

AGENTS AND PROFESSIONALISATION:
IMPROVEMENT ON THE EGREMONT ESTATES
c. 1770 TO c. 1860

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Abstract

This thesis examines aspects of estate improvement on the Egremont estates in Sussex, Yorkshire and Australia between 1770 and 1860. Using the Petworth House Archives and others, it documents large-scale improvement projects, including William Smith's work in mineral prospecting in West Yorkshire, and Colonel Wyndham's land speculation in South Australia. The third Earl of Egremont (1751-1837) himself has received some biographical attention, but this has concentrated to a great extent on his patronage of the arts. This thesis therefore documents a number of important matters for the first time, in particular the detailed work of the middle layer of personnel involved in estate management and improvement. Episodes of 'failure' in estate improvement are also revealing in this study. This thesis contributes to debates regarding the nature of 'improvement' in this period, and most particularly, to understandings of the developing rural professions and to scholarship regarding professionalisation; interpreting key episodes in the archive utilising a 'landscape' approach. It uses the concept of an 'estate landscape' to draw together the dispersed Egremont estates in order to better understand the management structures of these estates, and how they relate to the home estate at Petworth.

The thesis examines the relationships between Lord Egremont and the various agents (in the widest sense) who acted on his behalf; the configuration of which agents was different for each of the different estates. It makes a particular contribution to ongoing debates about the formation of the professions in eighteenth and nineteenth-century England in suggesting that despite the contemporary stress on applied agricultural expertise, legal land agents remained more influential than has been supposed. The belated professionalisation of the Petworth agents and the significant differences in their roles when compared with a land agency firm such as Kent, Claridge and Pearce suggests that estate management was far more diverse than has been suggested. Egremont himself emerges from the archive as neither a hands-on agricultural improver nor as an uninterested and neglectful absentee. Instead, I suggest, he acted as co-ordinator and as an impresario amongst the men engaged to act on his behalf, the middle layer of developing rural professionals including agents, surveyors, and engineers. If the literature to date has concentrated on Egremont as patron of art, he emerges from this thesis as a patron of improvement.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this thesis:

Add Ms.	Additional Manuscripts
BL	The British Library, London
Egremont	George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont (1751-1837)
PHA	Petworth House Archives, Petworth
ODNB	The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
OUMNH	Oxford University Museum of Natural History
RSA	Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and CommerceSussex
Sussex	Sussex has been divided into East and West since the 12 th century, but did not obtain separate county councils until 1888.
Wm Smith	William Smith Archives, Oxford
WSRO	West Sussex Record Office, Chichester
Wyndham	Colonel George Wyndham, 1 st Baron Leconfield (1787-1869)
£ / s. / d.	Pounds, shillings and pence

All quotations retain their original spellings.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Aims

My research examines the management and improvement of the Egremont estates, owned by the renowned agricultural improver George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont from 1763 to 1837, and by his son Colonel George Wyndham until 1869. The Egremont estate was dispersed over five English counties including Sussex, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Somerset and Devon, as well as Ireland and, from the mid nineteenth century, Australia. Previously, agricultural historians have tended to limit their analysis to 'home' estates, and have not examined the role of agricultural improvers (and the experts employed by them) on their 'absentee' estates, both in Britain and the colonies. My research considers the 'home' estate at Petworth along with its counterparts elsewhere, mainly in Yorkshire, and has several aims.

First, it will document, often for the first time, some highly significant and large-scale schemes of land improvement, most of which have been comparatively neglected in the literature to date. Some schemes, such as William Smith's work in mineral prospecting, have to the best of my knowledge never been investigated before. Others, such as the Beverley and Barmston drainage scheme have been touched upon by other scholars, but not using the material in the Petworth archives, or from the point of view of the Egremont estates as a

whole. Egremont himself has received some biographical attention, but this has concentrated to a great extent on his patronage of the arts. The thesis therefore documents a number of important matters for the first time, in particular the detailed work of the middle layer of personnel involved in estate management and improvement.

Secondly, it explores the relationships between the various people (or 'agents' in the widest sense) that influenced the management and potential 'improvement' of these landscapes.

This is in contrast to studies that have focused on the advances of an 'improving' estate owner.¹ This research contributes to debates regarding the mobility of rural professionals, the circulation of knowledge and networks of patronage in the developing fields of land agency, surveying, engineering and geology. The thesis will examine the relationships between the various people that influenced these landscapes, the complex connections between the different estate units, and, crucially; the difficulties inherent in managing such a dispersed patrimony. Each of the different estates operated with a different configuration of agents, although simplified patterns of management can be gleaned from these.

The study utilises the concept of an 'estate landscape' to draw together the dispersed Egremont estates in order to better understand the management structures of these estates, and how they relate to the home estate at Petworth. Particularly through its study on Colonel Wyndham's land speculation in Australia, but also in its examination of the work of William

¹ D. Brown, 'Reassessing the influence of the aristocratic improver: the example of the fifth Duke of Bedford (1765-1802)', *Agricultural History Review* 47, II (1999), 182-195.

Smith in Yorkshire, and of the Beverley and Barmston drainage, it provides case studies in the difficulties facing Egremont and his heir as absentee landlords, although in Egremont's case, an atypical and highly engaged one. Episodes of 'failure' in estate improvement are also particularly revealing in this study.

Thirdly, the thesis considers in particular the Earl of Egremont's patronage of land agents, surveyors, engineers and agricultural advisors and attempts to identify any potential development amongst land agents that might be considered 'professionalisation' during their employment on the Egremont estates. Chapter seven makes a specific contribution to ongoing debates about the formations of professions in eighteenth and nineteenth-century England.

The thesis is intended to shed light on the changing cultures of 'improvement' on British estate landscapes during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a particular interest in the professional networks of those who actually made these landscape changes, rather than their more renowned employers. As a result, it seeks to reconsider the role of Egremont himself, and to position him as neither a hands-on improver nor a neglectful absentee, but as an enthusiastic patron of improvement professionals.

1.2 Overview of Thesis

Chapter two reviews the salient literature on aristocratic landowners, absenteeism, estate management; surveyors, engineers and land agents. It examines debates regarding the terms 'improvement', 'landscape' and 'professionalisation'. Chapters two and three consider in turn the key theoretical and methodological approaches adopted, and the sources and research methods employed. These include a 'landscape' approach to improvement, as well as networks, letter writing and the circulation of knowledge, life-histories and telling stories. Chapter three examines the multiple archives used in this study.

Chapter four introduces the Egremont estates, placing the home estate at Petworth in the context of the wider estate in Britain and Ireland. It gives a brief biography of the third Earl (1751-1837) (hereafter referred to as 'Egremont' in this thesis), and his son Colonel George Wyndham (1787-1869). It then proceeds to examine Egremont's reputation as an agricultural improver, considering his philanthropy, his correspondence with the agricultural commentator Arthur Young and with Sir Joseph Banks, his investment in Sussex navigations, and his enthusiasm for agricultural developments.

Chapter five examines the home estate at Petworth to 1835. It introduces the Petworth land agents James Upton Tripp and William Tyler, and details the management of the home estate in its practical, legal, financial, social and political aspects. It examines some

instances of improvement, including the 1779 estate survey, changing leases, the conversion of a large area of parkland into Stag Park Farm (1782), the construction of an estate office at Petworth (1803), and the augmentation of the wider estate. It examines Petworth as a model farm and a site of experimentation, and as a site from which agricultural knowledge flowed to enthusiastic tenants in Sussex and Yorkshire. It ends with a discussion of estate management post 1835.

Chapter six introduces the Egremont estate in Yorkshire, and concentrates on a particular improvement scheme on the Yorkshire estates in the East Riding: the Beverley and Barmston drainage (1799-1810). In contrast to the home estate improvements in chapter five, it provides a case study in the management of a distant project, using multiple agents and in relation to other competing interests in the locality. The chapter examines Egremont's role and the role of his 'agents' in the Beverley drainage, and the political processes involved, including an intervention by Egremont and Arthur Young. It considers the engineer William Chapman's reports of the drainage and proceeds to assess the impact of the scheme on land use and rental values by a comparison of two estate surveys.

Chapter seven considers the ill-fated investment by Colonel Wyndham in the colony of South Australia (1838-1864). The chapter examines the investment in Australia in the context of Egremont's earlier assisted emigration scheme to Upper Canada. It examines how the estate was established, and the role played by key figures such as the land agent, Frederick

Mitchell, and by particular settlers, in the management, and failure of this venture. It again provides a case study in the difficulties of management at a great distance and a fascinating example of the exportation of ideas of estate management and 'improvement' to British colonies.

Through a comparison between the two Petworth solicitor-agents Tripp and Tyler with the professional land agency firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce employed to manage Egremont's Yorkshire estates, chapter eight considers the agents' contribution to estate improvement, and examines the validity of a thesis of professionalisation for agents, 1770-1835. It argues that the belated professionalisation of Egremont land agents at Petworth and the significant differences in their roles when compared with Kent, Claridge and Pearce suggests that estate management was far more diverse than has been previously suggested by agricultural historians.

Chapter nine examines the employment of the mineral surveyor William Smith on the Yorkshire estates from 1803. It considers the networks of patronage at the Board of Agriculture and the Royal Society that led to Smith's employment. It investigates the speculation in the context of coal mining in Yorkshire, and previous surveys at Spofforth by less renowned surveyors. It details the management of the Yorkshire trials, and considers Smith's professional status and reputation, and the role and potential influence of

acknowledged 'experts' in the improvement of absentee estates in Britain during the early nineteenth century.

Chapter ten offers some conclusions on improvement and estate landscapes, absentee estates, archives, patterns of estate management, professionalisation, networks and the circulation of 'improving' ideas, as well as an assessment of Egremont as an agricultural improver.

FIGURE 1: GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES IN ESTATE MANAGEMENT²

LANDOWNERS (in chronological order):

SECOND EARL OF EGREMONT (succ.1750-1763) Charles Wyndham, born 1710. Succeeded as second Earl of Egremont from his maternal uncle, the seventh duke of Somerset, in 1750. Appointed Secretary of State for the Southern Department in 1761 and played a significant role in international politics during this period.

COUNTESS OF EGREMONT Alicia Maria Wyndham, née Carpenter (1729?-1794), married 1751 Charles, second Earl of Egremont. Alicia was made Lady of the Bedchamber in 1761. Her sons were George (1751-1837), Percy Charles (1757-1823), Charles William (1760-1823), William Frederick (1763-1828), and daughters, Elizabeth Alicia Maria (1752-), Frances (1755-1795) and Charlotte (1756, died young). Together with her brother-in-law Percy Wyndham O'Brien, the Earl of Thomond (c.1723-1774), she retained control over the Egremont estates during her son's minority (1763-c.1772). In 1767 she married Hans Moritz, Count von Brühl (1736-1809).³

² This figure is a more extensive version of the original glossary produced for S. Webster 'Estate improvement and the professionalisation of land agents on the Egremont estates in Sussex and Yorkshire, 1770-1835', *Rural History* 18 (2007), 1-24.

³ Hans (John) Moritz von Brühl (1736-1809), born in Wiederau Germany, son of Friedrich-Wilhelm von Brühl (1695-1760) and the nephew of Count Heinrich von Brühl (Prime Minister and virtual ruler of electoral Saxony). He was Minister of Saxony in Germany and Ambassador to England. An amateur astronomer, building his own observatory and writing astronomical papers, a patron of musicians and a

FIGURE 1 continued: GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES

THIRD EARL OF EGREMONT (succ.1763-1837) George Wyndham, born 1751, first son of Charles Wyndham. Egremont adopted the title 'O'Brien' on the death of his uncle, Percy Wyndham O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, in 1774.

COLONEL GEORGE WYNDHAM (succ.1837-1869) Eldest son of third Earl and Miss Elizabeth Ilive (d. Countess of Egremont 1822), born 1787, created first Lord Leconfield 1859. Colonel Wyndham inherited the Egremont estates in Sussex, Ireland and Yorkshire in 1837 and the Cumberland estates in 1860. He was succeeded by his son Henry (1830-1901) in 1869.

FOURTH EARL OF EGREMONT (succ.1837-1845) George Francis Wyndham, son of third Earl's youngest brother, William Frederick Wyndham (1763-1845), born 1786. Wyndham inherited the Egremont title and the Western estates in Somerset and Devon in 1837. On his death, all honours became extinct.

PETWORTH AGENTS (in chronological order):

THOMAS ELDER agent to the second Earl of Egremont and steward of the Wiltshire and Somerset estates, c.1714-1780.

JAMES UPTON TRIPP (d.1801) PETWORTH AGENT and lawyer to third Earl of Egremont, 1772-1801.

WILLIAM TYLER (c.1764-1835) PETWORTH AGENT and lawyer to third Earl of Egremont, 1801-1835.

CHARLES MURRAY (1768-1847) PETWORTH AGENT and lawyer to Egremont and his son Colonel George Wyndham, 1835-1847.

DR JAMES MARR BRYDONE (1779-1866) naval surgeon and superintendent for the voyages of the Petworth Emigration Committee to Canada 1834-1837. Brydone travelled to Ireland with Colonel Wyndham in 1838 to inspect the estates there, and from 1839 he organised assisted emigration from the Irish estates. He acted as accountant and later PETWORTH AGENT to Colonel Wyndham after Charles Murray (d.1847).

talented chess player in the London Chess Club. Brühl was a keen agriculturalist, writing several times to the Board of Agriculture between 1797-1799. After Alicia Maria's death in 1794 it seems that Brühl married again, as letters from 'Maria, Countess de Brühl' are addressed to Lord Egremont in 1798, and mentioned in von Brühl's will of 1800. He left Egremont his 'transit instrument', an astronomical clock and a telescope. **WSRO, PHA 54.**

FIGURE 1 continued: GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES

PETWORTH CLERK AND BAILIFFS:

JAMES CHALLEN (1779-1834) William Tyler's clerk. It seems likely that Challen would have succeeded Tyler as agent to the Earl of Egremont, if he had not predeceased him.

JOHN HABBIN acted as bailiff on the Petworth estate between 1765 and 1801.

JOHN SHERWIN and later his son Thomas Sherwin were employed as bailiffs at Petworth from 1791 to 1850.

OTHER LAND AGENTS (in alphabetical order):

HENRY CLARIDGE YORKSHIRE AGENT 1835-1848. Son of John Claridge (see below).

JOHN CLARIDGE YORKSHIRE AGENT 1796-1835. Kent, Claridge and Pearce were a London firm established by the 1790s to provide professional guidance in the management and rationalisation of estates. Led by Nathaniel Kent (1737-1810), the firm managed several properties, including the Royal estates at Richmond and Windsor, and surveyed and valued many more.

WILLIAM CLUTTON AGENT FOR NORTHERN ESTATES (including Cumberland) from 1848. The firm Cluttons managed these estates until the end of the nineteenth century.

THOMAS CROWE IRISH AGENT 1801-1851, son of Thomas Crowe, agent 1774-1801.

FREDERICK MITCHELL AGENT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1838-1841.

HENRY TRIPP AGENT FOR WESTERN ESTATES c.1798-1835. Henry was a barrister in London, and the younger brother of Petworth agent James Upton Tripp.

SURVEYORS:

LANCELOT 'CAPABILITY' BROWN (1716-1783) landscape gardener, worked at Petworth 1751-1765.

THOMAS BROWNE (1702-1780) land surveyor who produced maps of Yorkshire and southern England.

FIGURE 1 continued: GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES

WILLIAM CHAPMAN (1749-1832) engineer employed in Yorkshire on the Beverley and Barmston drainage.

JAMES CROW (1711/12-1786) land surveyor who worked with Thomas Browne.

WILLIAM SMITH (1769-1839) 'Strata' Smith was a land surveyor, mineralogist and drainage engineer, whose research produced the first true geological map of Britain in 1815.⁴

JOHN SMEATON (1724-1792) civil engineer with a consulting practice from 1760, advising on the construction of drainage, bridges, harbours, engines and scientific equipment. Smeaton was employed by Egremont (1775) to report on the practicability of exporting coals from the Cumberland estates.⁵ William Jessop (1745-1814) was a pupil of Smeaton.⁶

JOHN UPTON land surveyor to third Earl at Petworth. His son, also John Upton (c.1774-1851), was a civil engineer in England and Russia. Petworth estate plans were also created by Thomas and Henry Upton for the third Earl.

OTHERS:

WILLIAM ANDRÉ (1743-1807) surgeon at Petworth House for third Earl of Egremont.

THOMAS HAMILTON AYLIFFE (1774-1852) the brother of Mrs Wyndham. He and his sons George (1802-1844), Thomas (1814-) and Henry (1819-1890) were sent to Australia in 1839.

REVEREND EUSEBY CLEAVER (1746-1819) presented to the rectory of Spofforth (Yorkshire) in 1774, which he held till 1783, when Egremont presented him with the rectories of Tillington and Petworth (Sussex). As Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin in Ireland his palace was plundered in the rebellion of 1798, although he was unharmed. He was raised to the archbishopric of Dublin in 1809.⁷

REVEREND CHARLES DUNSTER (1750-1816) rector of Petworth, 1783-1816.

ELIZABETH FOX / CROLE daughter of the proprietor of theatre royal, Brighton, mistress of Egremont and the Prince Regent, mother of Mary Fox (1791-1842) who was brought up at Petworth with the children of Elizabeth Ilive.

⁴ S. Winchester, *The Map that changed the world* (London, 2002).

⁵ J. Smeaton, in M. Dixon (ed.), *Reports of the late John Smeaton, F.R.S.* (London, 1812), pp. 396-403; A.W. Skempton, 'John Smeaton'; O. Wood, *West Cumberland Coal 1600-1982/3* (Kendall, 1988).

⁶ G. Revill, 'William Jessop'; C. Hadfield and A.W. Skempton, *William Jessop, Engineer* (Newton Abbot, 1979), pp.253-269; R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers*.

⁷ See 'Cleaver, Euseby' in L. Stephen (ed.) *Dictionary of National Biography* 11 (1887), p.22.

FIGURE 1 continued: GLOSSARY OF KEY FIGURES

REVEREND THOMAS SOCKETT (1777-1859) tutor to the sons of the third Earl of Egremont, Curate of Northchapel, Sussex (1811) and later Rector of Duncton (1815) and Petworth (1816). Responsible for dispatching 2,000 emigrants to Canada from Sussex.

MESSRS STEPHENS AND WATSON Auditors Stephens and Watson were employed individually by Egremont to assist in the rationalisation of James Upton Tripp's accounts from 1801.

DR JOHN TRIPP Rector at Spofforth, and briefly agent in Yorkshire before the employment of Kent, Claridge and Pearce in 1796. He was the elder brother of the Petworth agent James Upton Tripp (d.1801). Egremont patronage of the Tripp family can be seen over four generations.⁸

MRS WYNDHAM Elizabeth Ilive or Ayliffe (c.1770-1822), Egremont's mistress at Petworth from about 1789, reputed to have been the daughter of a librarian at Westminster School, or the daughter of a Devon farmer. She was an amateur scientist, contributor to Arthur Young's *Annals of Agriculture*, and was awarded a medal from the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. She and Egremont had eight children, sons George (1787-1869), Henry (1790-1860), Edward (1792-1792), William (1793-1794), Charles (1796-1866) and daughters Frances (1789-1848), Charlotte (1795-1870) and Elizabeth (1802-1803). She married Egremont in July 1801, but there was a permanent separation in this marriage from 1803, when the Countess resided in London until her death in 1822.

