theft: Robbery, 5th December 1798 (t17981205-62), OBP, Elizabeth Wetherall, Theft: Grand Larceny, 2nd June 1813 (t18130602-22), OBP, John Archer, Theft: Theft from a Specified Place, 2nd June 1813 (t18130602-102), OBP, William Seawood, John Latham, Violent Theft: Highway Robbery, 30th October 1816 (t18161030-16), OBP, Maria Thompson, Thomas Jarman, Ann Frith, Eliza Frith, Theft: Pocketpicking, 3rd December 1817 (t18171203-112). Group of women OBP, Susannah Hague, Theft: Grand Larceny, 22nd October 1766 (t17661022-30). A lone woman: OBP, Bridget King, Theft: Theft from a Specified Place, 9th December 1767.

³² Clark, *English Alehouse*, 225 and 311, Parratt, *More Than Mere Amusement*, 28-9, 120-1, and 127-8.

plebeian lives helped to shape generational and gender dynamics in other areas of life as well.

Because of the small number of instances of any particular activity, it is not prudent to attempt to draw conclusions about change over time from these results. Table 15 contains some figures that may reflect changes in popularity. The disappearance of animal sports in the samples from the 1790s and 1810s and the rise in club or theatre attendance in the latter periods may reflect changing plebeian habits as animal sports were targeted for abolition and more theatres and clubs opened across the metropolis. Other figures in the chart warn against reading too much into the data. First, with the number of instances generally under three, a drop from three to one or zero cannot be treated as statistically significant. The disappearance of gambling or commercial assemblies and shows from plebeian lives, for instance, seems unlikely. A particularly industrious constable could create a glut as well by looking for crimes in particular venues. William Payne of Bell Yard, who took his duties as constable very seriously, single handedly created a spike in prosecutions of fairground pickpockets in the 1760s and 1770s. To an extent our records of crime in the eighteenth century reflect where constables and authorities thought there would be crime.

I have already offered a few suggestions about the divergent uses of alehouses for working Londoners and propertied society. While it has not been possible to get good figures for the frequency with which plebeian people went into pubs for recreation, the evidence from the Old Bailey suggests that it was a prominent feature of plebeian life—more prominent than it was for propertied society. Furthermore, propertied women have not provided significant evidence to suggest that they ever went into alehouses, taverns, or pubs.³³ Plebeian women were not likely to have been in the majority in a pub, but they were a significant presence.

A further difference emerges when we compare the particular pubs that appear in diaries with those mentioned in the proceedings of the Old Bailey. The eating and drinking establishments mentioned in trial proceedings are generally not ones that appear

³³ The only exception I've found is a claim in an adultery trial by the wife that she frequently went to public houses: "she muttd at there [sic] price and said that she had drank tea at Publick Houses very often and never paid more than 10d a piece". This anecdote was recorded by her postillion. Court of Canterbury, 'Elwes V. Elwes', 1094.

in diaries.³⁴ Some, like the Bedford, Chapter, Jamaica, and Stock Exchange Coffeehouses, appear in the trials because a member of propertied society was giving testimony about his activities.³⁵ The number of coffee and public houses in London was enormous, certainly in the thousands, so it is not surprising that we find a wide range of establishments in the trial proceedings.³⁶ A more careful look at trial evidence relating to places where diarists drank gives evidence of a stratified system of public houses catering to different levels of clientele.

At the top of the pile of drinking houses when we rank them by the wealth and status of their clientele are the coffeehouses and a handful of high end drinking establishments such as the Brown Bear, where John Fielding and the Bow Street Runners ran their service, the Mitre near the Inns of Court, or the Crown and Anchor on Cornhill. A variety of ambiguous institutions mentioned in testimony from my sample may have been respectable, or not. These are establishments like the Queen's Head, Bishopsgate Street;³⁷ the George, Bloomsbury; or the Cock Inn, Aldersgate Street; venues that probably catered mostly to the middling and artisanal sorts. More dubious watering holes include Bob Derry's in Covent Garden, described in the transcript as a night house (and in another trial as "a very bad house"), or institutions like the Bull's Head, Crown Street, St. Giles'; Cooper's Arms, East Smithfield; and the Ship and Star, East Smithfield which lay in rough areas of town and probably offered cheap accommodation to sailors and the urban poor in addition to selling alcohol.³⁸ It is striking that when one searches the Old Bailey for public houses and taverns visited by propertied society they are overwhelmed

³⁴ 1760s: The Cock, Hackney; Bob Derry's, Covent Garden; Half-moon, Holborn; Rummer Tavern; Chapter Coffeehouse, Paternoster Row; King's Arms [no location]; Excise Coffee House; Cock Inn, Aldersgate Street; King's Arms, Old Castle Street; Two Blue Posts, Holborn; the Black Lion [Chelsea?]; Cooper's Arms, East Smithfield; the Ship Alehouse [no location]; Queen's Head, Bishopsgate Street; the Brown Bear, Strand; Two Chairmen, Hedge Lane; the Ship Alehouse, Stamford Hill; Ship and Star, East Smithfield. 1790s: Globe Tavern [no location]; the George, High Street Bloomsbury; Jamaica Coffeehouse; Stock Exchange Coffeehouse; Bedford Coffeehouse; White Hart, London Bridge; Half Moon, Long Lane; the Ship, Charing Cross; the Cock, Ludgate Hill; the Bull's Head, Jewin Street; Golden Hart, Parker's Lane; Bull's head, Crown Street, St. Giles'; the Crown, Clement's Inn Passage; the Hope, Vine Street, Blackfriars;

³⁵ OBP, Richard Candeline, Deception: Perjury, 13th January 1790 (t17900113-108). In this case it is actually the prosecutor who is using the Bedford Coffeehouse.

³⁶ Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses*.

³⁷ Possibly the coffee house that existed in 1657 listed by *Ibid.*, 465.

³⁸ For Bob Derry's see: OBP, David Morgan, William Dupuy, Violent Theft: Highway Robbery, 6th May 1761 (t17610506-15). The Ship and Star appears in literally dozens of cases, having the double luck of being in a rough area of town and apparently surviving from the 1750s until at least the mid 1850s.

in the results by other taverns of the same name but in other parts of town. Searching for the pubs attended by Stephen Montage, for instance, reveals a topography of drinking establishments with similar names but very different clienteles. Montage regularly visited the Cock near Temple Bar. A search for “The Cock” on the Old Bailey reveals a handful of establishments with the same name but in different locations; the Cock at Temple Bar does not appear to have been involved in criminal activity that was prosecuted at the Old Bailey. We can also see this in the case of pubs that were popular for meetings, such as the Crown and Anchor or the Mitre Tavern, where Boswell and Johnson often met.³⁹ The Mitre does appear a few times, usually because the staff stole from the owner, not because thieves entered from the street or people brawled in its rooms. The distribution suggests that, as Peter Clark suggested, houses catering to propertied society were more likely to be located on large thoroughfares.⁴⁰ We have already seen several taverns frequented by propertied society that were located on London’s major streets: the Strand and Cornhill. The presence of low pubs and, below them, night cellars, catering to a labouring or criminal clientele can be set apart from the more polite spaces visited by propertied society. These low-end, transient pubs fulfilled the functions Peter Clark ascribed to gin shops and dram shops.⁴¹ A similar stratification in clienteles has been discussed by David Magee, who examined the differences between coffee shops and coffeehouses. Though there was an overlap in clientele, the prosecutors for thefts occurring in coffee shops tended to be of humbler origins than the prosecutors who had been robbed in coffeehouses.⁴² Different sorts of people appear to have chosen different sorts of establishments to take their drinks in.

We have seen already that residence, workplace, and possibly friends’ residences helped to determine the general location, but, with numerous drinking houses to choose from in each area, further decisions remained to the client. The presence of plebeian versions of elite taverns and coffeehouses suggests that proprietors may have used name recognition to boost their clientele.⁴³ The Old Bailey records are unyielding when one

³⁹ Even the places where Boswell goes for low life, such as The Shakespeare in Covent Garden where he dallied with prostitutes, appear rarely when compared with labouring pubs.

⁴⁰ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 278.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁴² Magee, 'Morals, Intellect and Popular Periodicals', 259.

⁴³ See for instance the Crown and Anchor. The most famous Crown and Anchor, home of the Royal

looks for other thought-processes that led working people into one pub as opposed to another.⁴⁴ Perhaps the presence of a favorite or cheap beer did attract people as Burton Ale attracted Stephen Montage to repeatedly visit a pub on Gray's Inn Lane. The matrix of factors that includes location, clientele, cost, and quality of food and drink explains many of the choices, but further research into how individuals negotiated these decisions remains to be done.