REVEREND ARTHUR YOUNG (1769-1827) son of the agricultural writer Arthur Young (1741-1820) The Reverend Arthur Young studied at Cambridge (1789) and took holy orders, although produced two agricultural surveys for Sussex (1793, 1808) and made an extended survey in Russia from 1805 to 1814.⁹

⁸ Dr John Tripp was the eldest son of John Tripp (Deputy Recorder of Taunton under Charles, second Earl of Egremont) and his wife Anne, daughter of the Reverend James Upton, who was Sir William Wyndham's (1688-1740) tutor at Eton. Dr John Tripp attended Westminster School with Egremont, and was presented to the living of Spofforth in Yorkshire. John also acted briefly as superintendent of Egremont's Yorkshire estates. The second son, James Upton Tripp, was Petworth agent. Robert, a fourth son, was given livings in Devonshire. The youngest son, Henry, was a barrister and agent for the West of England estates for over fifty years. Tripp family patronage continued in the following generation, John's son becoming Rector of Silverton in Devonshire and James' son, Rector of Upwaltham in West Sussex. See H.A. Wyndham, *A family history* (London, 1950), p.312.

⁹ See M. Bentham-Edwards, *The Autobiography of Arthur Young* (London, 1898); J.G. Gazley, *The Life of Arthur Young, 1741-1820* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1973).

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a critical introduction to historical and geographical debates on improvement, aristocratic landowners, absenteeism, estate management, agents and professionalisation relevant to this study. The chapter further examines the key theoretical approaches adopted here, including work on correspondence networks, landscape and cultural geography. Debates on power and writing history, networks and life geographies will be considered in the subsequent chapter together with an examination of research sources, archives and methods.

2.1 Improvement

The 'improvement' of English estate landscapes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is now widely recognised as a multi-faceted process, involving social, political and aesthetic as well as narrowly economic concerns.¹⁰ Economically, in early usage 'to improve' was synonymous with 'to invest' or to gain profit, usually from land, and was associated with enclosure. From the seventeenth century, it was considered a moral duty of landowners and farmers to improve land visually and to make it more productive to feed a growing population, utilising concurrently both economic and aesthetic concepts of landscape design and

¹⁰ S. Daniels and S. Seymour, 'Landscape design and the idea of improvement, 1730-1814' in R.A. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin, (eds.), *An historical geography of England and Wales* (London, 1990), pp. 487-519; R. Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* (London: 1976), pp.160-161; S. Wade Martins, *Farmers, landlords and landscapes: rural Britain 1720 to 1870* (Macclesfield, 2004), p. 8.

agriculture. From the mid eighteenth century, the idea of 'improving oneself' morally and economically added to an already complex and potentially contradictory term.¹¹

'Improvement' has been characterised by Stephen Daniels and Susanne Seymour as the process of 'progressively restructuring the landscape for social and economic as well as aesthetic ends and, by extension, restructuring the conduct of those who lived in, worked in and looked upon it'.¹² Studies on this 'darker side' of landscape improvement have suggested that this reconciliation of economic progress with social stability often involved the coercion of those least able to determine the course of agricultural 'improvement'. Alun Howkins' analysis of J.M.W. Turner's paintings of Petworth Park for example has illustrated that depictions of 'an ideal and harmonised social order' often concealed contention. While the current thesis focuses on agricultural improvement gauged mainly by rental income, together with more qualitative signifiers of 'improvement' such as changing practices, plants, animals and machines, it is recognised that estate improvement involved many contradictory cultural, moral and political themes, aspirations, and struggles.¹³

¹¹ Williams, *Keywords*, pp.160-161.

¹² Daniels and Seymour, 'Landscape design', p.487.

¹³ J. Barrell, *The dark side of the landscape: the rural poor in English paintings 1730-1840* (Cambridge, 1980); J.M. Neeson, 'The opponents of enclosure in eighteenth century Northamptonshire', *Past and Present*, 105 (1984), 114-139; S. Seymour, 'Historical geographies of landscape', in B. Graham and C. Nash (eds.), *Modern historical geographies* (Harlow, 2000), pp.193-215; J. Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: useful knowledge and polite culture* (Cambridge, 1994), p.235; S. Daniels, S. Seymour and C. Watkins, 'Enlightenment, improvement, and the geographies of horticulture in later Georgian England', in D.N. Livingstone and C.W.J. Withers, (eds.), *Geography and Enlightenment* (London, 1999), pp.345-371; A. Howkins, 'J.M.W. Turner at Petworth: agricultural improvement and the politics of landscape' in J. Barrell, (ed.), *Painting and the politics of culture. New essays on British Art, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1992), 231-251, p.250.

Improvement can also be understood in a colonial context.¹⁴ Techniques of improvement helped to 'bind together the scattered elements of Empire' more effectively, making it more manageable, and more profitable. The ideal of improvement also offered a 'moral veneer to soften the crude realities of imperial expansion'.¹⁵ This justified imperialism to consumers 'at home' as mutually beneficial through discourses of health and civilisation for indigenous inhabitants.

2.2 Landowners and Improvement

As Susanna Wade Martins and Tom Williamson have suggested, celebrations of 'improvement' were 'a proclamation that nature could be transformed by the application of knowledge, and thus an affirmation of the rights of the social elite', thus '[i]mprovement gave legitimacy to landownership and the farming interest, at a time when the accumulation of property in the hands of the few and restrictions on the import of foreign grain, were both being questioned by an increasingly assertive middle class'.¹⁶ Similarly, J.R. Walton argues that improvement was used as a means for landowners to 'fulfil the responsibilities of their

¹⁴ S. Seymour, S. Daniels and C. Watkins 'Estate and empire: Sir George Cornwall's management of Moccas, Herefordshire and La Taste, Grenada, 1771-1819' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 24, 3 (1998), 313-351.

¹⁵ J. Gascoigne, *Science in the service of Empire. Joseph Banks, the British state and the uses of science in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 1998), p.169.

¹⁶ S. Wade Martins and T. Williamson, "Inappropriate technology'. The history of 'floating' in the North and East of England' in H. Cook and T. Williamson (eds.), *Water management in the English landscape: field, marsh and meadow* (Edinburgh, 1999), p.207.

position and distance themselves and their tenants from the worst effects of unrestricted trade in agricultural commodities'.¹⁷

Related to the moral duty to improve and the virtues of residence was the sense of the morally problematic nature of absenteeism by landowners. Whilst F.M.L. Thompson has noted that the benefits of residence were not always as great as contemporaries supposed, there was nonetheless a strong presumption of the 'evils' of absenteeism.¹⁸ As John Beckett has demonstrated, many historians have been no less severe on absenteeism.¹⁹

The influence of aristocratic improvers has long been debated. While, according to Adam Smith 'great proprietors are seldom great improvers', contemporary agricultural literature is full of hymns to patrons such as Coke of Holkham, the fifth Duke of Bedford, and Lord Egremont. Lord Ernle in 1936 stressed the critical role of renowned improvers in setting a fashion followed by the tenants and neighbours.²⁰ More recent scholars have sought to downplay aristocratic influence on practical innovations, John Beckett asserting that while a handful of leading aristocrats were major figures in agricultural improvement, Lord Ernle mistook paternalist endeavour for real achievement. Furthermore, the true credit for

¹⁷ J.R. Walton, 'Agriculture and rural society 1730-1914' in R.A. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin, *An historical geography of England and Wales*, 2nd edn. (London, 1990), 323-350, at p.337.

¹⁸ F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society in the nineteenth century* (London, 1963), p.181; J.V. Beckett, 'Absentee landownership in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century: the case of Cumbria', *Northern History* XIX (1983), 87-107; M. Jones, 'The absentee landlord's landscape: the Watson-Wentworth estate in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Landscapes* 1,2 (2000), 33-52; P. Roebuck 'Absentee landownership in the late 17th and early 18th centuries: a neglected factor in English agrarian history' *Agricultural History Review* 21 (1973), 1-17.

¹⁹ J.V. Beckett, 'Absentee landownership', p.88. Cf. Roebuck, 'Absentee landownership'.

²⁰ R.E. Prothero, later Lord Ernle (1851-1937), *English farming past and present*, 6th edn (1961), pp.213, 221.

agricultural changes should fall on lesser landowners, their stewards and tenant farmers.²¹ In contrast, David Brown's assessment of the influence of the fifth Duke of Bedford echoes a more traditional interpretation, arguing that Bedford was influential both in his county and in the broader development of scientific agriculture. Studies of the Earl Spencer, the Duke of Bridgewater and Coke of Norfolk have all contributed to this debate.²²

So far, I have concentrated on the agricultural aspects of estate improvement. However, landowners often had financial interests in other areas. Michael McCahill demonstrated that of Britain's top 57 noblemen (1783-1806), at least 36 delivered some of their income from mineral and other non agricultural sources, and 30 of these noblemen invested in or were directors of canal companies.²³ John Beckett has argued that a great estates' ability to survive economic depression was influenced by these alternative sources of income, which included investment in industry, railways, stock markets, urban development, and mineral incomes.²⁴

²¹ P. Horn, 'The contribution of the propagandist to eighteenth-century agricultural improvement', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), p.314; J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy in England 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986); D. Brown, 'Reassessing the influence'.

²² J.V. Beckett, *The Agricultural Revolution* (1990), p.29 and J.V. Beckett 'Landownership and Estate Management', in G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, vol. 6, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.569-570; R.A.C. Parker, *Coke of Norfolk, a Financial and Agricultural Study, 1707-1842* (Oxford, 1975), pp.200-201; S. Wade Martins, *A great estate at Work. The Holkham estate and its inhabitants in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1980); M. Turner, 'Land, industry and the Bridgewater inheritance', in B.A. Holderness and M. Turner (eds.), *Land, labour and agriculture 1700-1920. Essays for Gordon Mingay* (London, 1991), pp.1-25; E.A. Wasson, 'A progressive landlord. The third Earl Spencer, 1782-1845', in C.W. Chalklin and J.R. Wordie (eds.), *Town and Countryside. The English landowner in the national economy, 1660-1860* (London, 1989) pp83-101; B.A. English, *The great landowners of East Yorkshire* (Howden, 1990), pp.152, 190, 224.

²³ M. McCahill, *Order and equipoise: the peerage and the House of Lords 1783-1806* (London, 1978), p.197.

²⁴ J. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, pp.85-87.

2.3 Estate Management

The management of English landed estates at the end of the eighteenth century was primarily concerned with preventing poor farming and ensuring optimum rent levels.²⁵

However, the development of positive management associated with the application of science to agriculture improved farming practices and enabled tenants to pay higher rents without reducing land quality. Improvement, though, often involved long-term, gradual changes in agricultural practice such as crop rotation and animal husbandry, enclosure of waste and common land, and changes of tenure and land amalgamation, as well as rationalisation of buildings and land drainage.²⁶ Although it has been recognised that many of these processes were established before the mid-eighteenth century, they have become integral to debates regarding the 'Agricultural Revolution'.²⁷

These changes inevitably altered the face of the countryside, although without creating a unified landscape of large farms.²⁸ However, the efficiency of estate management was often

²⁵ J.R. Wordie, *Estate management in eighteenth century England: the building of the Leveson-Gower fortune* (London, 1982).

²⁶ S.J.M. Davis and J.V. Beckett, 'Animal husbandry and agricultural improvement: the archaeological evidence from animal bones and teeth' *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture* 10, 1 (1999), 1-17; J.M. Neeson, 'The opponents of enclosure'; S. Wade Martins, 'The farm buildings of the Agricultural Revolution' *The Local Historian* 12:8 (1977), 407-423; A.D.M. Phillips, *The underdraining of farmland in England during the nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1989).

²⁷ The concept of the 'Agricultural Revolution' as a rapid development has been abandoned for one that spread from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in a gradual process of change, perhaps described better in terms of agricultural 'improvement' rather than 'revolution'. See R.E. Prothero, *English farming past and present*; G.E. Mingay, 'The agricultural revolution in English history; a reconsideration, in W.E. Minchinton (ed.) *Essays in agrarian history* Vol.2 (Newton Abbot, 1968), pp.9-28; E. Kerridge, *The agricultural revolution* (London, 1967); F.M.L Thompson, 'The second agricultural revolution, 1815-1900', *Economic History Review*, 21 (1968), 62-77; J.V. Beckett, *The agricultural revolution* (Oxford, 1990); M. Overton, 'Re-establishing the English agricultural revolution', *Agricultural History Review*, 44 (1996), 1-20.

²⁸ P. Buzzing, *Estate management at Goodwood in the nineteenth century. A study in changing roles and relationships*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Open University, 1986); D. Spring, 'A great agricultural estate: Netherby under Sir James Graham, 1820-1845', *Agricultural History* 29, 73-81; D. Spring, *The English landed estate in the nineteenth century: its administration* (Baltimore: 1963).

offset by distance where estates were geographically dispersed. The spread of improved husbandry and management was also reliant on markets, transport and capital. Nevertheless, as David Spring argues, English agriculture during the nineteenth century achieved a standard of excellence scarcely reached elsewhere in the world.²⁹

Advances in transport and communications in Britain during the period of this study, including the development of turnpikes, navigations and railways led to increased mobility and interaction between communities. Transport improvements further enabled economic integration with the greater circulation of capital and commodities, and coincided with improvements in communication at a distance, including the postal service, national newspapers and the telegraph.³⁰ This influenced the viability of estate management from a distance, and enabled the movement of professionals and others between estates. Mobility was a key factor in the creation of what John Barrell called the rural professional class, which included surveyors and literate tenant farmers. Turnpikes and stage-coaches enabled professionals such as the landscape gardener Humphry Repton (1752-1818) to create and establish their careers 'on the road' from the late 1780s, developing networks of clients and commissions, and working practices and theoretical principles through their mobility throughout the country. Elite landscapes, created by an aesthetic sensibility informed by

²⁹ D. Spring, *The English landed estate*.

³⁰ N. Thrift, 'Transport and communication'.

seeing and comparing landscapes, were therefore dependent on the practical knowledge of road builders and other practical professions.³¹

The development of inland waterways coincided with and complemented that of turnpikes from the late seventeenth century. The railway era really began with the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway in 1830, which carried both passengers and freight. The proximity of land to railways raised letting and sale values more significantly than other developments.³² More than any other form of contemporary transport, the railways led to shrinkage of national space, and contributed to the movement of a broad base of the population with the introduction of third class fares.³³ However, the history of technology, according to George Revill has played only a secondary role in the work of historical geographers who have examined landscape design and agricultural improvement.³⁴

2.4 Agents and Professionalisation

This thesis uses the term 'agents' to refer to the various people (in this study, entirely men) who influenced and guided the improvement of the Egremont estates. These include land agents, surveyors, engineers, geologists and agricultural advisors who were patronised by Egremont. These men could be considered part of John Barrell's newly mobile, 'rural

³¹ J. Barrell, *The idea of landscape*; S. Daniels *Humphry Repton*; G. Revill 'William Jessop'.

³² J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, p.244.

³³ N. Thrift, 'Transport and communication'.

³⁴ G. Revill, 'William Jessop'. Cf. T. Warner, 'Leicestershire landowners and the railway: resistance and co-operation' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, LXI (1987), 51-61; S. Daniels *Humphry Repton*.

professional class'.³⁵ Penelope Corfield loosely defines a profession as a skilled occupation organised around specialist knowledge with both a theoretical and practical bearing, often with a distinctive ethos focused on service.³⁶ As Daniel Duman has argued, the ideal of service allowed the emerging professions to reconcile the concept of 'the gentleman' with the necessity of working for a living, and to formulate a definition of their relationship with clients and society. Furthermore, the professions existed during the eighteenth century 'by and large to serve the needs of the landed classes'.³⁷ This concept of service was neither wholly modern nor pre-modern, although the patron-professional relationship of the eighteenth century was gradually replaced by a more autonomous client-professional relationship.³⁸

Professionalisation has been characterised by Paul Brassley and others as an increased dominance and autonomy in a profession, while the 'professional' is recognised as an independent practitioner holding exclusive knowledge of a specialised activity that may have been gained through training, and who has been selected on merit (rather than wealth or inheritance), and belongs to a formal qualifying association with a professional identity.³⁹ For Brassley, twentieth-century English agriculture demonstrates 'some but not all of the features of a profession', in that there were not universal regulated training courses and in that entry into the profession by birth is still possible.⁴⁰ Similarly, land agents in the eighteenth and

³⁵ J. Barrell, *The idea of landscape*.

³⁶ P.J. Corfield, *Power and the professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London, 1995), p.25

³⁷ D. Duman, 'The creation and diffusion of a professional ideology', pp.114-115.

³⁸ D. Duman, 'The creation and diffusion of a professional ideology', pp.114-115.

³⁹ D. Duman, 'Pathway to professionalism', p.615.

⁴⁰ Paul Brassley notes the unjustified and emotive implications of the term 'unprofessional' that does not adequately describe those highly skilled individuals who fail to correspond with strict requirements

nineteenth centuries meet a limited number of these characteristics. Although there was no formal education for a land agent until the establishment of the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester in 1845, the great estate offices such as Holkham or Woburn became recognised training grounds for agents.⁴¹ However, it was not until 1902 that the land agents' profession was recognised with institutional status.

The term 'improvement' was a highly contested, and politically fraught term in contemporary society, and remains so in historiography today. A term of almost equal complexity is that of land agent. The definition of 'agent' was not stable, and was often used concurrently with 'steward' to describe many different occupations. During the eighteenth century, the roles of steward and legal adviser were not clearly distinguished, and were often performed by attorneys.⁴² As Penelope Corfield has argued, occupational pluralism was not uncommon, although a trend towards specialisation can be observed in the professions during this period. The position of land agents had originated in that of the bailiffs and stewards of the great medieval estates, and the profession developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth

for 'professional' characteristics. P. Brassley, 'The professionalisation of English agriculture', *Rural History* 16, 2 (2005), 235-251, p.249.

⁴¹ The Royal Agricultural College was established at Cirencester in 1845. See F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*; D. Spring, *The English landed estate*; J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay *The agricultural revolution 1750-1880* (London, 1966); R. Sayce, *The history of the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester* (Stroud, 1992).

⁴² R. Robson, *The attorney in eighteenth century England* (Cambridge, 1959); P.J. Corfield, *Power and the professions*; E. Hughes, 'The eighteenth-century estate agent' in H.A. Cronne, T.W. Moody and D.B. Quinn, *Essays in British and Irish History* (London, 1949), pp.185-199; J.V. Beckett 'Absentee landownership'; D. Hey, *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (Oxford, 1996).

centuries as landowners left their estates for long periods, whilst engaged in, for example, entertainment or politics in London.⁴³

The management of a landed estate, in effect the supervision of some of the largest enterprises in the British economy and a key space of social and political activity, was increasingly in the hands of agents. However, 'despite their acknowledged importance', and although there has been some work on particular individuals, including Francis Blaikie and Nathaniel Kent, John Beckett has argued that 'relatively little is known about individual eighteenth century stewards'. The tendency has in fact been to portray agents, according to Beckett, as 'rapacious, untrustworthy and weak willed'.⁴⁴ Edward Laurence dedicated his text in 1727 on *The Duty of a Steward to his Lord* to landowners that 'have already suffered through the knavery and unfaithfulness of their stewards' and stressed the dangers of extended absence from estates. In contrast, studies have shown that many agents were competent and influential figures in agricultural improvement.⁴⁵

G.E. Mingay maintained that estate administration improved during the eighteenth century as estate stewards became professionalised. Professionalisation, for Mingay, was a product of

⁴³ E. Hughes, 'The eighteenth-century estate agent'; J.V. Beckett 'Absentee landownership'; D. Hey, *The Oxford Companion*; G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward' in E.L. Jones and G.E. Mingay (eds.), *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution: Essays Presented to J.D. Chambers* (Chatham, 1967), pp.3-27; J.V. Beckett, 'Estate management in eighteenth century England: the Lowther-Spedding relationship in Cumberland' In J. Chartres and D. Hey (eds.), *English Rural Society, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.55-72; F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*; P. Horn, 'An eighteenth-century land agent: the career of Nathaniel Kent (1737-1810)', *Agricultural History Review* 30 (1982), 1-16.

⁴⁴ J.V. Beckett, 'Estate management', p.56.

⁴⁵ E. Laurence, *The Duty of a Steward to his Lord* (London, 1727); J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, *The agricultural revolution*, p.163.

the forces driving estate improvement, and was due to the increasing complexity of the economy, the resultant demands for expert services, and the extension of capitalist criteria of performance to estate management.⁴⁶ Further, non-economic drivers included a growing elite concern with science, changing views on service and practical endeavour and the reform of political sinecures. From the seventeenth century, estate management gradually became standardised, and increasingly centralised, with complex administrative hierarchies.⁴⁷ This process coincided with the professional and managerial revolution in law and medicine, although the growth of professions was far from uniform.⁴⁸

The chronology for the professionalisation of agents, however, is unclear; F.M.L Thompson and John Beckett have argued that this process occurred in the nineteenth century, while Edward Hughes and G.E. Mingay saw it as an eighteenth century phenomenon.⁴⁹ For Thompson, incentives to economy and efficiency were imparted by the wars of 1793-1815 and their aftermath and more generally by the altered position of agriculture within the economy as a whole. This drive towards efficiency carried professionalism forward at a brisk

⁴⁶ G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward'; P.J. Corfield, *Power and the professions*; F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*; J. Chartres, 'Country trades, crafts and professions', in G. E. Mingay (ed.) *The agrarian history of England and Wales, vol. 6, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.416-466. L. Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837* (London, 1992).

⁴⁷ J.V. Beckett, 'Landownership and Estate Management', in: G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, vol. 6, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.545-640; G.E. Mingay 'The eighteenth-century land steward'; H.J. Habakkuk, 'Economic functions of English landowners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 6, 2 (1953), 92-102; J. Martin, 'Estate stewards and their work in Glamorgan, 1660-1760: a regional study of estate management', *Journal of Glamorgan History (Morgannwg)* 13 (1979), 9-28.

⁴⁸ D. Duman, 'Pathway to professionalism'; P.J. Corfield, *Power and the professions*.

⁴⁹ F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*; J.V. Beckett, 'Landownership and estate management'; E. Hughes, 'The eighteenth-century estate agent'; G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward'.

pace.⁵⁰ The implications for this transition are also uncertain. Eric Richards has argued that agents' diligence and loyalty sustained the aristocracy in their 'careers of extraordinary leisure or of political and social leadership', while J.H. Porter claimed that professional agents contributed to increasing social distance in rural society between landlord and tenant, and led to agents' 'growing importance as a middle class in the social structure of rural society'.⁵¹

Historians have echoed William Marshall and other contemporaries in their dismissal of solicitors as agents, and their emphasis on the practical and technical at the expense of the legal and political aspects of agricultural improvement. However, at Petworth, the home estate of a renowned agricultural innovator, a succession of qualified solicitors were employed as land agents, while contemporary commentators actively discouraged this practice.⁵² Chapter eight of this study is in part an attempt to answer David Spring's call for further research on the work of solicitor-agents, a much-neglected aspect of our knowledge of land agents.⁵³

⁵⁰ F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: the growth of a profession* (London, 1968), p.60; F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*.

⁵¹ E. Richards, 'The land agent', in G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside* Vol. 2. (London, 1981), p.439-456; J.H. Porter, 'The development of rural society', in G.E. Mingay (ed.), 1989. *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, vol. 6, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, 1989), pp.836-865. The activities of both lawyer and land agent offered an opportunity for social advancement. As Paul Langford argues, the pursuit of genteel status united a diverse developing middle class. Professionalisation was connected with attempts by practitioners to make a social virtue, respectability, a professional asset. P. Langford, *A polite and commercial people: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1992).

⁵² E. Laurence, *The duty of a steward*; W. Marshall, *On the Landed Property of England*. (London, 1804).

⁵³ D. Spring, *The English landed estate*, p.64.

Land agents were frequently recruited from the ranks of surveyors, men who dealt with the inspection and the estimation of the actual or prospective value of land, and were increasingly skilled in mathematical techniques, drawing and map-making. Enclosures, tithe commutation, tenant rights and industrial and engineering schemes led to increasing demand for surveyors from the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ As Jon Gregory has shown, surveys often provided the basis for landowner's campaigns of improvement, and moved beyond simple understandings of productivity and output. The aerial perspective of surveys also had an impact on landowner's perceptions of their estates.⁵⁵

The established method of training as a surveyor was to serve articles of three or five years with a surveyor of established reputation. Surveyors without permanent positions on estates sought diverse commissions that often involved extensive travelling. This is certainly true for the surveyors Thomas Browne and James Crow who undertook surveys in Yorkshire, Sussex and Ireland for the Egremont estate and others. Thomas Browne (1702-1780), herald and land surveyor, produced maps of estates mainly in Yorkshire and southern England and was well regarded as a land surveyor; he was called Sense Browne, to distinguish him from his contemporary Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Browne acted as a land surveyor for the second Earl of Egremont as well as for the Countess of Egremont during the third Earl's minority, and a receipt for Browne's journey and survey of the Irish estates in

⁵⁴ F.W. Steer et al, *Dictionary of land surveyors and local map-makers of Great Britain and Ireland, 1530–1850*, ed. S. Bendall, 2nd edn, vol. 2, (London, 1997), p. 42.

⁵⁵ J. Gregory, 'Mapping improvement: reshaping rural landscapes in the eighteenth century' *Landscapes* 6:1 (2005), 62-82.

1777 can be found in the Petworth archives.⁵⁶ The Essex surveyor James Crow (1711/12-1786) carried out a number of surveys of the Petworth estates, including land in Sutton and Duncton in 1777 and had revised earlier Yorkshire surveys by Thomas Browne in 1767.⁵⁷

As F.M.L. Thompson has shown, the creation of a Land Surveyors Club in 1834 by six London surveyors was a step towards professionalisation, with the eventual establishment of the Institution of Surveyors in 1868. The first president of the Institution in 1868, John Clutton (1809-1896) went into his father's business in Sussex as a land agent and surveyor in 1827, moved to London and established his own practice in 1837 with his half brother William, and later his nephew, also William Clutton. The multi-estate firm of Cluttons were agents to Lord Leconfield in Yorkshire from 1848 and in Cumberland from 1860.⁵⁸

The profession of civil engineering was also closely tied to the 'spirit of improvement'.⁵⁹ The growth of the British engineering profession was a response to the increasing pace of industrialisation in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the demand for more buildings, roads, harbours and canals. The growth of the profession is signalled by the

⁵⁶ **WSRO, PHA 13722, PHA 6617**. A receipt for Thomas Browne's journey and survey of the Irish estates (1777) can be found in **WSRO, PHA 13723**. For more on Browne see F.W. Steer, *Dictionary of land surveyors*, vol. 2, p. 69.

⁵⁷ James Crow was paid £195 15s. (1757) and £245 (1790) for surveys of Sutton and Duncton. A survey of the Yorkshire estates from 1756 was revised by Thomas Browne and James Crow in 1767. **WSRO, PHA 1461, 1462, 1456**. For more on Crow, see F.W. Steer, *Dictionary of land surveyors*, vol. 2, p.124.

⁵⁸ F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*, p.160; F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*; B. English, 'Patterns of estate management in East Yorkshire c.1840-c.1880', *Agricultural History Review*, 32 (1984), 29-47, p. 32. Whitehaven RO, **Leconfield Y7/6** 18 Sep 1848: letter from Brydone to [William] Clutton esq. Cluttons also took over the management of the Cumberland estate in 1860 after Lord Leconfield inherited these from his younger brother.

⁵⁹ H. Skempton, 'John Smeaton (1724-1792) civil engineer' *Dictionary of National Biography* (online version at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25746>; G. Revill, 'William Jessop'.

formation of the Society of Civil Engineers in 1771, and by 1800 there was 'a small but effective engineering profession in Britain'.⁶⁰ John Smeaton (1724-1792), the earliest of the great civil engineers to achieve distinction as a scientist, ran a successful consulting practice from 1760, advising on the construction of drainage, bridges, harbours, engines and scientific equipment. Smeaton was employed by Egremont (1775) to report on the practicability of exporting coals from the Cumberland estates, involving an assessment of the competition between Egremont's Bransty estate with that belonging to the Lowthers at Whitehaven.⁶¹ William Jessop (1745-1814) was a pupil of Smeaton, involved in numerous improvements, who also set out some theoretical maxims on an aesthetic of engineering that was informed by discourses of improvement.⁶²

William Jessop made several visits to Petworth to survey the Arun and Rother rivers in 1783 and 1790, and also travelled with Egremont to Littlehampton and Shoreham in connection with proposals to improve the harbours there.⁶³ The engineer's son Josias Jessop (1781-1826) was to build the Wey and Arun navigation (1816). Also connected with Jessop and Smeaton was the Yorkshire engineer William Chapman, involved in the Beverley and Barmston drainage (see chapter six) and the Grand Canal in Ireland.⁶⁴ The geologist William

⁶⁰ R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers: a history of the engineering profession in Britain, 1750-1914* (London, 1989), p 45; H. Skempton, 'John Smeaton'; G. Revill, 'William Jessop'.

⁶¹ J. Smeaton, 'The report of John Smeaton, engineer, respecting the practicability of exporting coals from the estates of Bransty, Birkby and Aspatria, in the county of Cumberland, belonging to the Right Honourable Earl of Egremont' [19 October 1775], in M. Dixon (ed.), *Reports of the late John Smeaton, F.R.S.* (London, 1812), pp. 396-403; A.W. Skempton, 'John Smeaton'; O. Wood, *West Cumberland Coal 1600-1982/3* (Kendall, 1988).

⁶² G. Revill, 'William Jessop'; C. Hadfield and A.W. Skempton, *William Jessop, Engineer* (Newton Abbot, 1979), pp.253-269; R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers*.

⁶³ P.A.L. Vine, *London's lost route to Midhurst: the Earl of Egremont's navigation* (Sutton, 1995).

⁶⁴ R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers*, pp. 45, 57.

Smith, whose work in mining speculation for Egremont is examined in chapter nine, could also be considered an engineer, having been trained in canal construction, and met Jessop when he was surveyor to the Somerset Coal Canal.⁶⁵ As R.A. Buchanan has argued, the separation of engineers from surveyors was the last to occur; Smith described himself as both surveyor and engineer.⁶⁶

2.5 Theoretical approaches: Networks

George Revill has successfully examined William Jessop's engineering work on the River Trent by considering the spatial metaphors of region, fluid and network as an engagement with landscape theory and mobility theory. While this thesis does not attempt to mirror this achievement, it takes from it the importance of networks. As Revill, as well as Stephen Daniels, and John Barrell have argued, mobility helped to integrate and consolidate professional knowledges by generating first-hand expertise, as well as to develop networks of likeminded individuals.⁶⁷

The term network, describing an interconnected group or circuit, or a system of intersecting lines such as roads, appears to be an inherently geographical term. As a metaphor, it has been used by researchers inspired by the work of Bruno Latour and John Law to examine the relationship between nature, culture, technology and space. These approaches have

⁶⁵ S. Winchester, *The Map that Changed the World* (London, 2002), pp. 90, 101; for networks of engineers see G. Revill, 'William Jessop'.

⁶⁶ R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers*, p.45.

⁶⁷ G. Revill, 'William Jessop'; S. Daniels, *Humphry Repton*; J. Barrell, *The idea of landscape*.

been categorised under the term Actor Network Theory, which has been used by geographers to problematise practices of representation, uncover connections between technology and nature, and to suggest new means of understanding space and place.⁶⁸

Actor Network Theory includes a wider range of agents including humans, technologies, and nature, traces their interactions, and emphasises passing links and flows as sites of translation or exchange, rather than a traditional focus on nodes.

The work of Manuel Castells offers an alternative conception of networks, society and space, which has been more influential on this thesis. Castells claims that the 'informational society' is structured by a 'space of flows' that is organised at three levels, the infrastructural (the technology that enables these flows), the organisational (nodes where exchanges takes place such as World Cities – in contrast to ANT above) and the managerial world (individuals who move between them).⁶⁹ These three overlaid networks suggest that spaces such as cities are characterised by circulation, velocity and flow.⁷⁰

Networks have been a valuable metaphor for characterising global capital and an information society. They can be seen as webbed structures through which information, capital, goods and people flow in every direction. They depict forms of governance, and social networks

⁶⁸ N. Thrift, 'Actor Network Theory', in R.J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt, and M. Watts, eds. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th edn. (Oxford, 2000), pp. 4-6.

⁶⁹ M. Castells, *The rise of the network society* (Oxford, 1996).

⁷⁰ P. Hubbard, 'Manuel Castells', in P. Hubbard, R. Kitchin and G. Valentine, (eds.), *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (London, 2004), pp. 72-77.

based on affinities such as ethnicity.⁷¹ In a network approach, the global is not constituted as a collection of 'local' sites, or an overarching system such as capitalism. Rather, 'it comprises multiple, specific geographies of mobility, through which wider systemic networks are created, maintained and re-invented'.⁷² These flows are unevenly distributed and experienced. Although my research material is divided by location, each chapter will stress the linkages between places, examining similarities and differences between the estates, and changes over time. A 'network' approach to estate management will help to avoid a static interpretation of these estates. Indeed, it is the interactions between them with which I am most interested. As David Lambert and Alan Lester have pointed out, networks 'are perhaps clearest...when set in motion by real people'.⁷³ It is precisely this that I am attempting for the practical 'improvers' of the Egremont estate.

2.6 Correspondence Networks

The development of the British postal service was closely connected to improvements in communications. The introduction of mail coaches after 1784 made use of turnpikes, while from the mid nineteenth century the postal service was closely connected to the railways.⁷⁴ By 1838, the General Post handled fifty-seven million letters, while Privileged post carried a

⁷¹ K. Mitchell, 'Cultural geographies of transnationality', in K. Anderson, M. Domosh, D. Pile and N. Thrift, (eds.) *Handbook of Cultural Geography*. London, 2003), pp.74-84.

⁷² P. Crang, 'Local-Global', in P. Cloke, P. Crang and M. Goodwin (eds.), *Introducing human geographies 2nd edn* (London, 2005), p.48.

⁷³ S. Daniels and C. Nash, 'Lifepaths: geography and biography', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30, 3 (2004), 449-458, p.455; D. Lambert and A. Lester, 'Introduction: geographies of Empire and colonial life-writing' in D. Lambert and A. Lester (eds.), *Colonial lives across the British Empire: Imperial careering in the long nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 2006), p.24.

⁷⁴ N. Thrift, 'Transport and communication'.

further seven million.⁷⁵ Privileged post, or the practice of 'franking' letters by Members of Parliament and public officials was heavily abused, especially by those with banking or mercantile interests. Despite this, and the relatively high charges (until 1840) intended to raise government funds, postal services were used extensively to transfer information at a distance. For example, by 1838, almost forty-five million newspapers were handled by the Post Office.⁷⁶ Knowledge was therefore not confined to sites such as coffee houses or scientific laboratories, but travelled between places in the form of letters and printed texts. Correspondence moved private ideas into wider circulation, and transcended local and national boundaries.⁷⁷ Epistolary research has focused on the eighteenth century as a period for the construction of concepts of 'private' and 'public' space.⁷⁸ However, even the association of letters with the 'private' is problematic, as familial letters were frequently read aloud.

The exchange of information during this period helped to establish communities who held 'conversations at a distance' with one another. The appropriation of the state postal service by corresponding societies and the radical press, for example, helped to establish working class political agency and campaigns for parliamentary reform.⁷⁹ From the seventeenth

⁷⁵ D. Gregory, 'The friction of distance? Information circulation and the mails in early nineteenth century England' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 13, 2 (1987), 150-154.

⁷⁶ D. Gregory, 'The friction of distance'.

⁷⁷ D. Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: a cultural history of the French Enlightenment* (London, 1994); C.W.J. Withers, 'Writing in geography's history: Caledonia, networks of correspondence and geographical knowledge in the late Enlightenment', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 120:1-2 (2004), 33-45.

⁷⁸ E.H. Cook, *Epistolary bodies: gender and genre in the eighteenth century republic of letters* (Stanford CA, 1996).

⁷⁹ D. Gregory, 'The friction of distance'; G. Laugero, 'Infrastructures of Enlightenment: roadmaking, the public sphere and the emergence of literature' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29 (1995) 45-67.

century, letters were associated with transparency, directness and sociability, and as such were crucial in the dissemination of scientific knowledge. Correspondence with the Royal Society enabled those at a geographical distance from London to participate in scientific experimentation and discussion.⁸⁰ International exchanges established institutional authority for the Royal Society in the eighteenth century as it functioned as a 'clearing-house' for natural knowledge and a review body for scientific reports.⁸¹ Letter writing was therefore both an accumulation and a dissemination of knowledge.

However, letter writing as a methodology for the accumulation of scientific knowledge was troubling because while it offered nuggets of knowledge from correspondents, acceptance of a letter's content relied on its author's credibility. Steven Shapin has examined the role of trust in science and the association of trustworthiness with gentlemen.⁸² Social relations between correspondents were concerned with social and moral status and authority.⁸³ For example, concerned with credibility, the author George Chalmer restricted his geographical enquiries to public educated figures such as ministers of the Church of Scotland and

⁸⁰ A. Rusnook, 'Correspondence networks and the Royal Society, 1700-1750' *British Journal of the History of Science* 32:2, 113 (1999) 155-169.

⁸¹ M.B. Hall, 'Oldenburg and the art of scientific communication' *British Journal for the History of Science* 2, (1965) 277-290; D.S. Lux and H.J. Cook, 'Closed circles or open networks?: communicating at a distance during the scientific revolution' *History of Science*, 36:2, 112 (1998), 179-211; A. Rusnook, 'Correspondence networks'.

⁸² S. Shapin, *A social history of truth: civility and science in seventeenth century England* (Chicago, 1994); 'The Image of the Man of Science', in R.S. Porter, (ed.) *The Cambridge history of science vol. 4: eighteenth century science* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 159-83.

⁸³ A. Secord, 'Corresponding interests: artisans and gentlemen in 19th century natural history' *British Journal of the History of Science* 27:4, 95 (1994), 383-408; S. Whyman, 'Paper visits': the post-Restoration letter as seen through the Verney family archive', in: R. Earle, (ed.) *Epistolary selves. letters and letter-writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999), pp.15-36.

landowners. Chalmer's London residence was, according to Charles Withers, a 'centre of calculation' for co-ordinating networks of correspondence like that of Joseph Banks.⁸⁴

Whilst eighteenth century correspondence networks were more participatory than earlier, they were not yet the 'more fluid networks of professionals and amateurs of the more democratic nineteenth century'.⁸⁵ This increased flexibility is illustrated by Anne Secord's work on the correspondence of artisans and gentlemen in the collection of naturalist information and specimens. Here, personal contact, friendship groups, the employment of travelling collectors, and professional university posts established networks of trust.⁸⁶

Epistolary research has examined the letter as a site of self-expression, introspection and even self-creation. However, even 'impersonal' 'business' letters can reveal narratives of identity and trustworthiness.⁸⁷ Research has demonstrated that artisans, merchants, professionals and many others used letters to construct 'plausible selves' in order to develop professional and commercial networks.⁸⁸ Rhetoric was not a stylistic 'extra' tacked onto the scientific content of a letter, but the content itself. For example, even a prosaic letter of credit reveals networks of exchange and a demonstration of a trustworthy character.⁸⁹ If

⁸⁴ C.W.J. Withers, 'Writing in geography's history'; D. Miller, 'Joseph Banks, Empire and 'centres of calculation' in late Hanoverian London' in D. Miller and P.H. Reill, (eds.) *Visions of Empire: voyages, botany and representations* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 21-37.