The frequency of drinking in public houses and a handful of other activities foreign to propertied society set the labouring lifestyle apart, but we should not exaggerate the differences. Jeremy Black has suggested that the difference in taste between polite and plebeian recreations is related to the working population's preference for unstructured activities.⁴⁵ This explanation exaggerates both the structure in propertied lives and the disorder in the worker's existence. We have already seen propertied society indulging in numerous walks and rides which did not follow set patterns and despite the apparently formal rules for dinners and visiting, meals and social calls were relatively flexible—certainly more loosely organised than they would be by the middle of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ Moreover, this ignores the order of the plebeian recreations we have seen. Popular sports such as cockfighting and bull baiting would have been conducted according to rules and familiar forms. Similarly the visits to tea gardens, assemblies, and sporting events, or participation in singing, gambling, and shopping, were conducted according to patterns that would have been familiar to propertied society. Certainly gambling and singing had to be done according to rules if a chaotic outcome was to be avoided. As I have argued elsewhere, however, plebeian presence at public events was presented as less structured than propertied participation.⁴⁷ The willingness of some plebeian pleasure-seekers to adhere to expectations for behaviour set by people above them in the social order means that their presence in respectable drinking houses or in venues more widely associated with propertied society

Society, among other institutions, was located in Fleet Street. The Old Bailey reveals analogues on Saffron Hill, in Moorfields, and near 7 Dials. An East End version of Vauxhall also existed in the 1760s.

⁴⁴ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 200-15.

⁴⁵ Black, *Subject for Taste*, 16.

⁴⁶ Davidoff, *Best Circles*, 41-58, Arnold Palmer, *Movable Feasts: A Reconnaissance of the Origins and Consequences of Fluctuations in Meal-Times, with Special Attention to the Introduction of Luncheon and Afternoon Tea* (Oxford, 1952), 15.

⁴⁷ Benjamin Heller, "'Mene People' And the Polite Audience' (under consideration).

may have gone unnoticed and that the overlaps with propertied activities may be more important than a general survey of plebeian recreation would suggest.

Sharing spaces

The labouring poor had less time for recreation than propertied society and occupied that time differently from their social superiors. But, as we saw in Table 15, parks, theatres, pleasure gardens, and other spaces that appear in the diaries of propertied society also appear in court cases at the Old Bailey. There was not a great deal of overlap in the spaces of public drinking between propertied and working society, but venues such as parks and theatres must have been shared by popular and polite audiences. The Old Bailey provides evidence of the ways in which these spaces were used by hoi polloi, which I will compare and contrast with propertied society. The extent of the popular presence in polite spaces and the potential interactions between different sectors of society gives us an opportunity to consider whether there was a shared culture in London and what light taste in activities can shed on socioeconomic status.

Recent work by Emma Griffin has drawn a stark distinction between the spaces and activities of community elites in provincial towns and the working people in those towns.⁴⁸ Her research has demonstrated that if there was a shared culture in English towns at any point in the eighteenth century, it only existed at the most superficial level. Elsewhere, Griffin has argued that historians have ignored the broader cultural, social, and political contexts in which popular culture, and in particular sports and pastimes, took place and have therefore exaggerated the overlaps in popular and elite culture.⁴⁹ I have already outlined areas of difference between the polite and plebeian patterns, but there was undoubtedly overlap as well. In some ways this overlap provides us with evidence of the different functions of and conditions of access to diversions, but at the same time, shared spaces were used in surprisingly similar ways. Even material drawn from criminal records presents similarities in the theatre-going practices of individuals of the polite, professional, middling, and artisanal classes. Even though socioeconomic and

⁴⁸ Griffin, *England's Revelry*.

⁴⁹ Griffin, 'Popular Culture in Industrializing England', 627-32.

political conditions shaped access to spaces and activities, audiences provide evidence of mechanisms of cohesion that were more salient than class or wealth.

In order to contemplate these issues I have assembled cases from the Old Bailey containing evidence of use of two spaces which are thought to have assembled a mixture of Londoners: parks and theatres. Using the keyword search function on the Old Bailey Sessions papers, I have located fifty-eight instances of people diverting themselves in a “park” or “garden” and eighty-six cases where people went to the “theatre” or a “play.”

Public outdoor spaces, such as St. James’, Hyde, and Green Parks had no mechanism to prevent working people from getting in during daylight hours when the gates were open. Sentinels and gatekeepers could prevent carts, peddlers, animals, and women in pattens from coming in to the parks, but as commentators complained and evidence from the Old Bailey demonstrates, the parks were spaces for a wide array of people getting up to lots of different things.⁵⁰ Writers frequently bemoaned the disagreeable people who were found in the parks—from prostitutes in the act of soliciting to City shopkeepers to tradesmen and their wives—and made the grounds socially and morally ambiguous spaces.⁵¹ English commentators believed open access to the parks was an essential English liberty (A possibly apocryphal story involves George II’s wife Queen Caroline asking William Pitt how much it would cost to enclose the parks. He responded, we are told, “Only three crowns.”).⁵²

Many of the diarists in my sample can be found in St. James’, Hyde, and Green Parks, particularly female members of the gentry who resorted there to walk or ride on many mornings. Mary Coke, Mary Berry, and others all appeared daily during good weather. We also find men such as James Boswell, who appeared there to walk, but was not averse to taking advantage of prostitutes who offered their services in the bushes. City residents also made it out to Hyde Park as we can see from the diary of Elizabeth Tyrrell. Yet despite the complaints about the labouring poor infiltrating West End gardens, none of the diarists mentions coming into contact with lower-class people. Boswell’s diary shows that at least some low-life was there, but how much contact did the gentry who did not enter the parks at night have with rougher elements of London?

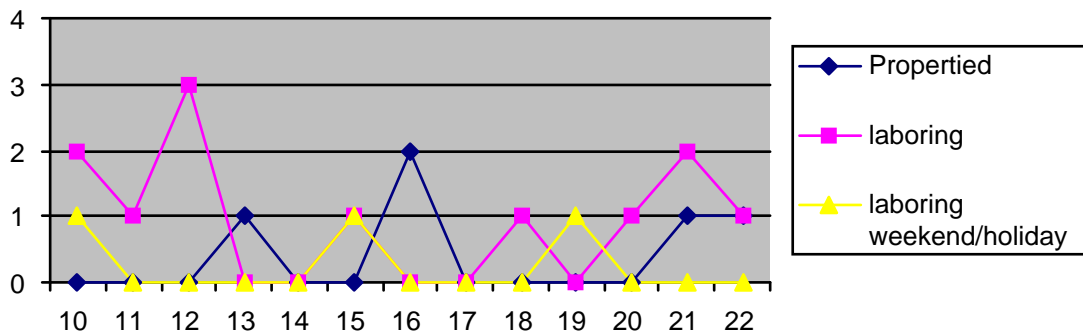
⁵⁰ O’Byrne, ‘Walking, Rambling, and Promenading’, 149-50.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 133-4.

⁵² L. R. Sadler, *The Story of the London Parks* (London, 1881), 101.

The conventional wisdom is that polite society separated itself from the labouring poor in the park by walking when the poor were working and riding when the poor might be walking. In his *London Adviser*, John Trusler announced "St. James's Park is crowded in week days, in May and June, between one and three, with people of fashion, walking there for the air. And on Sundays, about the same hour, and in the evenings, all the summer, the walks are covered with the trading part of the people." He cited similar hours in particular months for fashionable walking and riding in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park respectively.⁵³ Logically, the *beau monde* could walk in the parks and gardens without encountering disreputable people during the day when the labouring sorts would be at work. In the evenings and Sundays, however, the plebs were at liberty to walk in the parks.

Figure 20: propertied and plebeian presence in parks as recorded in the Old Bailey proceedings, 10.00 to 22.00



Diarists' patterns of activity basically conform to Trusler's model. Coke, Francis, and Berry all went to the parks before they dined in mid-afternoon. Because they needed to change before dining, it is likely that they took their walks a little earlier than Trusler suggests, but certainly during the hours when most of the population would have been working. What is surprising, however, is that Figure 20 shows a large number of middling and labouring people in the park around midday and a second, expected, increase in the evening hours. The chart shows that some of the morning and early afternoon numbers were on non-working days (Sundays, holidays, and days when special events such as royal appearances or military parades took place in the park), but the

⁵³ Trusler, *London Adviser*, 164.

midday spike remains prominent. As elsewhere in this chapter the numbers are small and so caution has to be exercised, but it appears that the working sorts of Londoners did not follow Trusler's advice. It is even more interesting that Harriet Cavendish complained in her letters about irritating or unfashionable members of her circle, but never about traders or artisans who probably would have been there too.⁵⁴ If they did not try to talk to her, Cavendish turned a blind eye to park-goers who were not in the *beau monde*. Polite coexistence and silent disapproval would have left similar evidence for the historian.