⁸⁵ A. Rusnook, 'Correspondence networks', p. 168.

⁸⁶ A. Secord, 'Corresponding interests'.

⁸⁷ R. Earle (ed.), *Epistolary selves: letters and letter-writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999).

⁸⁸ A. Secord, 'Corresponding interests'; T.L. Ditz, 'Formative ventures: eighteenth century commercial letters and the articulation of experience' in R. Earle, (ed.) *Epistolary selves*, pp.59-78; S. Daniels, *Humphry Repton*; J. Stobart, 'Personal and commercial networks in an English port: Chester in the early eighteenth century' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30 (2004), 277-293.

⁸⁹ T.L. Ditz, 'Formative ventures'.

correspondence demonstrated the rhetoric of authenticity and credibility, published texts by authors who collected information from such sources did not reveal this to the final audience.⁹⁰

Letters are not unmediated historical artefacts, and letter writing must be understood as a complex social practice incorporating texts, participants, activities and artefacts.⁹¹ Charles Withers emphasises that letters have a geographical, as well as an historical context to them; concerning where letters were written, how they travelled over space, and how their audience received them.⁹² Although frequently undervalued, letters form 'the hidden underpinnings' of much historical research, offering quotations, content, and meaning.⁹³

Current literature on correspondence networks have been particularly valuable to this study, in which I attempt to trace diverse networks of correspondence through which ideas of estate management and improvement travelled between professionals and their employers, and between individuals and sites of knowledge formation, such as the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (hereafter RSA) and the Board of Agriculture. How did letters reinforce professional reputations, or encourage aristocratic patronage? Letters, surveys and reports, when combined with printed publications by professionals, and our brief knowledge of their biographies, enable us to consider the

⁹⁰ A. Secord, 'Corresponding interests'; C.W.J. Withers, 'Writing in geography's history'.

⁹¹ D. Barton and N. Hall (eds.) *Letter writing as a social practice* (Amsterdam, 1999), p. 6.

⁹² C.W.J. Withers, 'Writing in geography's history'.

⁹³ R. Earle (ed.), *Epistolary selves*, p.1.

importance of social connections such as mutual membership of learned societies.

Furthermore, to what extent did publications by professionals such as Nathaniel Kent or

Arthur Young influence those who employed them, and the work carried out in practice?

These questions will be addressed further in chapters six, eight and nine of the thesis.

2.7 Landscape and Cultural Geography

The study of cultural landscapes has long been a part of Cultural Geography. Landscape research had its origins in Sauerian studies, as well as the influential work of J.B. Jackson and W.G. Hoskins who read landscapes as accumulations of history and meaning to be interpreted as a symbolic code.⁹⁴ Cultural geographers have also been interested in how people make sense of the world. Research on landscape in cultural geography has emphasised the role of language and representation in the production of culture, drawing on art history, cultural materialism and literary theory. The landscape research of new cultural geography emphasised the symbolic qualities of landscape, arguing that 'a landscape is a cultural image' that can have simultaneous different readings.⁹⁵ Marxist readings of landscape have been influential in cultural geography, and have been used to demonstrate

⁹⁴ W.G. Hoskins, *The making of the English landscape* (London, 1955); D. Meinig, ed. *The interpretation of ordinary landscapes: geographical essays* (Oxford, 1979), p.236.

⁹⁵ D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, *The iconography of landscape: essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments* (Cambridge, 1988); D. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* 2nd Edition (London,1998), p.123; J.S. Duncan, *The city as text: the politics of landscape interpretation in the Kandy Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1990).

that landscape is a 'way of seeing' that is historically specific and bound into class relations; a gaze which helps to make sense of a particular relationship between society and land.⁹⁶

Cultural and historical geographies of the English landed estate have focused on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and have recently explored the relationship between estate and empire, and the interconnections between landscapes and memory.⁹⁷ This thesis will interpret key episodes in the estate archive utilising a 'landscape' approach. A symbolic or iconographic approach to landscape recognises explicitly that there is a politics to representation.⁹⁸ In this study, landscape also provides a geographical framework for interpreting both estate improvement, and the relationships of the people involved. The concept of an 'estate landscape' is used to draw together the dispersed Egremont estates in order to better understand the management structures of these estates, and how they relate to the home estate at Petworth.

Performance and practice have been presented as alternative to representation, and demonstrate a move away from textual and visual interpretations. Geographical research on performance examines how social space is experienced bodily, for example through

⁹⁶ J. Berger, *Ways of seeing* (London,1972); G. Rose, 'Just how, exactly, is geography visual?' *Antipode* 35 (2003), 212-221.

⁹⁷ D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), *The iconography of landscape*; S. Seymour *Eighteenth century parkland improvement on the Dukeries' estates of north Nottinghamshire*. Unpublished PhD thesis (University of Nottingham, 1988); S. Daniels and S. Seymour, 'landscape design'; B. Short and J. Godfrey, 'The Outhwaite controversy': A micro-history of the Edwardian land campaign' *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2007), 45-71; S. Seymour, S. Daniels and C. Watkins 'Estate and empire'; S. Tachibana, S. Daniels and C. Watkins, 'Japanese gardens in Edwardian Britain: landscape and transculturation' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30,2 (2004), 364-394.

⁹⁸ S. Seymour, 'Historical geographies of landscape'.

Deleuzian ideas of movement and flow.⁹⁹ Criticisms of new cultural geography's engagement with landscape as reinforcing the very systems of power that practices of resistance are thought to undermine have led to an 'animated perspective' to landscape.¹⁰⁰ This examines everyday representations and practices that may be an alternative to the tension between hegemonic and contested readings of landscape, although it is not particularly useful to historical geographers. Hayden Lorimer's suggestion that the insights from the non-representational debate be combined with earlier ideas to form a 'more-than-representational' approach offers some hope, with a recognition that representation, as well as practice remains important.¹⁰¹

The concept of performance is an appropriate one for understanding cultures of improvement. William Marshall claimed that '[a]ll rural operations are more or less public, - are, as it were performed on a stage; - and spectators fail to criticise'.¹⁰² While Marshall meant that inadequate improvements were an obvious source of criticism for some landowners, his metaphor is nonetheless revealing, and suggests that cultures of improvement can be interpreted as theatre on a public stage of Enlightenment, progress and paternalism. Similarly, E.P. Thompson presented a theatrical model of society and saw the

⁹⁹ N. Thrift, "Non-representational theory" in R.J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt and M. Watts (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford, 2000); N. Thrift and J.D. Dewsbury, 'Dead geographies –and how to make them live' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 184 (2000), 411-432.

¹⁰⁰ M. Rose, 'Seductions of resistance: power, politics and a performance style of systems' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20, 4 (2002), 383-400, p.383 and 388.

¹⁰¹ H. Lorimer, 'Cultural geography: the busyness of being 'more-than-representational'' *Progress in Human Geography* 29,1 (2005), 83-94, p.84; P. Cloke and O. Jones, 'Dwelling, place, and landscape: an orchard in Somerset', *Environment and Planning A* 33(2001), 649-666, p.662.

¹⁰² W. Marshall, *On the landed property of England* (London, 1804), p.327.

participants as actors in theatre and counter-theatre of social hierarchies.¹⁰³ While the thesis does not engage directly with [working] class relations in Thompson's sense, performance is broader than the theatrical, being not restricted to conscious ritual actions. An awareness of the public and thus performative nature of the management of the Egremont estates is useful in interpreting the actions of both Egremont and those members of the middle stratum of rural professional society who acted on his behalf.

Nevertheless, this thesis uses the term 'status' rather than 'class' when examining the developing rural professions. As John Barrell has argued, these rural professionals were not a 'class' in the usual sense, having nothing more in common than that they were all members of professions, and may have shared a progressive attitude to agriculture and a set of attitudes to land.¹⁰⁴ Achieved status acknowledges the skill and knowledge that an individual acquires through their profession; as well as the perceived social status or prestige attached to that position.

¹⁰³ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963); E.P. Thompson, *Customs in common: studies in traditional popular culture* (New York, 1993).

¹⁰⁴ J. Barrell, *The idea of landscape*, p. 64

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH SOURCES AND METHODS

3.1 Power, the writing of History and life stories

The archival documents examined in this study were written to support and reproduce an elite institution, and to reinforce social relations based on support for this institution. It is clear, then, that theories of power and technologies of control are valuable concepts for this research. Foucauldian concepts are utilised by Chris Philo in his examination of geographies of improvement and the Edinburgh landscape of Enlightenment.¹⁰⁵ As Daniels, Seymour and Watkins suggest, Joseph Banks' estate office at Revesby was 'a model alliance of power and knowledge'.¹⁰⁶ The formation of archives is a characteristic of modernity that emphasized the values of ordered, systematic knowledge and the scientific search for truth and classification.¹⁰⁷

Writing history is inevitably a political and creative process, consisting of a piecing together of a narrative from surviving fragments of the past.¹⁰⁸ Postmodern and poststructuralist historiography has stressed the selectivity of historical representation. Postmodernist perspectives even question the certainty of 'facts' and claim that historical narratives are

¹⁰⁵ C. Philo 'Edinburgh, Enlightenment and the geographies of unreason' in D.N. Livingstone and C.W.J. Withers (eds.), *Geography, Enlightenment and Improvement* (Chicago, 1999), p.372-398.

¹⁰⁶ S. Daniels, S. Seymour and C. Watkins, 'Enlightenment, improvement'.

¹⁰⁷ M. Foucault, *The Foucault reader*, edited by P. Rabinow (Harmondsworth, 1986); K. Hannam, 'Using archives' and 'Coping with archival and textual data', in P. Shurmer-Smith (ed.) *Doing Cultural Geographies* (London, 2002).

¹⁰⁸ E. Somekawa and E.A. Smith, 'Theorizing the writing of history, or 'I can't think why it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention.' *Journal of Social History* 22 (1988), 67-88.

allegories or substitutions for the past.¹⁰⁹ Although this leads us to an impasse, it is perhaps valuable to take from these, and feminist perspectives, a recognition of the role of the researcher in structuring research and historical narratives. Derek Gregory and others have criticised the traditional trope of narrative found in historical geography because of the sense of order and closure that it imparts, and have called for narratives that celebrate the complexity and openness of day to day lives of particular people in particular places.¹¹⁰ Local case studies, however, may avoid making generalisations that reduce the comparability of any conclusions.

As well as being a product of the present, interpretations are also the product of a place; of analytic procedures and the construction of a text that has led to a reliance on authoritative texts, reproducing social hegemony.¹¹¹ Surviving sources describe only a fraction of what took place, and reflect the attitudes of those (usually men) who constructed them.

Experiments with telling stories and with life-histories have recognised the selectivity of historical representation and narration, and seek to move beyond the potential 'despair of relativism'.¹¹² Stories, according to George Revill and Susanne Seymour, reproduce the

¹⁰⁹ D. Wishart, 'The selectivity of historical representation', *Journal of Historical Geography* 23,3 (1997), 111-118.

¹¹⁰ D. Gregory and A.R.H Baker (eds.), *Explorations in historical geography: interpretative essays* (Cambridge, 1984); T.J. Barnes and J.S. Duncan (eds.), *Writing worlds: discourse, texts and metaphors in the representation of landscape* (London, 1992).

¹¹¹ J. Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: interpretation and its other* (Cambridge, 1995).

¹¹² D. Wishart, 'The selectivity of historical representation', p. 111; G. Revill and S. Seymour, 'Telling stories: story telling as a textual strategy' in A. Hughes, C. Morris and S. Seymour (eds.) *Ethnography and rural research* (Cheltenham, 2000), pp.136-157. S. Daniels and C. Nash, 'Lifepaths: geography and biography' *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, 3 (2004), 449-458; C. Hall, 'Imperial careering at home: Harriet Martineau on Empire' in D. Lambert and A. Lester, (eds.) *Colonial Lives*, pp335-359.

narrative flow of everyday life. They also emphasise the spatiality of knowledge, and the relationship between power and knowledge. For Stephen Daniels and Catherine Nash, the tracing of life histories can be seen as a method of social investigation and reform. For Catherine Hall, 'a grasp of the individual and the subjective, how histories were lived, is as central to our understanding of the past as are larger-scale narratives'.¹¹³ As has been suggested, networks are best understood through real people. In this study I 'tell stories' of particular individuals, and particular episodes in space and time in order to understand the processes of continuity and change more widely. Such episodes include the search for coal at Spofforth (chapter nine), or the purchase of land in South Australia (chapter seven).

3.2 A note on time period and research limitations

The focus of this thesis is to document some highly significant and large-scale schemes of land improvement, and to explore the relationships between the various agents that influenced the management and potential 'improvement' of these landscapes. In particular, it considers the Earl of Egremont's patronage of land agents, surveyors, engineers and agricultural advisors from the 1770s until his death in 1837. I have chosen the 1770s for the following reasons. Although Egremont inherited the estate in 1763 aged 11, during the 1770s a new agent was appointed at Petworth, Egremont inherited the Irish estates, and during the 1780s he moved to Petworth from London (see chapter four). The end date of the study is

¹¹³ C. Hall, 'Imperial careering at home: Harriet Martineau on Empire', in D. Lambert and A. Lester (eds.) *Colonial lives across the British Empire: imperial careering in the long nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 2006), p.335.

less clear cut. For the material on Sussex and Yorkshire, my research effectively ends in the early 1840s, as the third Earl's influence came to an end. However, I have chosen to include the case of Australian land speculation (1838-1864) by Egremont's heir Colonel Wyndham, despite not being contemporaneous with earlier research in other chapters, as it provides an insight into the exportation of ideas of 'improvement' to British colonies in the mid nineteenth century.

For reasons of space and time, this study is also limited geographically, and focuses on key episodes in estate improvement in Sussex and Yorkshire, with the additional comparison of Australia. The disadvantage of such extensive archives is the difficulty to cover and to interpret these vast archives in a meaningful way. A geographically limited study provides more room for discussion of the significance of these landscape changes, although many more examples could be found in the archive. A more exhaustive look at the Cumberland estates, together with the Irish 'improvements' and in particular the role of the Cumbrian and Irish land agents would make a fascinating extension to this thesis, as would further research on the Orchard Wyndham estates in Somerset and Devon.

3.3 Archives

The primary source for this research is the Petworth House Archives, including accounts, correspondence, diaries, memoranda, rentals, maps, surveys and paintings. This is the

largest private collection in the care of West Sussex Records Office in Chichester (although still held at Petworth) and is renowned for its extent and survival. The Petworth estate was chosen due to the prominence of the third Earl in debates regarding agricultural improvement, the quality of the estate archives, and the remarkable absence of work on the management of the Petworth estate. The importance placed on estate improvement at Petworth probably accounts for the exceptional range and volume of sources available, which would most likely be absent from an estate that did not consider agricultural improvement to be important. The archives are so dense that no definitive history of Petworth has been written in the Victoria County History series, and there remains a considerable amount of material to be catalogued. As with many great estate archives, the Petworth House Archives (hereafter PHA) contains a large amount of estate administration papers, many of which have not previously been examined in detail, which provide a valuable resource for understanding local historical processes and landscape changes.

The second major source for this research is the Leconfield archive, held in Cockermouth Castle, which was consulted at Whitehaven Record Office in Cumbria, containing similar material relating to the management of the northern estate owned by the Wyndhams. The Leconfield documents contain extensive uncatalogued information on estate management and mineral workings as well as some later records on the Yorkshire estates.¹¹⁴ Material

¹¹⁴ Whitehaven RO, **Leconfield archives**. For example, **DLEC 21** Mineral report 1832. Messrs Peile's report on collieries, iron ore and lead mines owned by Egremont in Cumberland, including sketches. Material on the Yorkshire estates included correspondence between the agent for the northern estates,

examined from this archive included eighteenth and nineteenth-century maps and surveys of the Cumberland estates, a selection of colliery accounts, enclosure papers and agents' correspondence. Manuscript sources on the Orchard Wyndham estate in Somerset, held at Taunton Record Office, were also briefly examined to gain a fuller picture of the Egremont estate.¹¹⁵ Research on the Yorkshire estates utilised material found in the Cumberland archives combined with Yorkshire material in the archives at Petworth. A thorough search on available material on these estates did not reveal extensive material based in any Yorkshire archives, although site visits to Leconfield near Beverley and to Spofforth near Wetherby and others provided valuable understandings of the landscape changes here.

The Holland House manuscripts at the British Library provided a wealth of personal detail in the 172 letters from Lord Egremont to the third Baron Holland (1773-1840) and his wife Elizabeth Vassal (1771-1845) between 1802 and 1836, and proved particularly valuable due to the absence of personal correspondence from Egremont in the Petworth House Archives.¹¹⁶ Other manuscripts consulted at the British Library included correspondence with Robert Peel and Arthur Young.¹¹⁷ An examination of the personal bank accounts of Egremont and others connected to the estate and Egremont family in the Drummonds Bank

William Clutton and J.M. Brydone at Petworth on the drainage at Wressle (East Riding) in the late 1840s. **Leconfield, DLEC Y7.6.9a-22a.**

¹¹⁵ Taunton RO, Orchard Wyndham archives, including material on Somerset and Wiltshire. For example, **Orchard Wyndham Box 101, DD\WY/101** Estate accounts.

¹¹⁶ London, British Library, **Add Ms 51725** Holland House Papers, correspondence with Lord Holland (1802-1836).

¹¹⁷ London, British Library, **Add Ms. 40401, f.269, 283, 287** (1830). Correspondence from Egremont to Robert Peel. Several other letters from Colonel Wyndham to Peel can also be found in this correspondence, 1841-1846. In particular, see **Add Ms 40529, f.175-184** (1843) regarding Ireland. For Egremont's correspondence with Arthur Young: London, BL, **Add. Ms. 35127** and **35128**; see also **WSRO, PHA 91.**

Archives in London enabled some understanding of personal finances to complement estate account records.¹¹⁸ Printed contemporary correspondence and agricultural literature was also consulted for this study (see bibliography for pre 1900 publications).

Most interesting, perhaps, of the smaller archive collections consulted was the correspondence from and to the geologist William Smith in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.¹¹⁹ Other material consulted included correspondence (to and from Egremont) with the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) in London, correspondence regarding John Claridge at Surrey History Centre and some papers of the old Board of Agriculture (1793-1822) at the Museum of English Rural Life.¹²⁰

Documents were selected from the respective archive catalogues due to the relevance of their content relating to estate management and improvement on the different estates during the given time period (1770 to 1860). Documents created by key figures such as land agents, surveyors, or other professionals were chosen, as was correspondence relating to

¹¹⁸ Drummonds has an impressive extant archive. Annual customer ledgers have been microfilmed up until 1815, and can be viewed at the Royal Bank of Scotland London archives in Islington. From the records it appears that Egremont closed his private account with Drummonds in 1784, moving his money to Pybus and Company. London, Royal Bank of Scotland, **Drummonds Bank London Customer Account Ledger**; accounts of 2nd and 3rd earls of Egremont; Count von Bruhl and Alicia Maria Wyndham, James Upton Tripp and William Tyler.