Just as working Londoners sometimes used the parks at the same times as polite society, they seem to have shared similar activities as well. Many of the people found in parks in the Old Bailey proceedings were doing what diarists were doing: walking and talking. Witnesses admitted to picking up prostitutes in the park or taking prostitutes found elsewhere into the park, something Boswell did as well. The grass and trees seem to have provided useful spaces for sexual liaisons and gambling and drinking too.⁵⁵ During the warmer months in particular the parks may have served as a surrogate domestic space for people who lived in small lodgings. In as much as gambling and drinking do not mesh with the conversation, walking, and riding which polite society appear to have undertaken, they reflect the differences in daily recreational activities between polite and plebeian that we have already seen.

The language used to describe trips to the park in company also suggest that working Londoners did not expect to see people they knew—a major difference from polite walkers but recalling the casual relationships that developed in public houses. Casual friends did sometimes encounter each other as when Mary Simms, a cookmaid, met John Irish and he pocketed her watch. The prosecutor suggested that he was drunk, did it accidentally and later returned it. This suggests that the pair were acquainted but that she did not know him well enough to trust him to give it back without the threat of prosecution.⁵⁶ The informal and temporary nature of plebeian recreational partnerships is an important difference from patterns followed by their social superiors. Unlike polite society, working Londoners would only have had intimate knowledge of a small

⁵⁴ Granville, *Hary-O*, 264.

⁵⁵ OBP, Thomas Gray, James Waldin, Theft: Grand Larceny, 10th May 1769 (t17690510-8), OBP, William Hamilton, Violent Theft: Highway Robbery, 14th January 1768 (t17680114-2). OBP, Elizabeth Ladd, Theft: Grand Larceny, 9th September 1767 (t17670909-8).

⁵⁶ OBP, John Irish, Theft: Grand Larceny, 22nd February 1769 (t17690222-58).

proportion of the people they interacted with on a daily basis, thus making it socially advantageous to be friendly and comfortable with strangers.

During daylight hours, women were abundant in the park. Female diarists mention going to the parks more frequently than males do. Though that gender imbalance is reversed among the plebeian park-goers, parks never become spaces for men and prostitutes alone. Unaccompanied women rarely appear in parks in the Old Bailey papers. Indeed the pattern is similar to that of public houses with women walking in the park with men and other women, but rarely by themselves.⁵⁷ Once again the cause of this imbalance remains unclear, but seems to point to a lack of time for unmolested recreation among labouring and trading women.

If the parks provide a space that anyone could access with relative ease and put to their own purposes, the theatres were less accessible and restricted behaviour more fully. The make-up of the crowds at theatres remains elusive to historians and different historians have interpreted the available evidence in conflicting ways. David Worrall, for instance, has drawn attention to the substantial plebeian element in the audiences, arguing that the theatres particularly catered to a skilled, artisanal audience.⁵⁸ Not only was the audience made up of more working people than Marc Baer believed, but they were more interested in the content of the performance than historians have assumed.⁵⁹ Worrall looks at sources familiar from Baer's account: coroners' reports, evidence of Old Price Rioters in 1809, and Francis Place's diary. The Old Bailey offers further evidence to support Worrall's basic assumptions, though evidence of artisanal solidarity among theatre audiences is less visible than he suggests. First, unsurprisingly, there was a prominent propertied element in the audience. For the decades when there are more than five individuals who give status or professional information we can see that many in the audience were well-off. In the 1780s there are four people dubbed 'esquire' (not in this

⁵⁷ Lone woman: OBP, Ibid, OBP, John Cook, Theft: Grand Larceny, 15th July 1772 (t17720715-55). Women with women: OBP, Joseph Webb, Violent Theft: Highway Robbery, 28th October 1789 (t17891028-54). OBP, Sarah Hynes, Theft: Grand Larceny, 29th May 1793 (t17930529-89). Women with men or a mixed group: OBP, Rhynewick, Otherwise Renwick Williams, Breaking the Peace: Assault, 8th July 1790, OBP, Thomas Pearson, Theft: Grand Larceny, 27th October 1790 (t17901027-10), OBP, Ann Andrews, Theft: Theft from a Specified Place, 30th October 1793 (t17931030-6), OBP, Francisco, Breaking Peace: Wounding, 27th October 1802 (t18021027-72).

⁵⁸ Worrall, *Theatrical Revolution*, 227-9.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 227.

context a sign of high status, but probably indicative of at least middling status) and two attorneys. The working population was similarly well represented with a jeweller, a captain in the army, a tallow chandler, a butcher's apprentice, a tailor and a master tailor, a pair of hairdressers, and an actor. The samples for 1800 and 1810 are even lower in their social composition. In the 1800s a merchant and the former English pro-Consul at Algiers are the only propertied witnesses or victims along with a variety of respectable middling, servants, and tradesmen (and they are all men). The 1810s sample has two merchants and an esquire, but it contains a bonnet seller, a glovers' servant, a bricklayer, and a variety of other servants.⁶⁰ There is also circumstantial evidence of gentility in a few cases when the victim was carrying large sums of money or trappings of an elite lifestyle. James Maddan, robbed of his pocket book in Covent Garden in 1772 claimed that he had been deprived of two lottery tickets and part of an opera ticket that were in his wallet when it was taken.⁶¹ Mrs. Ann Barry, robbed six years later, lost a box containing a silver hairpin set with diamonds from her carriage after a performance.⁶² In other cases people lost relatively large amounts of money, more than £172 in Bank of England notes in one case, £400 in another.⁶³ I have considered people who were robbed when carrying more than 10 guineas to have probably been a part of propertied society. Markers of poverty were rare. Surprisingly few people talk about entering the theatre at half-price, only a couple of apprentices and children appear, and one woman talks about living at the Refuge for the Destitute.⁶⁴ It is worth considering, however, that witnesses and victims

⁶⁰ 1780s: jeweler, army captain, butcher's apprentice, tallow chandler, four esquires, a tailor, a master tailor, an actor, two hair dressers, and two attorneys. 1800: army officer, master of a small vessel, former English pro-Consul at Algiers, merchant, upholsterer, tallow chandler, valet, officer in the marines, warehouse man and shawl manufacturer (one person), plasterer, jeweler. 1810s: naval officer, bricklayer, three servants, weaver, army captain, clerk, merchant, jeweler, bonnet seller, mariner, glover's servant, schoolmaster, footman, under-butler, glass merchant, general merchant, two esquires, a glass cutter's wife, a bookbinder, and a shoemaker's son.

⁶¹ OBP, James Jennings, John Birch, Edward Smith, Catherine Graham, Margaret Michener, Theft: Pocketpicking, Theft: Receiving, 19th February 1772 (t17720219-36).

⁶² OBP, George Glove, Theft: Simple Grand Larceny, 15th January, 1778 (t17780115-1).

⁶³ OBP, Francis Barnes, Theft: Pocketpicking, 15th April 1801 (t18010415-68), OBP, John Davis, Theft: Pocketpicking, 25th May 1803 (t18030525-24).

⁶⁴ Refuge for the Destitute: OBP, Charlotte Anthony, Harriet Garva, Theft: Grand Larceny, Theft: Receiving, 18th September 1816 (t18160918-120). Half-price: OBP, John Booth, Theft: Pocketpicking, 1st July 1812 (t18120701-64), OBP, Morris Isaacs, Humphrey Morris, Theft: Pocketpicking, 2nd December 1812 (t18121202-112). Apprentice: OBP, Giles Hauling, Theft: Grand Larceny, 9th January 1782 (t17820109-60). Shoemaker's son: OBP, Hugh Witham, John Martin, Joseph Ross, Theft: Pocketpicking, 6th December 1820 (t18201206-155).

may have tried to obscure their insecure financial position if they thought it would reflect badly on their testimony.⁶⁵

So when we compare the numbers of people who mentioned their presence in the theatre for each decade we find a high proportion of middling and artisanal audience members. Of the two play-goers who appear in the 1760s, one is a servant and the other is styled 'Esq.' Of the seven men and three women giving evidence in the 1770s, one, a scale maker, was clearly an artisan while four men and a woman appear to have been propertied. In the 1780s seven out of twenty-six total audience members (twenty-two men and four women) probably fit into the social and economic elite with nine of the twenty-six giving occupations that would classify them as middling or below. Out of only five men in the 1790 sample, we have a coffeehouse keeper, a printer, an attorney, and a man who made a type of fabric called spar. Large samples for the 1800s present twenty-five men and twelve women of whom five appear to have been propertied and nine probably were not. Finally the sample for the 1810s contains thirty-four men and twenty women; six were propertied, eighteen were not. A strong plebeian presence in the theatre in the second half of the eighteenth century appears to have become a large majority by the 1820s. In part this may have been caused by the emergence of minor theatres in Surrey and the east end, but the sample sizes are not sufficiently robust to compare changes in the audiences at the patent theatres with changes in the audiences elsewhere.

Placing people in this sample within the theatre provides evidence of communities of taste organised around aesthetic preferences rather than socioeconomic backgrounds. Historians have assumed that different priced seating-areas separated different sorts of people (Table 11). Historians have looked on the boxes costing 5s per person in the 1780s (up to 7s by the end of the period of this study) as the preserve of the wealthy and socially elite. Below the boxes in front of the stage was the pit, an area containing benches where people of comfortable means jostled for space. Pit seats cost 3s in the 1760s and have been considered the preserve of propertied young men in the eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century the pit appears to have been more plebeian,

⁶⁵ Muldrew, 'Class and Credit', Shepard, 'Honesty, Worth and Gender', Alexandra Shepard, 'Poverty, Labour and the Language of Social Description in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 201 (2008), 51-96.

particularly at the time of the Old Price riots. Above the boxes were two galleries costing 2s and 1s for entry. Historians have believed the galleries were where the trading classes and plebeian elements sat. It is in the galleries where historians have expected to find prostitutes and pickpockets.

As an amateur musician, John Marsh was not a typical opera and theatre-goer, but his journals provide useful insight into thought processes and ways of approaching venues that an institutional perspective prevents us from encountering. For instance the more remote areas of the Opera House were less fashionable, but may have offered good value: the seats were cheaper (thus allowing more visits) and the sound quality solid. After not having been at the opera in many years, Marsh went to the upper gallery of the rebuilt Opera House to hear a concert. He was surprised and disappointed to find “this situation (which in the old Opera House used to be reckon'd the Connoisseurs Gallery) to be now a place in wch little cod be seen or heard.”⁶⁶ Whereas devotees of opera could enjoy good sound for relatively low prices in the upper gallery of the previous building, the rebuilt opera house deprived people who wished to employ such a strategy in their opera-going. On a subsequent occasion when the fullness of the pit forced him to “mount” up to the gallery, Marsh responded by arriving early in order to scout out the best spot to enjoy the performance. Marsh “got a seat in the middle of ye pit, but finding [himself] now too near the orchestra,” he “determined...to sit either towards the back of the pit, or front of the gallery.”⁶⁷ While Marsh was unusual in the depth of his interest in musical performances, he was not unusual in his desire to get the most out of his operatic shilling. Shared interests created short-term communities within the pits and galleries of London’s public venues.

The majority of the Old Bailey cases emerge out of events in the pit, particularly at Drury Lane and the Royalty Theatres. The pit has generally been characterised as a space for young men, particularly of propertied backgrounds. The evidence at hand complicates this, however, as more than a third of the people found in the pit at Drury Lane were women and exactly a third at the minor theatres were women. People of apparently propertied backgrounds made up a smaller portion than the working classes in

⁶⁶ Huntington Library, John Marsh journals, HM 54457 XVI:43.

⁶⁷ Huntington Library, John Marsh journals, HM 54457 XXXI:115-6.

the pit at Drury Lane and people of substance were almost invisible in the pit at the Royalty. The majority of witnesses and victims of crimes at Covent Garden were located in the 2s gallery, the third most expensive seating area (out of four), in that theatre. Out of six people in that location, one appears to have been of propertied society. A few people located in the boxes did get involved in cases as victims or witnesses, but the locations of crimes suggests that access to the boxes was carefully controlled. The lack of crimes arising from the cheapest galleries is more difficult to explain, but may be due to the poverty of the people sitting there—both because it was more lucrative for a thief to try to get into the lower gallery or the pit where they might encounter wealthier people and because poor people might have been less able to devote time or money to pressing charges for thefts. The cheapest gallery may have also been sparsely attended, thereby making thefts more difficult to carry out. The packed conditions of the pit may have made thieving there easier than in the gallery where people might be seated and movement more limited.

The evidence suggests that propertied men mixed with male and female labouring Londoners in the pit. The amount of money people were carrying did not necessarily correlate with where they were sitting. We find, for instance, people of limited means such as apprentices and tradespeople in the 2s gallery, not the cheapest seats as we might expect. We also find people carrying surprisingly large amounts of money sitting amongst tradespeople. The heterosociability of theatre audiences, both in terms of gender and socioeconomic status, suggests divisions in the audience that are organised around different variables than we have recognized up to this point. For one, the function of male-only bonding suggested by John Tosh needs to be reconsidered.⁶⁸ While we have seen some spaces, particularly coffeehouses, that attracted little attention from propertied women, the presence of wives and groups of women in the pit speaks to a different function for the park or theatre as a public space. For propertied and unpropertied society, going to the theatre provided an opportunity to create and reinforce a position in a social network that included both men and women.

Testimony from the Old Bailey suggests that working people went to the theatre singly or in groups of two or three, just as propertied society did. In some instances

⁶⁸ Tosh, 'The Old Adam', 70-1.

going to the theatre alone created opportunities to meet new people, a feature of life in working London that was alien to the *beau monde* as they were likely to encounter people they already knew at the theatre. One case of plebeian theatre-going suggests that the crowds may not have been so anonymous and that even for the labouring sorts contacts of both genders were made at the theatre. The theatre was just one space in a system of recreational venues where members of the community might encounter each other. On September 9, 1788, Robert Simpson allegedly robbed Dr. Henry Reynolds while the doctor was riding in his chariot through Chalk Farm on his way to Hampstead.⁶⁹ Simpson's defence rested on a strong alibi: he had been at Mr. Keene's benefit at the Royalty Theatre near the Tower. To solidify his alibi Simpson called witnesses from a variety of professions and areas of the metropolis: William Platt, a master tailor from Marylebone; Ann Carter, a lodger and single woman of Rathbone Place who accompanied Simpson; William Rae, a clerk living in Wardour Street; Mary Lovell, a widow housekeeper resident near Gray's Inn; Abraham Pritchard, an attorney living in the Southampton Buildings who came with two other witnesses; Richard Tosh, a hairdresser living on Queen Ann Street East, and James Newby, another attorney. It is, firstly, interesting to note that the entire party had come from Holborn or further west to go to the east end theatre and consisted of a mixture of different sorts of people. The case suggests that a shared interest in the theatre (in this instance, the desire to support Mr. Keene at his benefit) provided a reason to associate with different sorts of people. The theatre is contextualized amongst a collection of other places where people might encounter each other. Tosh says he remembers Simpson being present because one of his companions pointed Simpson out as the clerk to someone he knew. Mary Lovell remembered Simpson because he had been in company with Mrs. Carter and she had seen him visit her neighbour, Mr. Smeaton. William Rae recognized Simpson from their days at school and Ann Carter had joined Simpson on a trip to the theatre after encountering him at Mr. Smeaton's. Finally, William Platt recognized him as a frequent skittle-player at the Adam and Eve, a tavern with playing fields located near the modern intersection of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. Simpson is thus positioned by others in relation to his profession, his companions, and the places where he spent time.

⁶⁹ OBP, Robert Simpson, Theft with Violence: Highway Robbery, 22nd October, 1788 (t17881022-61).

The ability to recognize individuals crossed the boundaries between the pit and the boxes and contextualized the people they encountered within broader social, professional, and recreational worlds in the metropolis.