¹¹⁹ Oxford, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, **William Smith archive** Boxes 1, 6, 8 and 16.

¹²⁰ London, **Royal Society of Arts PR/MC/101/10/1541** (1796); **RSA PR/MC/103/10/434** (1798); **RSA PR/MC/103/10/438** (1798) Letters to Samuel More regarding Mrs Wyndham's medal, possible uses for lamb skins, and growing opium. Woking, **Surrey History Centre, 3677** Pinder Simpson and John Simpson, Solicitors of Burlington st, London: Correspondence and papers relating to the Tiler family and the Fletcher family, 1590-1856. 3677/2/1-24 Letters from Ann Tiler to Mrs Tiler, (1814-1824) and **3677/3/139-144 and 163** Letters received by Ann Tiler (1814-1827). Ann Tiler was a governess in the Claridge household. Reading, **MERL** Register of letters for the Old Board of Agriculture 1793-1822.

agriculture, mining, drainage, enclosure, navigation or turnpike construction. Letters from important correspondents including Arthur Young, Charlotte Smith and Sir Joseph Banks were also selected. Documents in the Petworth archives relating to estates in Yorkshire, Cumberland, Ireland, and Australia in the period were examined.

The bulk of the selected material is from the Petworth archives due to the excellent collection there, and the centrality of this estate in the management of the wider estate during the research period. Documents from archives at Whitehaven, as well as additional manuscripts from London are intended to supplement the Petworth material, and provide a comparative framework. While selecting a smaller amount of material made from archive catalogues for Whitehaven, I attempted to make these samples representative of their archives. It is important to note here that most of the archives (with the exception of the British Library manuscripts) consulted did not contain folio references. I have attempted to identify documents with their date, summary of content, and the name of correspondents.

3.4 Document analysis

This study employed quantitative and qualitative data and analysis to examine how the Petworth landscape was viewed, experienced and constructed by social actors.¹²¹ Qualitative research recognises the need for an in-depth approach, an interpretation of

¹²¹ S. Smith, 'Qualitative methods' in R.J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt and M. Watts (eds) *The dictionary of human geography*, 4th edn (Oxford, 2000), pp.660-662.

positionality and power relations, and a contextual and interpretative understanding of estate landscapes.¹²² It is characterised by working scepticism; a commitment to close scrutiny of data; a focus on process; an appreciation for subjectivity and a tolerance for complexity.¹²³ Quantitative data analysis was used to a limited extent, particularly in assessing the impact of drainage improvements in chapter six, by the comparison of rental and survey data.

The study combined aspects of grounded theory and textual analysis in order to provide theoretically grounded and politically aware research. Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing ideas that are grounded in data which is systematically gathered and analysed.¹²⁴ In this approach, theory evolves during research through continuous comparisons and analysis. The development of theory through its interaction with the data is crucial to this thesis due to the iterative and unpredictable nature of archival research. Grounded theory involves asking generative concept-related questions, theoretical sampling and systematic coding procedures. It seeks multiple perspectives and interpretations and plausible explanations for data patterns that are the product of the data.¹²⁵

Textual analysis involves a close reading of texts, and 'mediation between the frames of reference of the researcher and those who produced the text'.¹²⁶ The researcher attempts to

¹²² M. Limb and C. Dwyer, *Qualitative methods for geographers: issues and debates* (London, 2001), p6.

¹²³ A. Bryman and R.G. Burgess (eds.), *Qualitative research* (London, 1999).

¹²⁴ A. Strauss and J. Corbin, 'Grounded theory methodology: an overview' in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 273-285, at p.273.

¹²⁵ A. Strauss and J. Corbin, 'Grounded theory'; A. Bryman and R.G. Burgess, *Qualitative research*.

¹²⁶ J. Scott, *A matter of record: documentary sources in social research* (Cambridge, 1990), p.31.

find meanings by identifying the system of rules that structure the construction of the text.¹²⁷

This is achieved through an assessment of language, authorship and intertextuality. It is important to consider the production of the text and its intended uses, and the received content constructed by its audience. Ultimately, the interpretation of the meaning will derive from the researcher's judgement that this interpretation 'makes sense' given their understanding of the author's situation and intentions.¹²⁸ Duncan and Ley argue that the historical mind regards the 'production of knowledge as a dialogue between an active subject in the form of the individuality of the scholar and an external reality, but a reality not necessarily possessed of a prior order or pattern'.¹²⁹ The combination of methodological and theoretical approaches in this research is an attempt to examine texts with a theoretically open yet critical perspective. However, the indiscriminate nature of the survival of historical documents and document analysis mean that interpretation will always be partial and positioned, providing a 'tentative and provisional judgement' of the evidence.¹³⁰

Transcripts of the documents were examined using textual and visual analysis techniques. As suggested by the analysis of correspondence networks (chapter 2.6, above), letters contain valuable material and are themselves evidence of the material connections between individuals and institutions. The Petworth documents examined were found to be in remarkably good condition, and often survive almost complete. However, even in a uniform

¹²⁷ K. Hogart, L. Lees and A. Davies, *Researching human geography* (London, 2002).

¹²⁸ J. Scott, *A matter of record*, p.32.

¹²⁹ J. Duncan and D. Ley (eds.), *Place/Culture/Representation* (London, 1993), p.26

¹³⁰ J. Scott, *A matter of record*, p.35.

archive, assessments must be made regarding their continuity, completeness, and reliability. The position and purpose of different archive types, and the silences of sources such as maps, must be also considered. The limitations of reliance on an 'elite' archive can be mitigated by the use of multiple archives, a commitment to examine countervailing accounts, and to test interpretations against others. Despite the relatively unsystematic nature of manuscript selection in archival research, this work takes from grounded theory an emphasis on continuous comparisons and analysis that lead to theorisation.¹³¹ The development of theory through its interaction with the data is crucial to this thesis due to the iterative, and unpredictable nature of archival research.

¹³¹ A. Strauss and J. Corbin, 'Grounded theory', p.273.

CHAPTER FOUR:

EGREMONT, WYNDHAM AND THEIR ESTATES

Chapter four introduces the Egremont estates, and gives a brief biography of the third Earl (1751-1837), and his son Colonel George Wyndham (1787-1869). It then proceeds to examine Egremont's reputation as an agricultural improver.

4.1 The Egremont estates

George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont (1751-1837) owned over 110,000 acres in the West of England, Sussex, Cumberland, Yorkshire, and Ireland, with an estimated annual income of £100,000 (see Map one, below). Over 30,000 acres of this land was located near Petworth, situated on the River Rother in the south of the Low Weald in (West) Sussex, 40 miles south-west of London. The estate, home of the Percys of Northumberland from the twelfth century, and the site of seventeenth-century Petworth House, had a powerful influence on the agricultural landscape. Petworth was Egremont's main seat, primary residence and the central site from which the wider estate was managed during this period, which is known as the 'Golden Age' of Petworth due to the longevity and relative stability of the Egremont's control (1763-1837). Egremont undertook a vast programme of land

acquisition and rationalisation in Sussex through purchases, sales, exchange and enclosure.¹³²

FIGURE 2: MAP OF THE EGREMONT ESTATES IN ENGLISH COUNTIES, 1770-1860

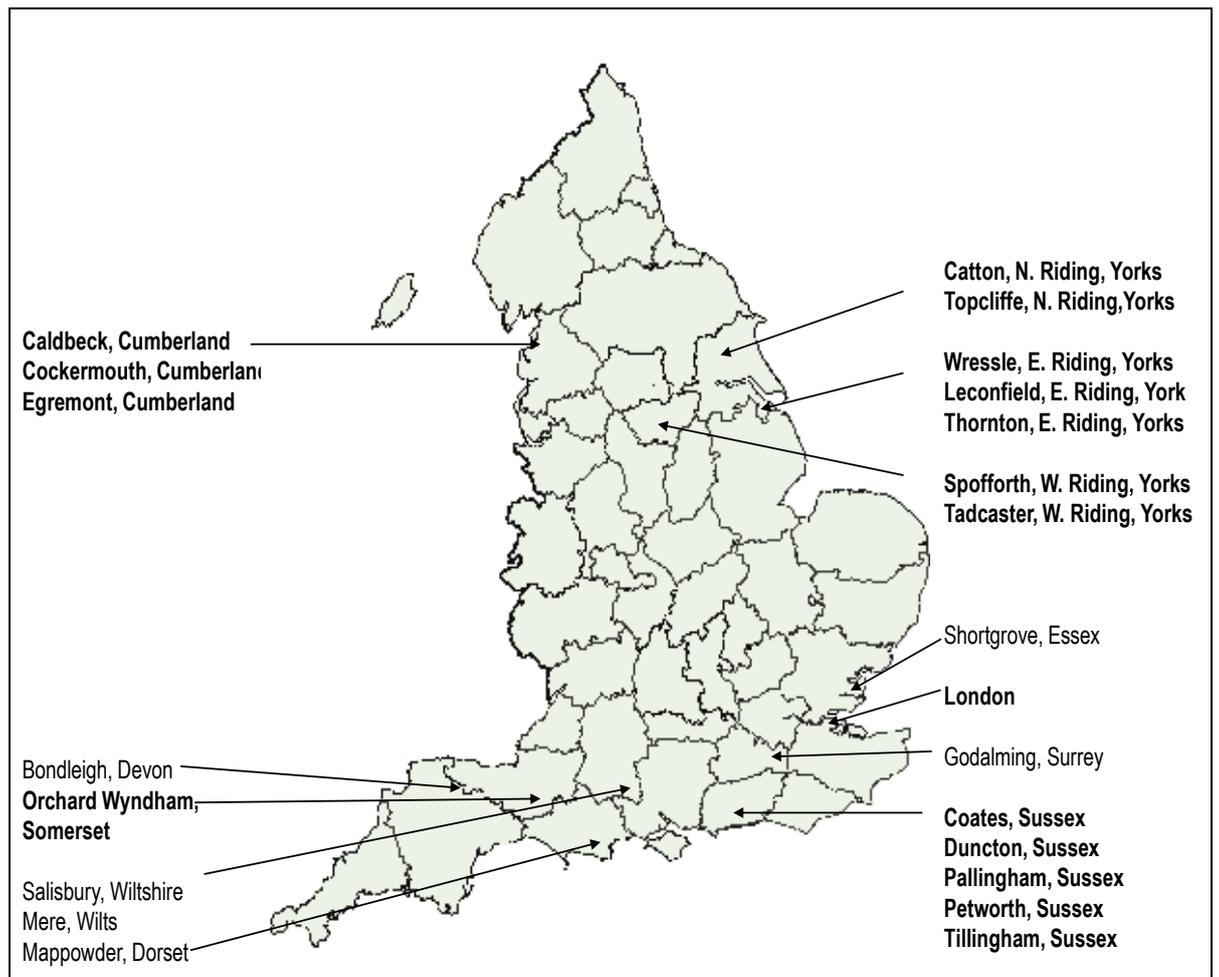


Table one below is a summary of the acreage values for the Egremont estate in the late nineteenth century, which gives some indication of their extent and relative value. The Sussex and Yorkshire estates by the 1870s were by far the most valuable, while the most extensive, in Ireland, held the lowest value per acre.

¹³² H.A. Wyndham, *A Family History* (London, 1950), p.300.

TABLE 1: ACREAGE VALUES FOR THE EGREMONT ESTATES (1873),

EXCLUDING SOMERSET¹³³

	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL	Value per acre
Sussex (West)	30,221	28 %	£ 0.98
Yorkshire (North, East and West)	24,773	23 %	£ 1.25
Cumberland	11,147	10 %	£ 0.60
Ireland (Clare, Limerick, Tipperary)	43,834	40 %	£ 0.47
TOTAL	109,975	100	

While the third Earl is known by historians primarily for his experiments in livestock breeding and the construction of canals in Sussex, he did not neglect the more profitable parts of his wider estate. This is particularly true for Egremont's lands in Yorkshire, consisting of 24,733 acres in Wressle and Leconfield (East Riding), Catton and Seamer (North Riding), and Spofforth and Tadcaster (West Riding).¹³⁴ The Yorkshire estates were part of the Percy

¹³³ These figures are calculated from acreage values from Bateman's *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1876, 1883) and from the *Return of Owners of Land* (1875). Lord Leconfield, as Egremont's heir, owned the quantities of land shown in the table. The figures do not include the Wyndham family's Somerset estates (of around 15,000 acres), which were inherited by Egremont's nephew, George Francis Wyndham (1786-845), fourth earl of Egremont, whose title became extinct on his death. The total acreage listed in the 1873 survey is 109,935, although the total used to calculate the percentage of total is the sum of the listed acreages, 114,975.

¹³⁴ The Yorkshire estate was situated mainly in the East Riding (54%), with less land in the North Riding (31%) and the West Riding (16%). It consisted of 24,733 acres, valued in 1873 at £31,019. Contemporary agricultural surveys for the East and North Ridings indicate that the estate lands were characterised by soils of 'fertile clayey loam' in the Cleveland (Seamer), Holderness (Leconfield) and

estates which the second Earl of Egremont inherited in 1750, and were inherited by the third Earl, together with the Sussex and Cumberland estates in 1763. These Yorkshire estates were extensively reorganised by the London surveyor firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce from 1796. Despite being an 'absentee' landlord, Egremont spent £26,000 between 1797 and 1812 on draining and fencing alone on this estate.¹³⁵ Egremont's investment in drainage, and in coal speculation in Yorkshire, are examined in chapter six and nine of this study.

The Egremont estate during the study period also consisted of land in Somerset and Devon, Cumberland and Ireland. The third Earl of Egremont was descended from Thomas Orchard who first obtained the family's lands at Orchard Wyndham, Williton in Somerset in 1287. In 1779, Egremont's guardians presented a bill in the House of Lords to partition the Wiltshire and Somerset estates.¹³⁶ The rental income for the Somerset estate in March 1783 was a moderate £5,611, and the estate around 15,000 acres.¹³⁷ However, there is a significant political connection between the Wyndham family and Somerset, which often provided members of the family with a position in Parliament. The Orchard Wyndham estate was inherited by Egremont's nephew, George Francis Wyndham (1786-1845), fourth Earl of Egremont, whose title became extinct on his death.

Howdenshire (Wressle) regions. H.E. Strickland, *A General View of the Agriculture of the East-Riding of Yorkshire* (1812, London); C. Howard, *Report of the Farming of the East-Riding of Yorkshire* (1848, York); J. Tuke, *General View of the Agriculture of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (1800, London). The Yorkshire rental was £19,443 in 1803, and in 1809 the Spofforth rental for this estate was £3,232. **WSRO, PHA 4111.**

¹³⁵ Wyndham, *A family history*.

¹³⁶ *Lords Journals*, 35 (1776-1779), p.666: 'An Act for confirming a partition of several estates in the counties of Wilts and Somerset, between the Hon Charles William Wyndham and other devisees of the Charles late earl of Egremont, deceased, and their issue, and Charles Marquis of Granby and Charlotte Countess of Aylesford...', 29 Mar 1779.

¹³⁷ **WSRO, PHA 2849**_Abstract of rents and profits of Egremont's Somerset estate, (1782-1819).

The Cumberland estate was situated in the parishes of Egremont and Caldbeck and the borough of Cockermouth and surrounds, and were passed on to Egremont's second son, General Sir Henry Wyndham (1790-1860), for a life interest. They returned to Colonel Wyndham (by now Lord Leconfield) in 1860. Egremont, unlike the Lowthers and Curwens did not work his own coal, but rented them out. From the Broughton colliery alone, rents rose from £1,000 per year in 1793 to £1,754 in 1809. In 1833 total rental income from the Bolton, Aspatria, Broughton, Greysouthern and Dean Collieries was £2,521, which compared favourably with that of the Curwen family, without capital expenditure or risk.¹³⁸

The Irish estates were inherited by Egremont in 1774 from his uncle, Percy Wyndham who had in turn inherited them from the Earl of Thomond on the condition that he assumed the name O'Brien – which Egremont subsequently did also. When Percy Wyndham inherited the Irish estates, they were encumbered by debts of over £100,000. When Egremont inherited the property, land worth £49,000 had already been sold towards liquidating this debt.¹³⁹ The Irish estates were part of the ancestral home of the earls of Thomond, situated principally in Counties Clare (84 percent of total) and Limerick, as well as Tipperary and Carlow and consisting of 44,500 acres. In 1876 Colonel Wyndham's son Henry, second Lord Leconfield was the largest landowner in Clare, owning approximately five per cent of the County, valued at £15,699. Nevertheless, more than half of the estate was outside the landlord's effective control and in the hands of tenants who sublet to cottiers at large profits. The estates appear

¹³⁸ O. Wood, *West Cumberland Coal*, p.146.

¹³⁹ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p. 255.

to have been primarily pastoral with some arable farming, although there is evidence of mining silver, lead and coal, the collection of seaweed and a small-scale flax industry.¹⁴⁰

Although there is little evidence to suggest that the Egremonts took much interest in their Clare estates until they were inherited by Colonel George Wyndham in 1837, the third Earl had initiated a set of surveys of the estates by Thomas Browne in 1777, and had undertaken significant estate rationalisation so that by the end of the eighteenth century yearly leases were removed, while the number of moribund holdings bringing in no return fell from twenty-six to fifteen.¹⁴¹ Colonel Wyndham (cr. Lord Leconfield 1859) visited his estates in 1838 and 1848, and had surveys drawn up by the agriculturalist J.F. Clark 1843, and 1849-1851, indicating a desire to 'improve' and consolidate the estates by both landowners.¹⁴² James Crowe of Ennis (not to be confused with the Essex surveyor James Crow mentioned in chapter five) was employed as agent to Egremont in Ireland from 1770, and was succeeded by his son Thomas Crowe in 1801. The family retained the position until 1873.¹⁴³ Considerable improvements undertaken by Colonel Wyndham and his agents at a time of great hardship in Ireland include drainage and road works, the removal of middlemen and regulation of leases; and the development of Model farms where pupils were given

¹⁴⁰ **WSRO, PHA 1716-1719** Copy letters to agents on the Irish estates (1806-1851); **PHA 1126- 1127** Memorandum books of instructions from Col. Wyndham (1838-1844); **PHA 11970-11971** Costs for flax mill (1849).

¹⁴¹ Thomas Browne (1702-1780), herald acted as a land surveyor for the 2nd Earl of Egremont, as well as for the Countess of Egremont during the 3rd earl's minority. A receipt for Thomas Browne's journey and survey of the Irish estates is dated 1777. **WSRO, PHA 13722 (1757); PHA 6617 (1756-1772); PHA 13723 (1777)**. H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.255.

¹⁴² **WSRO, PHA 11930-11944**, Estate Administration, Ireland. Reports by J.F. Clark on Col. Wyndham's Irish Estates (1843, 1849-1851).

¹⁴³ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.256. James Crowe of Ennis was agent for the Irish estates from 1770, and was succeeded by Thomas Crowe (1801), and by subsequent generations (often called Thomas) until 1873. Crowe received instructions regarding the Irish property in **WSRO, PHA 8621**.

accommodation and a small wage.¹⁴⁴ Wyndham and his former tutor the Reverend Thomas Sockett also oversaw the work of the Ennis Emigration Committee in assisting the emigration of 1,505 inhabitants of the Irish estates to Canada between 1839 and 1847.¹⁴⁵

In 1838 Colonel Wyndham purchased 960 acres of land in the province of South Australia at the cost of £1 an acre.¹⁴⁶ Chapter seven will examine this land speculation, the difficulties of estate management and land improvement overseas, as well as the limited assisted emigration to Australia.