Meanings of mixing

The evidence of plebeian patterns examined here provides an opportunity to reconsider the evidence offered by the diaries and the conclusions reached in previous chapters. As the evidence from the Old Bailey Sessions has shown, plebeian Londoners enjoyed many of the same recreations as their superiors. At the same time, however, the home fulfilled a much more limited role in the lives of working Londoners—the alehouse appears far more regularly than the home in criminal records. This stark contrast also meant different activity-partners as people socialized with strangers over drinks. But as the discussion of pub clientele, parks, and theatres demonstrated, the easy socializing found over a pint of ale did not mean that all sorts mixed. Alehouses catered to subsections of the population. People separated themselves by attending separate venues, or, if using the same space, going at different times of day or sitting in separate areas. However the evidence of attendance patterns at parks and theatres found in the Old Bailey Proceedings demonstrates that the choice of where to sit at the theatre or when to go to the theatre was not determined solely by social status or economic wealth. Some spaces were not shared by different social groups at the same time, but other spaces did see the shoulders of the social elite rubbing against those of tradesmen or their wives.

The choice of where to sit in the theatre takes on greater importance in determining the significance of the performance to the patron, but understanding the difference is more difficult: both groups were still attending a play and paying money to see a performance. Nevertheless in the theatre we can see how communities of taste could overcome boundaries created by socioeconomic status. These communities of taste can explain why people carrying large amounts of money can be found in the galleries amongst the servants and apprentices and why humble theatre goers appear in the pit and the boxes when, economically, we might have expected them to be positioned in one of the galleries. Historians have tended to interpret plebeian intrusion into supposedly polite spaces or the creation of plebeian analogues of those spaces as emulation or

appropriation, but the heterogeneous crowds in the pit make it difficult to identify a particular section of the theatre with one social group that others were aspiring to emulate. As chapter 7 showed, to polite society the attraction of parties, assemblies, and theatrical performances was not so transcendent that the trading and working classes could not have appreciated the same aspects of their own gatherings: a good crowd, pleasant conditions, good music and plenty of dancing. Socializing for working Londoners involved a larger network of loose associations, but interacting with other members of the audience appears to have been a part of the attraction as was quality entertainment—something their presence close to the stage suggests.

The concept of a community of taste has implications for the set of activities historians sometimes refer to anachronistically as slumming, that is to say, the upper class taste for low life. Vic Gatrell has forcefully made the case for the prevalence of an interest in slumming in a period that others, for instance Jennifer Hall-Witt, have seen as an age of solidifying social and cultural hierarchies.⁷⁰ My evidence indicates that a certain amount of social mixing went on, but it does not seem to have involved polite society infiltrating working pleasure spaces for amusement. Rather, working Londoners entered polite space and justified their presence by paying and by behaving in a manner appropriate to the venue. Some evidence of social snobbery or social mixing also needs to be read with care. Mixing with inferiors could involve fraternizing with low-life but it could also mean that an event was populated with the wrong social types. Dr. Wray, writing to Marchioness Grey in 1769, reflected on his wife's trip to the Lord Mayor's show where she watched the water procession from a window in the Exchequer. She could have gone to the ball where she could "have read her name in the list with Mrs Macaulay & Reynolds [,] Wilkes' Attorney. But she chose not to mix in a company composed of Gallants in Great-coats & Scratch wigs."⁷¹ Mrs. Wray saw the tedium of a night spent with unfashionable men as a greater burden than the pleasure of being with a small amount of marginally fashionable company. This sort of snobbery is not particularly surprising, but probably marks the greatest extent of people's anxieties about socializing with inferiors. Interacting with unfashionable sorts might have seemed

⁷⁰ Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts*, 21, 223-4, and passim.

⁷¹ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L 30/9/94/1, 'Dr. Wray to the Marchioness Grey. 14 Nov 1769'.

unpleasant or like a danger to one's social reputation, but was avoided where necessary. The anxiety of the correspondent once again rests on having to mix with a dull subsection of propertied society rather than on mixing with the lower sorts.

Mixing with propertied but *déclassé* people differed from interacting with low-life. The diaries examined in previous chapters have shown that if low life was a passion for some, they were in a minority subculture. The diary of someone like the poet Tom Moore, who intermittently dipped into low culture as part of Byron's circle, demonstrates that while for some boxing and flash songs provided an amusement from time to time, they did so because they were not everyday diversions. I do not mean to say, however, that drunkenness (very much on display in the Old Bailey Sessions Papers and intermittently discussed in letters and diaries) was not a part of propertied life. However drinking too much was not a way of dipping into lower class life and probably did not result in wall-to-wall vomiting as a matter of course as Gatrell's images suggest. The prevalence of vomiting in images of upper-class drinking was a conventional way of demonstrating to the viewer the scale of the drinking. It was not reportage.

In part, misunderstandings about crowds and slumming result from the misinterpretation of sources. Comments about the diversity of crowds are often interpreted as evidence of a wide range of socio-economic groups when they are actually demonstrating the presence of a lot of different social types.⁷² Social types do not necessarily denote different social backgrounds. We can find lists of social types in eighteenth-century writings describing society parties. Mary Berry, for instance, described a party in May 1810 at Mrs. Thompson's in Grosvenor Square as "a great enormous stuffy Assembly with some of all sorts at it."⁷³ Here Berry refers to the social types recognizable within high society, not to a plebeian contingent at the party. London events that brought together contrasting groups of people could do so within the confines of propertied society.

The concept of communities of taste suggests that clienteles for different sorts of entertainment venues and drinking establishments were self-selecting. Evidence from the Old Bailey has shown that propertied society occupied different drinking establishments

⁷² See for instance Lynda Nead's comments on Cremorne Gardens. Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven & London, 2000), 120-1.

⁷³ Berry, 'Diary', Add MSS 37732, 16 May 1810.

than their social inferiors, but the distinction may have been founded on the behaviour of the clientele rather than the social makeup of the clients. Well-behaved workers in the corner of the Crown and Anchor were unlikely to make history: people who wanted to behave badly may have gone to the night cellar nearby. Nonetheless, we see people selecting spaces with recognition that there were certain behaviours expected. When we combine the plebeian evidence with propertied diaries and account books, we get a stronger sense that people went to predictable places based on the sorts of activities they wanted to indulge in rather than the most socially refined or expensive place they could get into. James Boswell and Tom Moore's self-conscious slumming are the exceptions that prove the rule.⁷⁴ Both revel in the boundary-crossing that disturbs those around them. The lack of complaints in gentry women's diaries reflects the innocuous behaviour of the social inferiors in the park; it is the obnoxious gentry men intruding on a pleasant walk who really agitate them.

The expectation that inappropriate people would exclude themselves from elite recreations was not always satisfied. Interlopers certainly appeared. Amabel Yorke, in a letter to Marchioness Grey, complained that at a particular ball "There were a great many women of the town and some very strange men got admittance, I believe many tickets were forged."⁷⁵ In this instance a snooty comment and the suggestion of impropriety were all the consequences for the "women of the town" and "very strange men" turning up at the event. It is the prostitution and peculiarity of the interlopers that was the cause of the comments, not simply their social position. The rarity of complaints about inappropriate visitors suggests that social and cultural barriers were effective at keeping people behaving appropriately and in the correct situations. Yet it remains unclear whether people behaved according to expectations because they feared they would be ejected, or because they agreed to adhere to the rules. Just as the Prince Regent might switch behavioural codes depending on the setting, it seems that the labouring poor acted in a manner appropriate to their surroundings.

The communities of taste created by shared clienteles for recreational spaces provide a cultural model of social cohesion apart from the faceless economic

⁷⁴ Moore, *Journal*, I:93 & 96, Boswell, *London Journal*, 272-3.

⁷⁵ BLARS, Wrest Park archive, L30/9/97/159, 'A. Yorke to Marchioness Grey, 14 October 1768'.

interdependence generated by the market and the face-to-face community where everyone knew each other. Theatres created face-to-face communities and provided opportunities (if usually transient ones) for strangers to bond. Chapter 5 showed that recreational networks crossed social boundaries within propertied society in limited ways, but parks and theatres provided spaces where diversions facilitated limited interaction between propertied and labouring society. Socioeconomic status was not irrelevant to the sorts of spaces people occupied. The evidence from the Old Bailey does not suggest that the poor and the rich were companions, though they did enjoy some of the same activities and occupied some of the same spaces. In spaces like parks even the poorest Londoners might walk near the *beau monde*. While sharing spaces and activities did not mean interacting across socioeconomic divides, it did provide people with a sense of shared culture. Commentators expressed anxiety about the possibility that there were shared elements to London's culture (not least because the existence of time for recreation among labouring Londoners was regarded with ambivalence), but attempts to separate the sorts or bar the poor from particular spaces through anything other than high prices never became a common practice.⁷⁶

Socioeconomic status hemmed people into particular recreational spaces and activities partly because of the cost of activities, but more frequently divisions were the result of behavioural expectations that attended certain amusements. Individual taste was expressed by people at all levels of society, but that taste was limited by what was available and what was appropriate to different sorts.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Conlin has pointed to the withdrawal of the elite from Vauxhall Gardens in the early nineteenth century. The gentry and nobility could separate themselves from different types by spending more time in private settings. Conlin, 'Vauxhall Revisited'.