4.2 George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont (1751-1837):

A biographical account to 1794

The baptism of George Wyndham, first son of Charles, second Earl of Egremont (1710-1763) and his wife Alicia Maria Carpenter (1729?-1794) was held on the ninth of January 1752, at the parliamentary church of St Margaret, Westminster.¹⁴⁷ King George II acted as sponsor to the three-week-old baby, and the event elicited an observation in the correspondence of Horace Walpole, who noted that the other sponsors were the Duchess

¹⁴⁴ **WSRO, PHA 355-356** Disbursements in Ireland (1819-1838); **WSRO, PHA 4472-4591** Estate Rentals (1810-1874); **WSRO, PHA 1126-1127** Memo books of instructions from Colonel Wyndham (1838-1844). Planned model farmsteads in Britain and Ireland were often designed by landowners on home farms or as exemplary tenant farms. See S. Wade Martins, *The English model farm* (Macclesfield, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ **WSRO, PHA 1052-1054** Papers concerning the Ennis Emigration Scheme (1839-1847).

¹⁴⁶ **WSRO, PHA 7917** Correspondence relating to purchase of land in South Australia by Col. Wyndham, (1838-1856).

¹⁴⁷ C. Rowell, 'Wyndham, George O'Brien, third earl of Egremont (1751-1837)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30141>].
H. M. Scott, 'Wyndham, Charles, second earl of Egremont (1710-1763)', *Oxford DNB*, (Oxford, 2004); online edn, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30139>].

Dowager of Somerset and “(if he is able to stand)”, the Earl of Granville.¹⁴⁸ While the selection of King George and the Earl of Granville may have been political, the inclusion of the Duchess of Somerset was a recognition of the connection that had recently provided this family with its wealth and status;¹⁴⁹ the sixth Duke of Somerset was Charles Wyndham’s maternal grandfather, and Wyndham had succeeded as Earl of Egremont and Baron Cockermouth from his uncle, the seventh Duke of Somerset, in 1750. Vast estates in Sussex, Yorkshire, Cumberland and the west of England accompanied these titles. On his death in 1763, the second Earl was believed to have left an annual income of £18,000 and a fortune of £170,000 in cash.

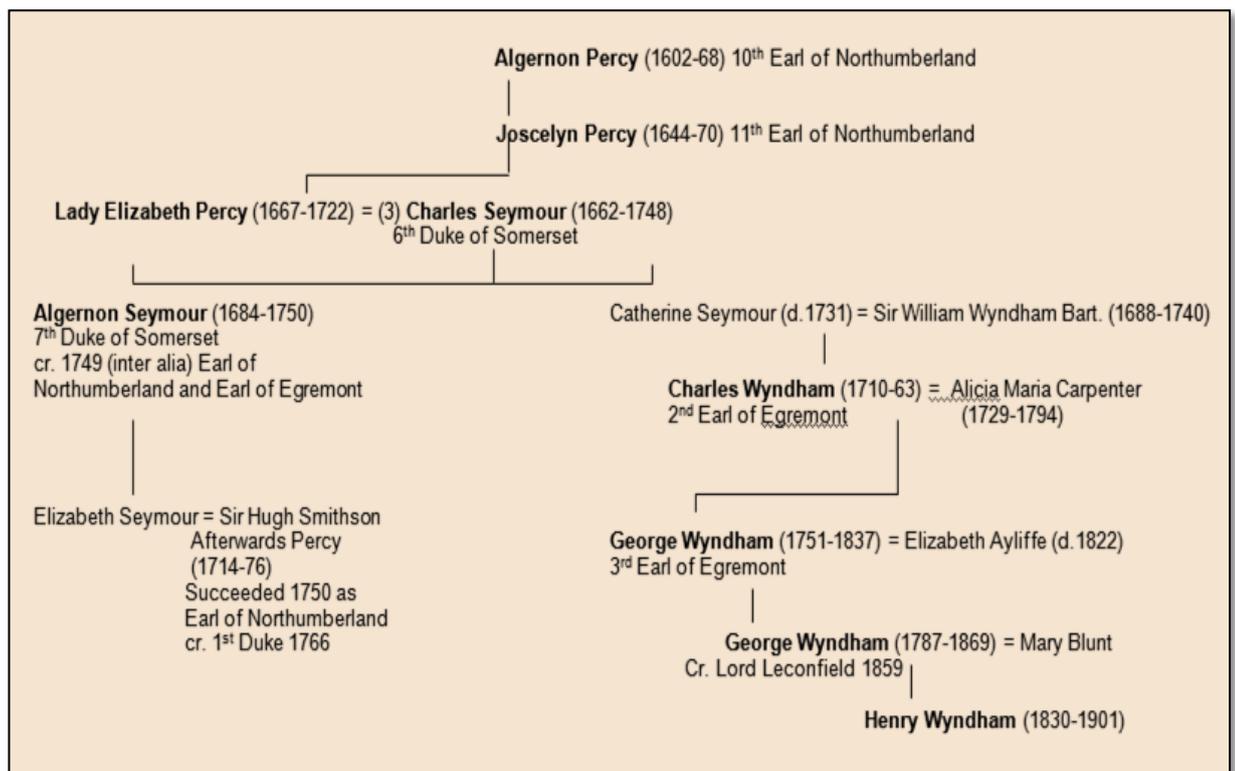
The celebration of George Wyndham’s baptism was a demonstration of the great political and social standing of his family. The child’s paternal grandfather, Sir William Wyndham (c.1688-1740), was a Tory opposition leader and Chancellor of the Exchequer who had been imprisoned in the Tower for his support of the Pretender in 1715. However, George’s father, despite being the son of a Jacobite, successfully integrated himself into the Hanoverian establishment, supporting the Whig Government and Earl Granville. While Charles

¹⁴⁸ Horace Walpole (1717-1797) to George Montagu, Thurs 9 Jan 1752. Walpole suggests that the Earl of Granville (John Carteret, 1690-1763) may have on occasion been unreliably drunk. However, Granville was also an influential elder statesman and a distant relative; probably the reason that Charles Egremont picked him as sponsor for his son. W.S. Lewis et al. (eds), *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole’s correspondence*, 48 vols. (1937–83) *Vol. 9. Montagu I. 1736-1761*. (New Haven, 1937-1983), p. 125.

¹⁴⁹ At the time of George Wyndham’s baptism, there were two dowager duchesses of Somerset, Lady Charlotte Finch (d.1773), who married Charles 6th Duke of Somerset (1662-1748) in his sixties; and Frances Thynne (1699-1754) who married his son Algernon Seymour, Earl of Hertford and 7th duke of Somerset (1684-1750) in 1715. The latter is the more likely, as it was by her husband’s death that the Egremont estates and title were passed to Charles Wyndham. She had also been a lady of the bedchamber to the princess of Wales (later Queen Caroline), and was a poet and evangelical Christian. R. O. Bucholz, ‘Seymour, Charles, sixth duke of Somerset (1662–1748)’, *Oxford DNB*, (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25158>].; J. Sambrook, ‘Seymour , Frances, duchess of Somerset (1699–1754)’, *Oxford DNB*, (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53787>].

Wyndham had limited political abilities, the marriage of his sister Elizabeth Wyndham to George Grenville (1712-1770) in 1749 established links with Lord Temple, and, more distantly, with William Pitt, and propelled Egremont into higher political spheres: entering the Lords, acting as Lord Lieutenant for both Sussex and Cumberland, and gaining ministerial responsibility. In 1761 Charles was made Secretary of State for the Southern Department, a position he retained until his sudden death in 1763.

FIGURE 3: WYNDHAM FAMILY TREE c.1600-1900, IDENTIFYING OWNERS OF PETWORTH IN BOLD



George Wyndham's mother, Alicia Maria, also had a political inheritance. A renowned beauty, and sister to the first Earl of Tyrconnel, she was the daughter of Baron Carpenter (1695-1749), M.P. and Fellow of the Royal Society, whose own father had been Governor of Minorca and Commander in Chief in Scotland. Reflecting her husband's rise in politics, Alicia was made lady of the bedchamber in 1761. Together with her brother-in-law the Earl of Thomond, she retained control over the Egremont estates during her son's minority, and must have had a significant influence on George and his siblings' childhood.¹⁵⁰

Between the ages of six and eight, George Wyndham (styled Lord Cockermouth) was educated at the exclusive Pampellone's school run by a Frenchman of that name in Wandsworth, London, where his classmates included Charles James Fox, Lord Ilchester, the Duke of Leinster and other aristocratic children, as well as Coke of Norfolk.¹⁵¹ Reminiscing over sixty years later, Egremont did not remember whether his cousins the Grenvilles were at the school, as he "saw so much of them in early youth that I do not distinguish between home and school", indicating the intimacy between these two political families.¹⁵² Wyndham attended Westminster school with similarly distinguished classmates, and was there when

¹⁵⁰ George's guardians included his mother, and her brother-in-law, Percy Wyndham O'Brien, Earl of Thomond (c.1723-1774). An Act to empower the guardians of George Earl of Egremont to make leases on his estate was passed in 1764 (4 Geo. 3, c.69).

¹⁵¹ L.G. Mitchell, 1997 *Charles James Fox* (London, 1997), p.6; A.M.W. Stirling, *Coke of Norfolk and his friends. The life of Thomas William Coke, first earl of Leicester of Holkham* (London, 1912), p.48.

¹⁵² **London, BL Add Ms. 47591, f.38** Lord Egremont to Lord Holland, 26 Jan 1820. George Grenville and his wife Elizabeth Wyndham had four sons and five daughters. The fourth son, William Wyndham Grenville, became Lord Grenville in 1790 and prime minister in 1806. J.V. Beckett and P.D.G. Thomas, 'Grenville, George (1712-1770)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford,2004); online edn, 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11489>].

George III became King.¹⁵³ At the age of eleven, on the sudden death of his father, he succeeded as third Earl of Egremont and baron Cockermouth, with its extensive estates, property (centred on Petworth House) and a vast collection of pictures and sculpture collected there. Four years later, Egremont left Westminster school and matriculated into Christ Church Oxford (1767), his father's college, and his father's before that. In the same year, Egremont's mother married Hans Moritz, Count von Brühl, the foreign minister from the Elector of Saxony.¹⁵⁴ Von Brühl shared an interest in science and technology with his stepson, and left him a number of scientific and astronomical apparatus in his will. On her death in 1794, Alicia Maria placed the interests of her new family with Egremont.¹⁵⁵

In 1774, Egremont adopted the name O'Brien on the inheritance of the vast Irish Thomond estates in Clare, Limerick, Tipperary and Carlow from his uncle Percy Wyndham.¹⁵⁶ The Farington Diary records that Percy had intended to make Egremont's younger brother, also Percy, his heir, but that he died suddenly and had not made a will, so that 'the whole of his estates devolved to the present Earl of Egremont'. Egremont 'very nobly gave his brother

¹⁵³ **London, BL Add Ms. 47591, f.38.** Lord Egremont to Lord Holland, 26 Jan 1820. George O'Brien Wyndham is in the school lists at Westminster in 1764 and 1767. He left the school in 1767 for Christ Church, Oxford. G.F. Russell Barker and Alan H Stenning, 1927, *The Record of Old Westminsters*. Vol 2 (London, 1930); J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1715-1886*, vol. iv. (Oxford, 1888). While it is suggested in GE Cockayne, *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage* and by the DNB that Egremont attended Eton College, this appears to contradict Egremont's own account of his education (BL Add Ms 47591), and his name cannot be found in R.A. Austen-Leigh, *Eton College Register 1753-1790* (Eton, 1927). However, Egremont did buy two Turner pictures, one of Eton, and another of Eton students. E. Joll, 'Painter and patron': Turner and the third Earl of Egremont', *Apollo magazine* (1977), 374-381. Interestingly, it seems that a similar mistake was made in recording the education of the 2nd Earl of Egremont, as noted by R.A. Austen-Leigh, p. 381.

¹⁵⁴ **WSRO, PHA 54** Letters to Egremont from Alicia Countess of Egremont, and Von Bruhl family, 1794-c.1829.

¹⁵⁵ **WSRO, PHA 54.**

¹⁵⁶ Percy Wyndham (b. ?1723-d. 1774) inherited the estates of the late earl of Thomond (the husband of his mother's sister) in 1741 and assumed under his will the name O'Brien.

Percy the house and [900 acre] estate at Aldborough in Suffolk, where Lord Thomond had lived', which Percy then sold.¹⁵⁷

The young earl took two grand tours to Europe between 1770 and 1772, visiting Dresden, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, as well as Venice and Paris. Egremont appears to have resided for some time at Dresden and Vienna with Count von Brühl, and to have 'spent a portion of almost every day in the renowned galleries of those cities'.¹⁵⁸ This northern tour was different from Egremont's father's, who studied in Paris, and then visited Turin, Genoa, Milan, Padua, Venice, Rome, Naples and Florence for two years from 1729.¹⁵⁹ In Paris, the younger Egremont acquired a reputation as a man of fashion in both apparel, and behaviour.¹⁶⁰ In a later letter to the third Baron Holland (1773-1840), Egremont described the society into which he entered as a young man:

'When I came into what is called the world Voltaire and Rousseau were both alive and their art and their doctrines engrossed the attention of everybody and not a day passed without hearing their names talked of either with admiration or censure; and added to this everything in fashionable life, dress, food, amusement, morals, and manners, all must be French...'.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ J. Farington (1747-1821), *Diary of Joseph Farington, vol. 5 (1801-1803)* K. Gardlick and A. Macintyre (eds.), (London, 1978-84), p.214.

¹⁵⁸ Anon. Obituary for Egremont *The Gentleman's Magazine* 9,1 new series (1838), p.89-92.

¹⁵⁹ J. Ingamells, *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy 1701-1800*, (London, 1997), p.333.

¹⁶⁰ C. Rowell, 'Wyndham, George O'Brien'.

¹⁶¹ **London, BL Add Ms. 47591, f.138**_Lord Egremont to Lord Holland, (7 Mar 1833); H.A. Wyndham, *A family history* pp.217-218.

While his school friend Charles James Fox was emancipated from the 'gallic tyranny' of manners, Egremont remained captivated by them, which, in hindsight, 'was very inconvenient as well as ridiculously expensive in point of dress and very troublesome in many other ways'.¹⁶² Egremont House in Piccadilly became a meeting place of the Macaronis, and the *Morning Herald* declared in 1782 the chief interest of this young man of fashion to be 'Street riding'.¹⁶³ Extravagance on the Continent was reflected on the home estate at Petworth, too.¹⁶⁴ The impractical liveries selected by Egremont for his servants in 1773, gleefully described by Horace Walpole ("the postilions have white jackets trimmed with muslin, and clean ones every two days"), were very different to those described by Thomas Creevey over fifty years later as 'extremely plain'.¹⁶⁵

Both Mary Coke and Horace Walpole record the wild speculation surrounding the potential marriage partners of such an eligible bachelor. In the summer of 1774 Egremont was connected with Lady Barrymore, although he returned to Paris again that year.¹⁶⁶ In 1780, the Earl earned the bitter reproach of Horace Walpole when he called off his engagement to the writer's niece, Lady Maria Waldegrave. Before its cessation, Walpole described him at twenty-eight as 'handsome', with 'between 20 and 30,000 a year'. After celebrating at

¹⁶² **London, BL Add Ms. 47591, f.138** Lord Egremont to Lord Holland, (7 Mar 1833).

¹⁶³ H.A. Wyndham; C. Rowell, 'Wyndham'. Interestingly, Wyndham alleges that Egremont neither drank nor gambled; the latter could be confirmed in further research by reference to manuscripts held by Brooks's club.

¹⁶⁴ Mary Coke reported rumours of Egremont 'having drawn for 11,000 pounds since he has been in France' in 1772. *The letters and journals of Lady Mary Coke. Vols 1-4, 1756-1774* (Bath, 1970), vol 4, p. 133. See also *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1794), 64 p.579.

¹⁶⁵ T. Creevey (1768-1838), *The Creevey papers*, H. Maxwell (ed.) (London, 1904); C. Rowell, 'Wyndham'.

¹⁶⁶ H. Walpole, 23 June 1774 in *Horace Walpole's correspondence* 48 vols. (New Haven, 1937-1983), vol. 39, p. 175; Mary Coke *letters* 1774, vol. 4, pp. 367 and 405.

Ranelagh gardens (an intimidating experience with the Waldegrave family so closely related to the Royals), the engagement was broken-off, and Walpole's altered opinion was of 'a most worthless young fellow', 'weak and irresolute', who had 'drawn universal odium on himself'.¹⁶⁷ However, an alternative account in the *Glenbervie Journals* suggest that Egremont's 'conduct on that occasion was truly generous, for he submitted to universal censure rather than expose her'.¹⁶⁸ The various reasons given for Egremont's failure to marry Maria Waldegrave given by contemporaries include: the poor behaviour of Maria, her sisters, and in particular her mother; the high cost of Maria's allowance demanded by the Waldegraves; and most commonly, Egremont's shyness. However, Walpole saw Egremont's behaviour as a demonstration of the influence of his mistress, Elizabeth Lamb, née Milbanke (bap.1751-d.1818).

Elizabeth, Lady Melbourne was the wife of Sir Peniston Lamb (1745–1828), a landowner in Derbyshire and Hertfordshire, an MP and from 1770 an Irish peer as first Baron Melbourne (Viscount Melbourne from 1781). According to Walpole, Coke and others, Egremont's liaison with her was believed to have produced one future prime minister, the politician William Lamb (later second Viscount Melbourne) and the wife of another, Lady Palmerston.¹⁶⁹ Egremont certainly took an interest in William's education and career, and his and his sister's portraits were hung at Egremont house in Brighton, while William made use of Egremont's

¹⁶⁷ H. Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, July 1780 in *Correspondence* vol. 25 pp.68, 74-75.

¹⁶⁸ Lord Glenbervie, 23 Nov 1773, *The Glenbervie Journals*, ed. W. Sichel (London, 1910), p.105-106.

¹⁶⁹ H. Walpole, 28 Oct 1777 in *Correspondence*, vol. 32.

box at the Opera. Egremont was a constant guest at Melbourne House, and William had fond memories of gambolling in Petworth Park. Later William visited the elderly Egremont to be teased for his Radicalism.¹⁷⁰

Egremont's other mistresses included Elizabeth Fox, alias Crol (c.1770-1840), who was also at one time the mistress of the Prince Regent.¹⁷¹ From about 1786, Egremont began a long term association with the young Elizabeth Ilive (c.1770-1822), who was reputed to have been the daughter of a librarian at Westminster School, or the daughter of a Devon farmer. Elizabeth lived at Petworth as 'Mrs Wyndham' from about 1789, after the birth of her first child, George Wyndham. She had a further seven children by Egremont, the last, born after her parents married in July 1801, died in infancy. There was a permanent separation in this marriage from 1803.¹⁷²

4.3 Egremont's move to Petworth (1794)

Thus far this chapter has given a brief portrait of a wealthy aristocrat, with familial and social connections with the highest echelons of English society. In 1794, Egremont's mother, the Countess Dowager, died, and in the same year Egremont at the age of 43 moved more permanently to Petworth. Auctioning many of his father's paintings, he sold Egremont House

¹⁷⁰ W.M. Torrens, *Memoirs of the Rt Hon William Second Viscount Melbourne*, 2 vols, (London, 1878) Vol 1, pp.31-32, vol. 2, p.245.

¹⁷¹ **WSRO, PHA 8661** is a draft will of Egremont's which lists four children surnamed Fox (1798).