9. Conclusion

Several strands running through this thesis can be pulled together to offer further insight into recreation and Georgian culture specifically and historical study and the nature of society more broadly. I begin this conclusion by reassessing choice and the ways that people made choices when confronted with different types of constraints and how pleasure and politeness interrelated. These conclusions lead into a review of the ways in which my thesis suggests that we should examine individuals and the ways that individuals fit into social groups. Finally I offer some thoughts about how diaries present evidence of change over time and how strategies for living resisted change.

Choice and pleasure in the eighteenth century

This thesis has examined the choices people made about what to do with their leisure time and has focused particularly on the use of leisure to attain pleasure. As I outlined in the introduction, leisure was time not spent at business or at work, but it was time that might be spent discharging obligations. Recreations, amusements, diversions, or pleasures were activities that might be undertaken in leisure time. According to eighteenth and early nineteenth-century definitions and usage, those words indicated activities that were undertaken freely and for enjoyment. However people rarely pursued activities without any sense of constraint.

This thesis began by looking at the ways time, transport, and money constrained individual choice. Each of these constrained people in different classes of propertied society in different ways. I drew out patterns in the ways people dealt with those constraints and suggested how people made choices with those limitations in mind. Chapters 5 through 8 looked at constraints enacted by different sorts of social expectations, including social networks and obligations, taste, and social class. Domesticity involved both social expectations (particularly how to respond to people entering the household) and practice, namely the operation of the household and decisions about how to welcome visitors and, in turn, how to visit others. Choice became more complicated when decisions were made based on the actions or attitudes of other human actors rather than based on easily answered questions such as “do I have enough

money?” or “do I have time?” When we take all of these constraints into consideration the idea of free choice disappears and we are left with evidence of people negotiating a wide array of objective factors.

Social obligation was a significant factor when people made decisions about time use within propertied society, but an obligation to be discharged could still be a pleasure. Attitudes toward most activities were mixed. Many women comment favorably on having the chance to dance or to play cards, while others complain about the dullness of a card party or the tedious fatigue of dancing. It is essential to keep these variations in mind in order to be aware that individual proclivities and day-to-day changes in mood or circumstances had a meaningful impact on pleasure. Therefore to understand what constituted a diversion it was necessary to look both at the ways people used leisure time and how they reacted to their activities.

This focus on individual reactions and variations within social groups suggests that we should clarify our understandings of how individuals related to groups. Individuals could find pleasure in duty, but not everyone found the same duties pleasurable. Throughout this thesis it has been necessary to lump some activities together as recreation that we might find to have been unpleasant obligations if more detailed source material were available. This also generates further insight into how we should understand the power of self-discipline over emotions. In *The Navigation of Feeling*, William Reddy argued that rehearsing or choosing to express an emotion may intensify or even create the experience of that emotion.¹ That is to say that an individual who felt that they should be pleased by fulfilling their duties to others might have expressed pleasure in fulfilling those duties and thereby found pleasure in obligation. Source material does not let us see this as it happened, and even if it did we have seen people differ in their ability to push themselves to find pleasure in obligations.

What the definitions of recreation and its synonyms suggest is that ideally we should look for emotional responses to activities to locate recreation, rather than a quality of time or freedom of choice (see on page 28). However, thinking harder about how pleasure relates to freedom of choice or qualities of time helps us to further unpack the ways people obtained pleasure, the ways different sorts of people felt about their work,

¹ Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 103-4.

and the ways that the relationships between those three definitions of leisure have changed over time. Has freedom of choice ever matched up with pleasure in a straightforward way? In periods of the past did non-work time and pleasure ever simply overlap? The relationship between these three definitions might offer a way of grasping and quantifying change in the meanings of leisure over time.

Johnson's definition of "amusement" specified that amusements were not labor. My diarists have suggested that pleasure was easier to attain when people were not at work and when others did not dictate activities, but obligations were not incompatible with pleasure. In fact, because an obligation could become a pleasure, we need to look at attitudes toward activities in order to understand how to group them. This suggests that leisure studies could benefit from rethinking its methodologies. Researchers should look not for non-working time, but rather for recreation and pleasure. This offers a way of moving beyond the difficulties caused by work and leisure overlapping and as women and men experience leisure differently. If we are looking for sources of pleasure and refreshing relaxation, we have to follow individuals' actions and seek out their attitudes in all areas of their lives. When we do this the distinctions between work and leisure break down as pleasure is potentially found all sorts of places.

Politeness might be seen as a constraint on pleasure because it encouraged certain forms of behavior. Indeed in some settings, particularly aristocratic parties, politeness as a mode of deportment seems to have been jettisoned by people in search of pleasure. Though domestic spaces were often evaluated using terms and values associated with politeness, I would also suggest that politeness was less ubiquitous in propertied life than other historians have supposed. Analysis of daily activities reveals politeness to be endemic to particular contexts, rather than characteristic of a select sort of people. Behavior at gatherings in the domestic sphere of the *beau monde* suggests that politeness was less important in terms of facilitating interaction between equals, than in terms of visual display within the home and the arrangement of domestic space. In contrast to the public spaces examined in chapter 8, where you were mattered more than how you behaved.

As associated values came to the fore in this thesis the term "polite" receded into the background. Considering the importance placed on spaces that were decorated and

laid out in ways that were deemed “polite” and having parties where people were engaged in the archetypical “polite” activity of conversation, it is surprising how antisocial polite gatherings could be. It is notable, first of all, how rarely “polite” or “easy” appear in descriptions of social events. People praised characteristics associated with politeness, yet polite society seems to have been all too willing to ignore these values in actual behaviour. Once we begin to think about the patron’s perspective on domestic sociability, gatherings of the social elite begin to appear distinctly impolite; this is not accidental. The impolite nature of card parties, which created small, sequestered groups, engendered a tension between a society supposedly built upon politeness and one of the most important pastimes of that group. Card tables provided opportunities for demonstrating intra-group status by giving a hostess the chance to select her three preferred companions. Politeness thus becomes less important for interpersonal relations within a social group, even if it was essential as a set of common codes for navigating many recreational spaces in the metropolis.²

Methodology, individuality, and the social

Recreation might smooth over certain social distinctions at the same time that it drew attention to divisions within social classes. A patron-centred approach to analyzing leisure shows how choice served both to solidify connections created in other contexts and to differentiate an individual from other people in his or her social network or class. This thesis has revealed three lifestyle groups within propertied society for men and two with female routines. People in each of these groups appear to have approached choices in similar ways, though they did not always end up doing the same things. Once individual patterns are analysed we can see how networks shaped an individual’s activities. Within particular networks people made individual choices and exhibited individual characteristics that made them fit members of networks and entertaining members of larger social groupings. People adhered to group expectations at the same time that they tried to differentiate themselves from others in the group.

In this case lifestyle is defined as frequency of hosting, visiting, and trips to different sorts of commercial spaces such as the theatres, Opera, taverns, and

² Paul.Langford, 'The uses of eighteenth-century politeness'. *TRHS*, 6th ser., 12 (2002), 311-31.

coffeehouses. First, we have a west-end lifestyle primarily practiced by the gentry and nobility resident in the west end of town. This group is marked by high rates of visiting, particularly for the women, and high levels of attendance at the theatres, the Opera, Ranelagh, and elite men's clubs such as Brooks's. Apart from most clubs, these were all spaces that women could use. Women were more frequent visitors and hostesses than men, alternative activities to men's clubbing and attendance at parliament.

Next is the merchant-professional lifestyle, typical of residents of the City or people who worked in the City. People following this path visited and attended public spaces relatively less often, except for coffeehouses and taverns, which were far more prominent than in the west-end lifestyle. The wives of men who followed this lifestyle may have behaved in something closer to the west-end lifestyle. Elizabeth Tyrrell went for walks and rides in the fashionable west-end parks and frequently took her children to the theatre and opera. Merchants' wives have left little evidence of their daily activities. Based on fragmentary evidence in men's diaries it seems that they did more visiting than men. Household obligations were probably a prominent part of their daily lives, but they were certainly not tied to the home.

Finally, there was what we might call the clubbable lifestyle. Thomas Birch, Joseph Brasbridge and John Wilkes, all of whose schedules featured a high rate of club attendance, exemplify this group. None seems to have been deeply invested in domestic activity (Birch was not married, Brasbridge says he spent little time at home, and Wilkes was estranged from his wife), though all received visitors and visited others' homes. At the same time that these men enjoyed club life, none made frequent appearances at the theatres. Because adherents to this lifestyle tended to occupy public clubs, coffeehouses, and taverns, there is no female equivalent of this path.

In addition, the limited data available can be used to give an impressionistic view of patterns of amusement for people with less wealth. For the majority of labouring Londoners the pub was the primary venue for recreation, offering among other pastimes drinking, socializing, music, gaming, dancing, and sport. Drinking spots were most heavily used by men, but women were often present as well. The visiting patterns of this sector of society are obscure, though they may have carried out much of their visiting activity informally on the street or in pubs and taverns. Groupings of the lower middling

and labouring poor may well echo the propertied groups, but without better data they will have to remain a large lump in the context of this taxonomy.

Certain activities and patterns were typical of these groups, but individuals followed routines that were more closely aligned with personal networks consisting of kin, business contacts, patronage connections, and activity partners. Networks tended to be contained within the lifestyle groups I have just outlined, but some, most notably clubbable men, had connections with people in other groups because interest groups could bring together people of different social standing. A model that allows for variation by network allows for wide variations within a segment of society; it accommodates the boorish libertinism described by Vic Gatrell in *The City of Laughter* as well as more delicate and refined behaviours. Large social groups contained a variety of subgroups based on networks that look dissimilar when compared with one another.

At the individual level an agent's networks created a set of possible activity choices and acceptable behaviours. Individuals followed their own preferences within the set of possible activity choices. The choices revealed in diaries suggest that we should see self-regulation as a critical force in determining where people went and how they behaved when they got there. At a mundane level this entailed people behaving in ways that would allow them to pursue professional and family business successfully. Politeness could make things go smoothly in situations where mixed crowds were unavoidable, but broadly people at higher social levels headed to places where they already knew others and where they would feel comfortable. This also has repercussions for our ideas of public and private. The distinction becomes not one between spaces where anyone could go and where only the invited can go, but between spaces where they might be thrown into conversations with strangers or different sorts and spaces where people only had to interact with people they knew and wanted to interact with.

People without the right connections were deprived of the opportunity to do things they might have been interested in, but the lack of evidence of conflict over admission to activities suggests that people knew where they were not wanted. Clubs may have provided opportunities to develop close bonds with strangers, but it remains unclear just how open clubs were. Most clubs seem to have accepted only new members who were brought by current members or had some sort of pre-existing connection to the

group (for instance Masons who moved from one lodge to another). This left people with less freedom to change their routines once established than much of the literature on the commercialization of leisure assumes. To be sure, many commercial venues wanted to be as inclusive as possible without sabotaging their public image, but advertising and admissions policies devised by commercial venues played a limited role in peoples' decisions to attend or not attend. Meeting new people was possible, but forging new bonds was more difficult.

This emphasis on networks should not be taken to imply that behaviour and preferences were uniform within particular networks (i.e. that networks deprived people of agency). Rather each individual had a unique network configured by links to friends, companions, kin, and other connections. This created scope for individual variation within a group even as individuals maintained connections with members of their other networks. It seems obvious that people expressed individual tastes in Georgian England. Yet historians have tended to refrain from thinking about this possibility in a systematic way. Scholars have noted that the terms "individuality" and "personality" were not used in the modern sense of a characteristic that sets one person apart from those around them (though original/originality did have this meaning).³ Furthermore, historians have concluded that the perceived mutability of physical or mental attributes prevented them from appreciating enduring personality in the modern sense. Dror Wahrman in particular has suggested that because outward appearances were not considered to be inextricably linked to internal morality and personality, choices of deportment and consumption were not evidence of personal preferences, rather they represented an attempt to affiliate with larger social groups.⁴ Deborah Cohen has argued that only with the evolution of the term "personality" in the Victorian period did people see their choices (in her case, the way people designed and furnished their homes) as a reflection of individual taste.⁵

Rather than desiring individuality, it has been argued, people sought to exhibit their character, meaning their moral condition. We might see this particularly with reference to a social code like politeness, which sought to overcome boundaries and create shared modes of deportment. However as we have seen the blanket term

³ Williams, *Keywords*, 161-5, 230-1, and 232-5.

⁴ Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*.

⁵ Cohen, *Household Gods*, 122-44.

“politeness” obscured a wide variety of behaviours. We have seen people who were deemed entertaining or surprising celebrated by people with whom they engaged. An original and unique conversation partner was desired, even if “personality” was not recognized in the modern sense. Variations within broad social groups appear to have been accepted. Vic Gatrell’s work on the bawdy and drunken culture of the socially elite is evidence that politeness made particular subculture possible; it was not an excessively delicate disposition this tried to obliterate all deviation. Georgian society was more accepting of small groups that deviated from patterns of behaviour more common in society.

Diarists negotiated different sorts of constraints in ways that varied from person to person. Classes are most easily differentiated by the impacts of time, money, and distance on patterns of behaviour. Within particular classes interpersonal behaviour, network connection and reactions to obligations played a greater part in differentiating individuals and networks from each other. Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* (see on page 4) helps us think about how broad classes of people behaved in response to a learned “disposition” (as Bourdieu calls it). William Sewell has elaborated on Bourdieu’s ideas by suggesting that because each individual has a unique set of connections and experiences which happen in a unique order, everyone develops a unique set of strategies for dealing with external events (we might say each has an individual *habitus*).⁶ Without more information about how other people within groups behaved, it is difficult to see just how much people within groups differed in their decisions to act when confronted with the same quandaries.

People operated within rules that said what they could or could not do; those rules also effected what people could *want* to do. Nonetheless people operated creatively within the rules, perhaps even reshaping the rules within the bounds of what they conceived as possible. The lifestyle groupings presented on page 277 suggest that though socioeconomic class is important, Bourdieu and Sewell—both of whom focus primarily on societies where class is taken as a given—have exaggerated the role of class in generating habitus (or schemas as Sewell has it). This may be due to differences in historical contexts (i.e. Georgian England was not a class society) or a failure on their

⁶ Sewell, *Logics of History*, 212.

part to appreciate the ways that habitus could cut across class boundaries. Also important in this thesis is the role of place in shaping practice. In domestic, commercial, and public settings people molded their behaviours to their understanding of the rules of those spaces. Everyone did not share the same ideas about how spaces ought to be used, but it is striking how widely shared behaviours could be within particular settings.

Bourdieu and Sewell suggest timeless ways of modelling structure and agency. Unlike Bourdieu, Sewell sees social change as possible, but he still believes his model operates in any period. Unpacking the decision-making processes of Georgian Londoners involves navigating between the equal dangers of reading eighteenth-century subjects as too much like us and understanding them as completely unfamiliar. The eighteenth century has suffered from its position as a period that was not quite modern but not quite early modern either. These are neither cat-murdering apprentices, nor modern and familiar. While historians have recognized many aspects of “modernity” in the eighteenth century, they have been happy to suppose that dissimilarities with the modern world were due to the absence of some aspect of “modern” mentality rather than a difference in the way that mentality exhibits itself between the Georgian period and today. This is particularly evident in historians’ examinations of recreations and leisure. The eighteenth-century context seems to present people without personalities, yet as the preceding chapters have demonstrated individual differences were rife and personal choices were abundant even in a world bound up by inconveniences caused by weather, finances, and immobility and by normative values of different sorts. Individuality in the modern sense was described differently than we would describe it today. Rather than seeing this world as one where people sought to emulate each other and had no amusement in their leisure time because they had to adhere to strict behavioural codes to retain social capital, we need to recognize the ways in which people presented their differences, and the mental frameworks that supported varieties of individuality that were described using terminology different from those evident today. We need to be attuned not just to how the eighteenth century was different, but also to the ways that it is similar to the modern context even if it was described differently.

The methodologies developed in this thesis are particularly useful for examining networks and individual variations. The agent-centred perspective grounds activities in

the past in routines and day-to-day behaviour. At a descriptive level it offers a new way of grouping individuals' activities and understanding how different activities fit together. It also forces us to pause and recognize behaviours such as needlework that were ubiquitous but which remain understudied. But it does more than just plug a descriptive gap or ground familiar activities.