¹⁷² A. McCann, 'A private laboratory at Petworth House, Sussex, in the late eighteenth century' *Annals of Science* 30, 6 (1983), 635-655; J. Farington, 9 Oct 1803 in *Diary of Joseph Farington* vol 6, p.2140.

in Piccadilly and purchased a smaller London property at Grosvenor Place near Hyde Park corner.¹⁷³ Egremont also retained his house in Brighton, East Lodge.¹⁷⁴ Contemporary accounts testify to Egremont's apparent shyness, and to his dislike of the trappings of high social position. Egremont repeatedly refused the Garter, and showed a remarkable lack of concern with the illegitimacy of his children.¹⁷⁵ It has also been suggested that Egremont was personally and politically out of sympathy with the Pitt regime which entered government in 1784.¹⁷⁶ While Egremont did not take an active role in politics, Charles James Fox is known to have said of him in his late twenties, that though he had no experience in business, and had never been in office, he would rather take his judgment on the [East] India Bill (1783) than that of most other men he knew.¹⁷⁷ Lord Auckland claimed in 1797 that Lord Egremont had

'...become a most useful character in his country; & is exercising his mind & his property in a way that does more good to mankind than all the politicks [sic] & pretended philosophers, are capable of doing.'¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ **WSRO, PHA 9360** concerning Lord Ossory's leasing stables and coachhouses at Grosvenor Place from LE, June 1798. **PHA 7557** abstract and bills from tradesmen for work done to No 5 Grosvenor Place, 1799-1800. Nos. 3 and 4 Grosvenor Place are mentioned in Petworth documents from the 1810s, and Egremont also borrows his brother's house on Gros. Place (28 Sep 1824), London BL, Add Ms. 47591 (Holland House papers), f.79. Col Wyndham retains No. 4 Grosvenor Place as his London residence in the 1850s. **WSRO, PHA 7521-7527**.

¹⁷⁴ **WSRO, PHA 8694** Summary valuations of the contents of East Lodge, Brighton, Grosvenor Place, London, and Petworth House (1838). **London, BL Add Ms. 47591 f.39**, Egremont to Lord Holland re. the fitting of a steam kitchen in the Brighton house (24 Dec 1819).

¹⁷⁵ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.223.

¹⁷⁶ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.238-240.

¹⁷⁷ W.M. Torrens, *Memoirs of the Rt Hon Wm Second Viscount Melbourne*, vol.1, p.31.

¹⁷⁸ **London, BL Add Ms. 35728, f.294-5** Lord Auckland to Lord Sheffield, 23 Nov 1797; M. McCahill, *Order and equipoise*, p.206.

Egremont was alleged to have inherited the Wyndham tradition for oratory, and Charles Greville believed that had he chosen he might have taken a conspicuous part in politics.¹⁷⁹ With age, Egremont's politics became more conservative. In 1792 the split in the Whig Party over the French Revolution occurred and Egremont crossed over to support Pitt's proclamations against wicked and seditious writings.¹⁸⁰ As his anonymous obituary in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* (1838) records:

'Without taking a very prominent part in the discussions of that branch of the legislature of which he was a member, his Lordship always enjoyed much political consideration. In times of pressure and peril, his purse, his example, and his exertions were nobly devoted to the cause of his country. Always liberal in his opinions, he, nevertheless, gave his support to the illustrious William Pitt; and when it was deemed necessary to arm against the threatened aggression of France, he came forward with alacrity; and his nervous, soul-stirring eloquence, at the public meetings of the period, are not yet forgotten. At that crisis his Lordship raised, and placed himself at the head of, one of those bodies of British volunteers, in whose imposing force and attitude the Nation probably found its safety at the hour of need, and its ultimate triumph at the close of a struggle of unexampled severity.'¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ S. Lee, (ed.) *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 63 (London, 1900). At 'Wyndham, George O'Brien.

¹⁸⁰ T. Creevey, 18 Aug 1828 in *The Creevey papers*; P.A.L. Vine, *London's lost route*, pp.11-12.

¹⁸¹ Anon. Obituary for Egremont *The Gentleman's Magazine* 9,1 new series (1838), p.89-92.

Whatever the reasons for the relocation, despite the move to Sussex, it was not the case that Egremont lived in obscurity. He famously kept an extravagantly open house, which was frequented by numerous artists and other visitors from the social scene in London which he had left behind.¹⁸² It was also the case that his connections, albeit maintained more by letter, were as strong as ever. He remained a close friend of the Prince of Wales, being a constant companion to the Prince on his visits to Brighton in 1796 and 1803, and was still involved in royal intrigue as late as 1831.¹⁸³ He also continued to correspond with a diverse range of well-connected figures including the Duchess of Devonshire, Sir Joseph Banks (of which more below) and William Cobbett.¹⁸⁴ Egremont visited Paris in the short-lived peace of July 1802. In 1813, after Napoleon's abdication, he received the Prince Regent, the Tsar of Russia and the King of Prussia at Petworth; while in 1814 Egremont hosted the Prince Regent accompanied by the King of France.¹⁸⁵

4.4 George Wyndham, 1st Baron Leconfield

When compared to the wealth of biographical information available for his father, very little is positively known about Colonel George Wyndham (1787-1869). Born in June 1787 as the

¹⁸² Charles Greville (1794-1865) '...Petworth was consequently like a great inn. Everybody came when they thought fit, and departed without notice or leavetaking...' *The Greville Diary* 2 vols, P. Whitwell Wilson (ed.) (London, 1927), vol. 1, p.470-471 (14 Nov 1837); *The Greville memoirs* 8 vols. H. Reeve (ed.) (London, 1888), vol. 4, p. 24 (14 Nov 1837).

¹⁸³ George IV, *The correspondence of George, Prince of Wales 1770-1812* A. Aspinall (ed.) 8 vols. (London, 1963-1971), vol. 3, pp. 260-261; also vol.4, p. 355 and p.400. For Egremont on royalty, see A.D. Kriegel, ed. *The Holland house diaries 1831-1840. The diary of Henry Richard Vassal Fox, third Lord Holland* (London, 1977), pp.13-15 July 1831 regarding a visit to LE and his thoughts on the King and Queen.

¹⁸⁴ **WSRO, PHA 55.** A. Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London, 1998), p.266. W. Cobbett, 26 Dec 1821, *The life and letters of William Cobbett in England and America*, L. Melville [pseud] (ed.) 2 vols. (London, 1913), vol. 2 pp.194-196.

¹⁸⁵ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*; P.A.L. Vine *London's lost route*; W.M. Torrens, *Memoirs of Viscount Melbourne*, pp.108-109 (20 Apr 1814).

illegitimate eldest son of the third Earl, and his mistress Elizabeth Ilive, he attended Midhurst Grammar School, and Christ Church Oxford. He was a midshipman in the Royal Navy, before serving in the Army from the age of 15, and attained the rank of Colonel aged 30. His parents were married in 1801 but had no sons after their marriage. Wyndham inherited the unentailed Egremont estates in Sussex, Ireland and Yorkshire after the death of his father, while his brother Henry (1790-1860), KCB, MP inherited the Cumberland estate. The earldom of Egremont became extinct on the death of Egremont's nephew, also George Wyndham, in 1845.¹⁸⁶

Colonel Wyndham was a Member of Parliament for West Sussex, and in 1859 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Leconfield. Wyndham had served in the West Indies and in Germany, Spain and much of the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic wars (1803-1815), although without the success of his brother Henry, a General who fought at Waterloo, where he almost captured Jerome Bonaparte. Colonel Wyndham married Mary Fanny Blunt (d.1863), daughter of Reverend William Blunt of Crabbet, Sussex in 1815, and had ten children. He died in March 1869, aged 81, and was succeeded in the barony by his eldest

¹⁸⁶ George Francis Wyndham (1786-1845), 4th earl of Egremont, was the son of William Frederick Wyndham (1763-1828), youngest brother of 3rd earl, and a captain RN. He inherited Orchard Wyndham and other family estates in Somerset and Devon, and died in 1845 at Silverton Park, Devon, when all honours became extinct. The Countess of Egremont died at Orchard Wyndham in 1876. At her death, she held 8,365 acres in Somerset and 6,740 in Devon, worth £23,851 a year. Orchard Wyndham then passed to William Wyndham of Dinton (1876). See J. Debrett, *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage* (London, 1976); J. Bateman *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, 4th edn (London, 1883); J. Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the peerage and baronetage* (London, 1931).

son Henry. His second son the Hon. Percy Scawen Wyndham was the father of the politician and man of letters George Wyndham.¹⁸⁷

4.5 Egremont as an Improving Landowner?

Egremont was a renowned agricultural improver who was offered the post of President of the Board of Agriculture in 1798 and was described by the historian Mark Anthony Lower in 1865 as 'one of the fathers of modern English agriculture'.¹⁸⁸ Contemporary agricultural commentators recorded the Earl's interest and enthusiasm for agricultural improvement. William Marshall (1798) described Egremont's 'patriotism and benevolence' that flowed 'in every direction', and his 'truly noble and patriotic exertions' in the selective breeding of livestock.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, in his 1813 report on the agriculture of Sussex, the Reverend Arthur Young, son of the renowned agricultural observer, described Egremont's estates as 'conducted upon a great scale, in the highest style of improvement'.¹⁹⁰ Reverend Young depicted Egremont as a conscientious and benevolent landlord, providing incentives for agricultural improvement through patronage of the Sussex Agricultural Society, established

¹⁸⁷ Memorial tablet in Petworth church; See *Kelly's handbook to the titled, landed and official classes* (London, 1881).

¹⁸⁸ M.A. Lower, *The Worthies of Sussex: Biographical Sketches of the Most Eminent Natives or Inhabitants of the Country, from the Earliest Period to Present Times; with Incidental Notices, Illustrative of Sussex History* (London, 1865); M. Butlin, M. Luther and I. Warrell, *Turner at Petworth. Painter and Patron* (London, 1989).

¹⁸⁹ W. Marshall, *The Rural Economy*, vol. 2, (London, 1798), pp. 153, 197.

¹⁹⁰ Revd. A. Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sussex with Observations on the Means of its Improvement* (London, 1813), p.17. The Reverend Arthur Young studied at Cambridge (1789) and took holy orders, although produced two agricultural surveys for Sussex (1793, 1808) and made an extended survey in Russia from 1805 to 1814. See M. Bentham-Edwards, *The Autobiography of Arthur Young* (London, 1898); J.G. Gazley, *The Life of Arthur Young, 1741-1820* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1973).

in 1797 and in his role at the Royal Society and Board of Agriculture.¹⁹¹ In 1803 Egremont raised and commanded the Petworth volunteers. He was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Sussex in November 1819 and held this office for sixteen years; resigning the position due to infirmity.¹⁹² Egremont presented two petitions for Sussex and Yorkshire to the House of Lords regarding the distress of the counties in March 1816.¹⁹³

Both Egremont and Colonel Wyndham maintained an implacable opposition to the imposition of the New Poor Law regulations (1834), preferring to tackle the 'superabundant' population attracted to Petworth with rent concessions, property maintenance, public works, and the funding of an assisted emigration scheme that enabled 1,800 poor tenants to emigrate from Sussex to Upper Canada between 1832 and 1837.¹⁹⁴ This scheme was later extended by Wyndham to an assisted emigration scheme from the family's Irish estates, and also to the purchase and attempted management of land in South Australia in 1838, examined in chapter seven.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex* (London, 1813), p.466-8.

¹⁹² Anon. Obituary for Egremont *The Gentleman's Magazine* 9,1 new series (1838), p.89-92.

¹⁹³ *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 33 (London, 1816), pp.2 and 521. '[Egremont] took the opportunity of expressing his satisfaction at the rejection of the income tax, and the abandonment of the war duty on malt. There was, however, full one third of the country in which barley was not grown, and to which, therefore, the abandonment of the war malt tax would be no relief whatever. He trusted, therefore, that some relief should be afforded to that part of the country, including some districts in Scotland and several in England, from that extreme agricultural distress which undoubtedly prevailed.' (Egremont's Yorkshire petition, 22 Mar. 1816) Cobbett, p521.

¹⁹⁴ S. Thomas 'Power, paternalism, patronage and philanthropy: the Wyndhams and the New Poor Law in Petworth' *The Local Historian* 32, 2 (2002), 99-117; W. Cameron and M. McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada. The Petworth Project, 1832-1837* (Montreal, 2000).

¹⁹⁵ W. Cameron and M. McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada*; S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham, 1st Lord Leconfield, and his agency in the fledgling colony of South Australia, 1838-1860' *South Australian Geographical Journal* 97 (1998), 3-19.

Egremont's enthusiasm for rural development can be traced in thirty years' correspondence with Arthur Young (1741-1820) from the 1790s.¹⁹⁶ These letters contain comments on the values of various breeds of cattle, pigs, and sheep; on the uses of animal products such as lamb skins to make gloves (about which Egremont also corresponded with the Royal Society of Arts).¹⁹⁷ Other letters discuss mechanical and scientific equipment, designs for barns, cottages and piggeries, as well as general enclosure, Corn Laws, tythes, the state of the nation and the rural poor. Young and Egremont also corresponded about the drainage of Egremont's Yorkshire estate (see chapter six), and Egremont's patronage of the Reverend Young's career. Both Egremont and his mistress Elizabeth Ilive (d.1822) published reports of agricultural experiments in Young's *Annals of Agriculture*, the latter anonymously.¹⁹⁸

Young's insistence that Egremont take the position of President of the Board of Agriculture in 1798 was apparently supported by Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), although the role was refused by Egremont.¹⁹⁹ Banks had been in correspondence with the Earl from 1791 regarding British and foreign wools, the king's gifts of merinos, sheep breeding experiments, the activities of the Board of Agriculture, and Egremont's own admission into the Royal Society in 1797.²⁰⁰ Egremont also corresponded with the scientist Samuel More, secretary of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce after the mineral cobalt was

¹⁹⁶ **WSRO, PHA 91; BL Add Ms 35127; 35128; 35132; 35133** (c. 1793-1820); M. Bentham Edwardes, *The autobiography of Arthur Young*.

¹⁹⁷ London, **RSA PR/MC/103/10/418-436; PR/MC/101/10/1532-1547; PR/MC/10/438**, Feb. 1798

¹⁹⁸ **WSRO, PHA 91** 22 Mar 1797 Young to Egremont re. Mrs Wyndham's and Egremont's articles in Young's *Annals of Agriculture*.

¹⁹⁹ **WSRO, PHA 91**, 26 Jan 1798; and Bentham-Edwardes, *Arthur Young* pp.315-316.

²⁰⁰ H.B. Carter, *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1781-1820* (London, 1979) letters 575, 579, 644, 661, 662, 667, 673, 677, 679, 712, 762, 895, 1329, 1365; **WSRO, PHA 90** 1792-1810, Letters on agricultural matters; **WSRO, PHA 91** 1793-1815, letters from Arthur Young.

identified in Cumberland, and with Charles Greville and Charles Hatchett regarding the coal speculation in Yorkshire (see chapter nine).²⁰¹ This 'scientific' correspondence is in contrast to that between Egremont and John Holroyd (1735-1821), later Earl of Sheffield, and the eventual President of the Board of Agriculture in 1798. Sheffield wrote at length to Egremont regarding the state of agriculture and the wider governance of Sussex, and more generally regarding the representation of agricultural interests in parliament, between 1794 and 1820.²⁰²

Egremont's investment and chairmanship of the Wey, Rother and Arun river navigations in Sussex provided extensive employment, boosted local economies, and provided an accessible route to London markets. Egremont's land agents played another influential role in the legal and political negotiations for the preparation and procession of navigation bills through Parliament.

The 1791 Rother Navigation Act authorised the improvement of the Western Rother to Midhurst, and enabled 'his Lordship, at his own sole expense, to make the Rother navigable from its junction with the Arun, as far as Midhurst; and by a collateral branch to Haslingbourne, within half a mile of Petworth'.²⁰³ This provided a navigable river from Midhurst to the river Arun, which had been improved in 1732, creating a direct cut to the sea

²⁰¹ **WSRO, PHA 70**, 1797, Letters about Cumberland estate matters.

²⁰² **WSRO, PHA 69**, Letters from Lord Sheffield (1794-1820); Sir Robert Peel (1820); William Cobbett (1821); the Duke of Wellington (1827) and others.

²⁰³ **WSRO, PHA O14/10 M** Uncatalogued material. Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex* (London, 1813), p.422.

at Littlehampton, and enabling the efficient transportation of agricultural produce, chalk and other commercial products. This small-scale navigation assisted with the supply of coal and lime, and exporting lead, corn, timber, and Petworth marble, costing £13,300 in 1794.²⁰⁴

Egremont also sponsored the Adur navigation (1806), and the Chichester, Arun and Portsmouth canals (1823) with the eventual aim of connecting West Sussex with London.²⁰⁵

However, this immense task was never achieved due to the cost and difficulty of such a project, and the declining interest in canals following the restoration of peace in 1815 that had removed the immediate need for an inland water-route to London. Egremont's interest in the improvement of navigation is illustrated by J.M.W. Turner's paintings of *Chichester Canal* (c.1828-30) and *Brighton from the Sea* (c1828-30). These were commissioned for Petworth House and displayed there alongside two images of the Park, and represent the values of agricultural improvement, and the Earl's patriotism and benevolence.²⁰⁶

Egremont's interest in river and canal networks, however, was not purely idealistic, but the result of careful, although ultimately unsustainable, financial projections. This careful calculation is evident in William Tyler's correspondence regarding the 'material advantage' of navigation for the transport of chalk, and the collation of knowledge regarding trade, costs,

²⁰⁴ P. Brandon and B. Short, *A Regional History of England: the South East from AD 1000* (London, 1990); P.A.L. Vine, *London's lost route*, p.33.

²⁰⁵ **WSRO, PHA 8620** notes that Egremont had 'material interests' in the Adur navigation bill.

²⁰⁶ *Petworth Park* (c1828-30) and *The Lake in Petworth Park* (c1828-30). C. Rowell, *Petworth House*. See also A. Howkins, 'J.M.W. Turner at Petworth'.

and the political hurdles necessary before navigation could take place.²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, Chichester Canal, which was completed in 1822 as part of the Portsmouth and Arundel Canal, lost Egremont at least £55,000 and was unprofitable from its opening. Egremont withdrew from the company in 1826, but still commissioned the picture from Turner.²⁰⁸ The development of railways from 1840 dealt a further blow to Sussex waterways, leaving only the Chichester canal active by the 1870s.²⁰⁹

The condition of roads, too, underwent significant improvement with the construction of turnpike roads in Sussex from 1749. The poor condition of roads at mid century had prompted Walpole to exclaim 'If you love good roads, good inns, plenty of postillions and horses, be so kind as never to go to Sussex'.²¹⁰ However, road improvements should not be overstated; only 22 percent were turnpiked by 1837, and many local roads outside Petworth remained inadequate, while road improvements, like navigation, were overtaken by the railway age.²¹¹

In summary, Egremont appears to have been knowledgeable and well informed about his estates, and to have had a genuine concern for his tenants.²¹² It was in the area of food crops that Egremont was able to act as a philanthropic landlord. Petworth Park provided

²⁰⁷ **WSRO, PHA 2681** 7 May 1811 Letter from William Tyler. **PHA 2681** 6 May 1811 Tyler: 'I should be glad to know the general opinion of the merchants of Arundel, at what price per done the barging may be done from Littlehampton to the River Wey at Godalming...'.
²⁰⁸ C. Rowell, *Petworth House*.

²⁰⁹ P. Brandon and B. Short, *A regional history: the South East*.

²¹⁰ P. Brandon and B. Short, *A regional history: the South East*, p.247.

²¹¹ P. Brandon and B. Short, *A regional history: the South East*, p.247.