Methodologically I have navigated a middle course between microhistory as practiced by medieval and early modern scholars and history of everyday life as pursued by scholars of the twentieth century. I have attempted, as both of these literatures do, to uncover people making sense of the world around them. This dissertation employs methods that might be termed "history from below", but for the top of society. Perhaps it is "history from within." At the same time I do not see the diarists examined here as being "typical exceptions" as the microhistorians would have it. Their eccentricities were not such that they throw light on some other group of "normal" people. The diarists are appreciated as being typical themselves. The processes that preserved these diaries are rather different from those that applied to documents about Ginzburg's miller or Arnaud de Tihl, for instance.⁷ At the same time this is not *alltagsgeschichte* as historians of the twentieth century can practice it, inasmuch as this can easily uncover patterns of movement by either asking the people being examined or by studying documents intending to record people's every move.⁸ Diaries are rather less enlightening about individual attitudes than we might hope. The Georgian period has left us with rich documents, but not the sort of sources that we might want to have for performing rigorous ethnographic research. However diaries obviously have a great deal to offer. Though in most cases diarists were not open about their closures, they did record at least some of their daily activities; this is enlightening material for the modern historian when approached with the right questions.

An agent-centred perspective engages with contemporary debates and print culture differently from other methodologies. This approach depends on egodocuments that provide personal reactions and insight into routines and patterns of decisions.

⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore, 1992). Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA., 1983).

⁸ Alf Lüdtke, 'Introduction: What Is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practicioners?', in Alf Lüdtke and William Templer (eds.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995).

Egodocuments have to be read carefully, despite appearing to give unmediated access to an individual's beliefs and reactions, they were both consciously and unconsciously shaped by their authors. Nevertheless, an agent-centred approach does more than just reframe old perspectives; it forces us to question many of the conclusions drawn from institutional and print-based histories. There is no question that the last decades of the eighteenth century saw significant changes in London's streets, for instance. Better pavements and lighting made mobility more comfortable and safer. Changes in policing made walking at night less risky, at least in certain areas, yet these changes did not cause most people to adopt new modes of visiting or diversion.

Attitudes towards behaviours revealed in print, letters, or courtroom testimony are less evident in diaries. Issues like social, cultural, and economic credit are less obvious in diary accounts of daily life. Despite the power of credit in situations when people needed to prove their worth, we do not find people discussing their movements around town in ways that suggest they were anxious about their credit. Rather than providing evidence of a society wracked with anxiety, diaries offer a different side of the story: many people get on with things without perpetually fretting (Boswell obviously excepted!). An agent-centred approach that looks at daily life rather than moments of personal/economic/social/political crisis gives us a sense of stability that provides an essential corrective to print-based accounts of crisis. Of course an agent-centred perspective does not insist that the banal be as prominent as it is here—there can be agent-centred accounts of major world events—but stepping back to the perspective of individuals making decisions about how they ought to proceed introduces a deeper appreciation for the possibilities for action and the relationship between an individual and the world around them.

That said, an agent-centred perspective that relies on diaries obviously does not solve all problems. Several aspects of culture are probably underrepresented in these diurnal records. Firstly, the effects of print culture on behaviour are almost never explicitly stated. The great extent of print and the vigorous reading habits of some diarists indicates that printed works were desired and read if not incorporated into daily life. The literature that informed people's attitudes and worldviews was internalized, probably without much comment. The lack of comment makes it extremely difficult to

square the dramatic account of social crisis represented in print and the epistles of a small number of writers with the monotonous accounts of most diaries.⁹ Working out the relationship between printed advertising and daily life is even more difficult.

Newspapers present a world full of curiosities, lectures, operas, theatre, prizefights, exhibitions, books on all varieties of pastimes, prostitutes, and music just to name a small selection. Some of these activities appeared in diaries, but many did not. Because of the small sample, many niche activities are absent from the preceding pages. But even with a larger sample the relationship between the bountiful advertisements found in newspapers and individual or group decision-making would remain unclear.

The relative significance of particular groupings or settings in individuals' lives also remains largely unclear. The emotional reaction to particular settings cannot be adequately gauged from the formulaic or staid entries in most diaries. The dynamics of interaction in the regulated context of clubs requires further analysis as well. The findings of this dissertation point to the need for further work into sociability from an agent-centred perspective, possibly using particularly rich institutional records or letter collections.

A period of great change and no change

Change has been referred to over the course of this dissertation, but rarely has an account of change come to the fore. Some small changes over the period have been noted (e.g. changing patterns of attendance at theatres or pleasure gardens), but on the whole the sources have prompted a static understanding of how propertied society approached leisure in the Georgian period. From the evidence I have presented we need to look more carefully at how we assess and understand change over time.

There is no obvious reason to think that structural changes or changes in taste in literature, theatre, or clothes, led people to change their modes of approaching recreation and amusement. With regards to periodization, attitudes to recreation in the period outlined here pass the Rip van Winkle test that has been suggested by Paul Langford and Boyd Hilton, i.e. if someone went to sleep in 1760 and woke up in 1820 would the

⁹ For instance Russell's *Women, Sociability and Theatre* relies primarily on print with occasional cameos from Horace Walpole's letters and Lady Mary Coke's diary.

choices they faced and other people's approaches to those choices be comprehensible.¹⁰ People seem to have maintained similar strategies for navigating constraint throughout the period. The small changes evident in the period do not add up to a noticeable transformation, though a longer period of time would allow for changes to accrue to the point where we could identify a significant change in strategies.

Most historians have seen the 1780s and 1790s as a period of profound change, and clearly some aspects of life did change. Accounts of panics in the press over gender relations, crime, or morality all point to changes either in some aspect of London life or in perceptions of life in the capital.¹¹ Administrative, political, and topographical changes also abound in the period. Polite society dined later in the day and different activities likewise shifted their starting time. Certain activities had vogues and then fell away. Cards, for instances, may have declined in popularity in the face of dancing. Yet practices and strategies for navigating the metropolis appear to have changed little.

What sorts of developments would ultimately lead to changes in practice? Changes in transportation in the mid nineteenth century, such as the proliferation of train travel and the underground, made travel across the metropolis faster and seem to have changed patterns of attendance at the theatres. Increased spending power and new commercial recreation spaces may have offered the lower middling sort and labouring poor more choice. Though I have not seen evidence for this change in the diaries I have looked at, changes in the ways that networks were organised may also have impacted the varieties of activities people undertook. As propertied society grew in size, the scope for choice also grew and networks became more numerous and varied. Changes in the size and organization of domestic space that occurred in the first half of the eighteenth century may have shaped both use and attitudes to the domestic sphere. Similarly propertied society's attitudes to public spaces may have changed around the beginning of the eighteenth century as the number and variety of public spaces increased and again in the early years of Victoria's reign as the social elite withdrew from public spaces and the very wealthy became an increasingly minor subculture.

¹⁰ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford & New York, 1989), 725, Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), 44.

¹¹ Lennox et al., *Life and Letters*, 290-3.

We might think of the changes and continuities in London life across this period in terms of registers of change. In sociolinguistics registers refer to the formality or informality of spoken or written language. These registers do not operate independently of each other (they share some vocabulary and rules of syntax), but they change at different rates and they are not equally useful in all situations. With reference to recreation in the eighteenth century, the debates occurring between intellectuals or in public forums operated in one register while daily living was expressed in another (often acted rather than spoken). The slow pace of change in the daily living register does not mean that the rapid changes in the terms of public debates were unrelated to daily life, however it does requires us to think harder about how the two interrelated.

The evidence presented in diaries suggests that despite the numerous and apparently extensive changes in areas of life recorded and debated in print, daily life remained constant. Mental changes occurred at a slow and gradual pace despite changes described by commentators or attempts to institute change from the top down.¹² Of course this may also be a problem with the unyielding diurnal form. The consistency of diary keeping may mask subtle changes when they did occur. However I think it is more likely that print culture, literary forms, and modes of deportment represent only some elements in the story and that other aspects of human behaviour, for instance decision-making about playtime, change at a molasses-like pace.¹³ We need to attend to the ways that changes both mask and are made possible by continuities in manners of thinking and behaving. Daily routines were certainly affected by the changes historians have noted in print culture, particular with reference to domesticity, but work remains to be done on the ways that public debates related to daily life.

¹² William M. Reddy, 'The Structure of a Cultural Crisis: Thinking About Cloth in France before and after the Revolution', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), Sewell, *Logics of History*.

¹³ P. J. Corfield, *Time and the Shape of History* (New Haven & London, 2007) 233-48.

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