²¹² **WSRO, PHA 726; PHA 73** also demonstrates Egremont's thorough knowledge regarding the Yorkshire estates.

valuable medicinal plants such as rhubarb and opium, which may have been used by a doctor employed by Egremont for ensuring the health of tenants and employees.²¹³ Following the example of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, Egremont experimented with the composition of bread and with bread substitutes such as potatoes and rice to provide sustenance during times of hardship.²¹⁴ The enthusiasm and experiments of Sir John Sinclair and Sir Joseph Banks on the cultivation of potatoes resulted in the publication of the Board of Agriculture's *Hints Respecting the Cultivation and the Use of Potatoes* (1795) at a time of great scarcity, and a belief that potatoes were 'the means of saving this country from the risk of famine'.²¹⁵

Although potatoes were not uncommon during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Egremont consumed them, together with brown bread at his own table.²¹⁶ Egremont held an interest in cloth making, possibly to provide cheap clothing for the poor, and found employment for poor labourers during periods of agricultural depression.²¹⁷ Egremont's investment in smallpox inoculation, and the construction of almshouses, schools, hospitals (and prisons) led to the landowner's reputation for philanthropy. He was said by the historian

²¹³ 'The largest quantity of this invaluable drug that was ever cured in this country, was raised in 1797 from the Lord Egremont's garden at Petworth' Revd. A. Young, *General view of the agriculture of the county of Sussex* (London, 1813), p.141. 'A surgeon-apothecary (Mr. Andrew) [Andre] lives in Petworth-house, for the express purpose of attending upon the poor of that and the neighbouring parishes gratis' Revd. A. Young, *General view of Sussex*, p.448. **WSRO, PHA 12013** 'Medical assistance is given to all the members of his lordships large establishment and those of his tenants and work people whom he may direct to be medically relieved', 9 April 1805.

²¹⁴ **WSRO, PHA 8849** 'Society for bettering the condition of the poor, *Extract from an account of what it is doing to diminish the present scarcity and to restore plenty in this country*, 1800; **PHA 12009**.

²¹⁵ Sir John Sinclair to George III, 1795. Quoted in J. Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful knowledge and polite culture* (Cambridge, 1994), p193; A. Aspinall (ed.), *The later Correspondence of George III*, II (Cambridge, 1962-70), p.405.

²¹⁶ **WSRO, PHA 8540, and PHA 8649** Correspondence regarding food sent to London from Petworth. Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, p.95.

²¹⁷ **WSRO, PHA 2681; PHA 8557.**

M.A. Lower to have 'spent in the course of sixty years in acts of charity and liberality, the enormous sum of one million two hundred thousand pounds, or about £20,000 per annum'.²¹⁸ This generosity must be seen in the context of rising displays of 'patriotic endeavour' amongst the landed elite during the war period, as aristocrats were faced with the dual threats of invasion by revolutionary France and internal revolution.²¹⁹

Nevertheless, it seems that Egremont was sometimes frustrated with the slow progress of agricultural improvement, and the apparent unwillingness of some tenants to adopt new agricultural techniques, despite the probable economic gains that would accrue to them. 'His lordship observes', wrote the agent William Tyler, 'he cannot understand [this]... as those experiences which arise from the mere improved culture speedily repay the farmer by better crops, without risk'.²²⁰ Despite this, Egremont was willing to fund and support numerous improving activities. These included enclosure, drainage, estate repairs, crop, livestock and equipment development and transport improvements, which will be examined in greater detail in chapters five and six.

²¹⁸ M.A. Lower, *A compendious history of Sussex*, vol 2 (London, 1870), p.90, C. Rowell, 'Wyndham'; *Greville Diary*, 23 May 1834, vol 1, pp.469-470.

²¹⁹ S. Daniels and C. Watkins, 'Picturesque landscaping and estate management. Uvedale Price at Foxley, 1770-1829'. *Rural History* 2 (1991), 141-169; L. Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837* (London, 1992); S. Seymour and R. Calvocoressi, 'Landscape parks and the memorialisation of empire: the Pierreponts' 'naval seascape' in Thoresby Park, Nottinghamshire during the French Wars, 1793-1815', *Rural History* 18, 1 (2007), 95-118.

²²⁰ **WSRO, PHA 12011** Letter from William Tyler to Mr Gell, 1803.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE HOME ESTATE

Chapter five examines the home estate at Petworth to 1835. It considers James Crow's 1779 survey of the estate, and any changes to agricultural leases during the period. It introduces the Petworth land agents James Upton Tripp and William Tyler, and considers the management of the estate before and after their employment (1772-1835). The chapter also examines some instances of improvement projects at Petworth, including the conversion of a large area of parkland into Stag Park Farm (1782), as well as improving works made in relation to timber production, livestock, agricultural equipment, drainage and enclosure. Following chapter four, it continues to examine Egremont's role as an improving landowner (as promoted by Reverend Arthur Young), and in particular, this chapter focuses on the interaction between Egremont and his agents and bailiffs at Petworth.

The home estate consisted of over 30,000 acres in the district of Petworth, 'between the western quarter of the Weald, or Vale Lands, and that part of the Chalk Hills of Sussex, called the West Downs; extending, eastward, to Pulborough, and westward to Midhurst...'.²²¹

The soil of the Petworth district, as reported by William Marshall, was characterised as 'a light sandy loam; resting on a mass of sand'.²²² According to the 1785 Land Tax survey,

²²¹ W. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of the Southern Counties*, vol. 2, (London, 1798), pp.165-166.

²²² W. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of the Southern Counties*, vol. 2, (London, 1798), pp.165-166.

Egremont owned land in 21 parishes in (West) Sussex, and in four of these the landowner controlled over fifty percent of rentable property. The parishes that contributed most to Egremont's rental income were Petworth (£1,255), and the adjacent parishes of Tillington (£569) and Northchapel (£390).²²³

5.1 James Crow's 1779 estate survey

The 1779 survey was initiated by the trustees of the third Earl, and was part of a general assessment of the wider estate, including land in Yorkshire, Cumberland and Somerset.²²⁴

The '1779' was surveyed and drawn by the Essex surveyor James Crow (1711/12-1786), whose progress with the plan is documented in estate correspondence.²²⁵ Crow should not be confused with the agents of the Irish estate, the Crowe family of Ennis. James Crow carried out a number of other surveys of the Sussex estates, including land in Sutton and Duncton in 1777 and had revised earlier Yorkshire surveys by Thomas Browne in 1767.²²⁶ Petworth estate plans were also created by Thomas and Henry Upton for estate valuations, repairs, purchase deeds, timber sales and land disputes.²²⁷

²²³ A. Readman, et al.. *West Sussex Land Tax 1785*. (Lewes, 2000).

²²⁴ **WSRO, PHA 3606** Survey by James Crow, 1779. The Yorkshire and Cumberland estates were surveyed by Thomas Browne during the 1750s, who recommended that six bailiffs be replaced by a single steward, that farms should be revalued, and that customary tenants ought to be enfranchised (J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, p.147). In Cumbria, late eighteenth century surveys include Browne's survey (1758), another in 1776, and Baines and Benson's survey of 1795, followed by some early nineteenth century surveys made due to extensive enfranchising.

²²⁵ **WSRO, PHA 726, 12180, 8540**. For more on James Crow, see F.W. Steer, *Dictionary of land surveyors*, vol. 2, p.124.

²²⁶ **WSRO, PHA 1461, 1462, 1456**.

²²⁷ **WSRO, PHA 2681, 9940**. Upton seems to have planned other estates. Upton turned down a request for his assistance as he was too busy (**WSRO, PHA 2681**).

Work on the 1779 survey began in 1761, two years before the death of the second Earl, and it seems likely that the evaluation of property was motivated by inheritance and plans for future development on behalf of his heir. The last survey undertaken before this had been in the early seventeenth century.²²⁸ Crow's rough plan of 1761 was updated between 1775 and 1783 (with alterations drawn over the top of the survey), and the fair plan was completed in 1785.²²⁹ The fair plan does not suggest any alterations to the Sussex estate, recording only the land owned, its name and extent in acres. However, as William Marshall argued, 'the groundwork of improvement...is an accurate delineation of the *existing estate*, together with a faithful estimate of the *present value*'.²³⁰ The survey covers seven parishes near Petworth, describing the contemporary state of agriculture and extent of Egremont's property in these parishes.²³¹ While the 1785 land tax survey suggests that in five of these seven parishes Egremont owned less than fifty percent of the total rent, this may be due to the inclusion of houses and potentially the deliberate undervaluing of rents for land in-hand in order to pay lower taxes. Nevertheless, visual analysis of the survey reveals a much greater influence in terms of acreage than is suggested by total rental.

²²⁸ Mrs Alison McCann, personal communication August 2004.

²²⁹ WSRO, PHA 3605, PHA 3606.

²³⁰ The general map, according to William Marshall, is 'a comprehensive and useful subject of study to the practical improver. It is, to him, what the map of a country is to a traveller, or a sea chart to a navigator. If an estate is large, a faithful delineation of it will enable him, in a few hours, to set out with advantages, respecting the connexions and dependencies of the whole and its several parts, with which as many days, weeks or months could not furnish him, without such scientific assistance'. W. Marshall, *On the landed property of England* (London, 1804), p.29.

²³¹ The parishes are Lurgashall, North Chapel, Kirdford, Tillington, Petworth, Egdean and Fittleworth.

FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM 1779 SURVEY, PHA 3606



The 1779 survey illustrates that Egremont land was extensive; and by and large compact, although interspersed sporadically with other properties. Egremont appears to own a large swathe of land in Egdean. Birchfold Coppice in North Chapel, on the other hand, is encircled by land owned by Lord Winterton, and the dense and huddled farms of Tillington are laid out in a similarly muddled fashion. The high proportion of smaller plots demonstrates the continued importance of small-scale farming despite the presence of Petworth park and home farm. The relatively unrationalised field layout of the parishes and the continuation of outmoded strip farming, as suggested by the river plots (which could also be water

meadows), may have been part of the motive force for the third Earl's subsequent policies of land acquisition and rationalisation.²³²

During the period covered by this thesis, Egremont undertook a vast programme of land acquisition and rationalisation through purchases, sales, exchange and enclosure. Egremont spent £50,000 on land in (west) Sussex, where he bought and converted 1,350 acres of copyhold into freehold, and spent £350,000 in acquiring over 12,500 acres of freehold land in Sussex.²³³ Egremont's spending at the end of the eighteenth century, although impressive, seems not to have been extraordinary for a man of his rank. The third duke of Northumberland spent £375,000 on land between 1817 and 1847, while the Duke of Newcastle laid out £375,000 on Worksop Manor in 1839.²³⁴ Such large purchases were made possible through mortgages and loans, and were consonant with Ricardian theory that rents would rise with population and the incalculable social status of land. However, it is likely that a policy of land acquisition would have been particularly difficult to instigate in a county as populated, ancient, and proximate to London, as (west) Sussex.

²³² Open field strip farming was seen as an inefficient, unproductive and outmoded form of agriculture. The increased productivity resulting from enclosure is demonstrated by a general increase in rents. For example, the Fitzwilliam estates showed a 16% return on outlay following enclosure. An average doubling of rents after enclosure was expected by improving landowners. J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, p.174.

²³³ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.300.

²³⁴ Although these figures give land purchases in the early nineteenth century, they demonstrate the immense cost and effort that went into acquisition by the aristocracy during this period. The net return on investments in land was not usually more than 2 ½ %. While other investments, such as navigation or Government stocks could give a much greater return, John Beckett argues that land became a 'conspicuous social investment', rather than a financial one. J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, p.70.

The peak period of purchasing was between 1786 and 1791, when Egremont bought 5,000 acres, with the associated rent roll growing from under 70 to 123 tenants.²³⁵ Egremont also obtained land through a significant number of exchanges, but enclosed only 150 acres as the county had already experienced extensive enclosure.²³⁶ In contrast, the Yorkshire estates were extended primarily through enclosure rather than purchase, and experienced a decline in tenant numbers.²³⁷ In the years between 1791 and 1831, the average Egremont holding in Sussex increased in annual rental value from £64 to £72 (gross rental £7,950-£14,770). However, in less than 30 years, the Yorkshire holdings increased in annual rental value from £23 to £62 (1797-1824), with an associated rise in gross rental income from £12,976 to £34,000.

These contrasting approaches of land purchase and land rationalisation also partly explain changing tenant patterns. In Sussex the occupiers with the lowest rents, at £10 or less, doubled in number, as did also the highest rented class, at £101 or more. In Yorkshire the lowest rented decreased from 301 to 263, while the highest rent increased from 24 to 113, a rise of 370 per cent. In both counties the intermediary class of tenants diminished; in Sussex relatively, in Yorkshire absolutely.²³⁸

²³⁵ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.300.

²³⁶ P. Jerrome, *Cloakbag and common purse: enclosure and copyhold in 16th century Petworth* (Petworth, 1979).

²³⁷ 'No more than 250 acres' were purchased in Yorkshire, while a much greater amount of land was enclosed. The decline in tenants was small, from 570 in 1797 to 551 in 1824. H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.301.

²³⁷ H.A. Wyndham, p 301.

²³⁸ H.A. Wyndham, p.301.

Increasing numbers of low-rent tenants and the small fall in the number of medium-sized farms at Petworth indicates the relatively limited scope for estate rationalisation in counties of old enclosure such as Sussex. The fact that the Petworth estates were rationalised without significant landscape change suggests that neither process necessarily resulted in the other. A comparison between an extract from the 1779 survey and one from the 1838 Tithe map illustrates this point. Little rationalisation occurred to farms or field layout in this particular area during the period between these two surveys. The land to the east of Stag park and Pheasant Coppice on the 1779 survey shows small parcels of land between 3 to 5 acres. The 1838 map indicates that the field pattern and wooded areas (with the exception of Stag Park) have been retained. Parcels 760-820 on the tithe map, known as Osiers farm, consisted of over 152 acres of arable and meadowland owned by Colonel Wyndham, and occupied by Charles Hopkins for a rent of £24, 5s. 6d. Osiers farm is also present in the 1785 land tax register, occupied by Mr George Elliott for a rent of £24.²³⁹ This area of Petworth parish retained both its field pattern, and principal farm, and even the rent did not alter significantly in over 50 years, although this may hide rising rents during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, and a subsequent fall during the post-war depression.

The Petworth estate, therefore experienced only limited landscape change on the rented estate farms during the period 1770 to c.1860. Moreover, it is unlikely that any significant alterations to the agricultural landscape had occurred since the enclosure of the area in the

²³⁹ A. Readman et al, *West Sussex Land Tax 1785*, p.177.

seventeenth century.²⁴⁰ Improvements that may not have registered on maps include changing land use, farm amalgamation, road development, the creation of new farm buildings and the development of home farms, as well as new agricultural equipment, livestock or crop rotation; although increased productivity would probably be registered in a growing rental value for Osiers farm. Nevertheless, a more general comparison of the 1779 survey with the tithe map would be necessary to confirm these suggestions. It is clear, though, that the Petworth landscape retained a stable field layout and tenant base during a chaotic period of agricultural depression, war, and industrial transition.

5.2 Agricultural leases

Tenant leases are a useful index of examining changing agricultural processes, and the influence of 'improvement' on the everyday life of estate tenants. Three versions of a lease agreement, drafted between 1818 and 1830, show the importance to Egremont of careful husbandry and timber management.²⁴¹ The leases also establish agreements with tenants from year to year, a popular form which often replaced agreements for tenants 'at will' and which provided flexibility for both landowner and tenant.²⁴² Annual holdings however, according to William Marshall, were the most discouraging to tenants, and 'unfriendly' to

²⁴⁰ P. Jerome, *Cloakbag and common purse*.

²⁴¹ **WSRO, PHA 9639**:1818-1830, Draft and corrected versions of the farm agreement between the 3rd Earl of Egremont and his tenants. 1 original bundle

²⁴² **WSRO, PHA 9639**, H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*.

agricultural improvement. They were also 'impolitical', and produced inadequate tenant-owner relations.²⁴³

Marshall and his contemporaries instead emphasised the value of long leases of up to 21 years, providing tenants with security and incentives for improvement, and Petworth leases were also commonly for 7, 14 or 21 years.²⁴⁴ However, long leases saddled landowners with poor tenants, prevented rent increases, and led to abatements in times of hardship. The Agricultural Distress Committee (1833) further demonstrated that long leases were also unpopular with tenants in times of hardship, while their length did not necessarily promote improvement.²⁴⁵

Quite apart from the length of leases, agricultural experts were unanimous in their emphasis on the importance of lease covenants to promote better husbandry. However, lease agreement clauses were mainly preventative, rather than progressive. The 1818 to 1830 Petworth leases required that the tenant 'will keep and leave, in good condition and repair all the buildings gates fences roads and drains'. He would not 'without the consent in writing of the landlord or his steward, break up or pare any meadow or pasture', but would 'give up'

²⁴³ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*, p.363.

²⁴⁴ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*; N. Kent, *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property* (London, 1775).

²⁴⁵ British Parliamentary Paper 1833 (612), *Report from the Select Committee on Agriculture with minutes of evidence* (Dublin, 1968); J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*. William Marshall's compromise between these two extremes was a three-year rolling lease. W. Marshall, *On the landed property*.

land for a turnip season, 'spread hay straw dung fodder and compost' on the land and protect timber, saplings, underwood and hedgerows.²⁴⁶

H.A. Wyndham examined four earlier leases, created between 1773 and 1830, for land between 14 and 162 acres, for 14 to 21 years.²⁴⁷ These leases demonstrate changing ideas of ideal husbandry in fluctuating economic conditions, and illustrate a fundamental change between leaving land fallow, and the planting of turnips, with an intermediary step permitting fallow or turnips. In the first lease (1773), the cropping of land 'above four years together' was forbidden, and after every fourth year the tenant was enjoined to fallow it 'according to the custom of the country'. In 1798 a tenant was commanded to 'cultivate according to the usual course of husbandry of the country', while in 1810 tenants were expected 'to occupy in a good and husbandlike manner according to the best and most approved course of husbandry of the country'. In 1813 a tenant was forbidden to sow wheat after a wheat crop or oats next after oats. During the last seven of a fourteen-year lease he could sow more than a quarter of the land with wheat, one third with Lent or summer corn, and leave the remainder fallow or sown with turnips, vetches, clover or grass seeds to be fed off on the premises.²⁴⁸

The similarities between the 1813 lease and those of 1818 and 1830 suggest that significant changes in husbandry occurred during the first decade of the nineteenth century, and that

²⁴⁶ Although not all tenants were men, this passage reproduces the language used in the lease documents. **WSRO, PHA 9639:1818-1830**, Draft and corrected versions of the farm agreement between the 3rd Earl of Egremont and his tenants. 1 original bdl.

²⁴⁷ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.246.

²⁴⁸ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.246.

subsequently only minor changes were made to the lease covenants. The land agents wrote the leases, and adjusted them to individual tenants and conditions. James Upton Tripp and William Tyler were responsible for ensuring that tenants adhered to these covenants, although enforcement was often difficult. Agricultural leases should be seen more as conventions of agricultural practice than regulations, and therefore as valuable sources of information regarding the 'approved course of husbandry' practised by Sussex farmers, and the subsequent influence of concepts of 'improvement' on these practices.²⁴⁹

5.3 The management of the home estate

The appointment of James Upton Tripp as land agent in 1772 seems to mark a sea-change in the management of the home estate. Before this point, the management of the Petworth estate seems to have been complex and with responsibilities distributed among multiple individuals. It is unclear whether an agent or steward was situated at Petworth immediately prior to this appointment, although there is evidence of stewards at Petworth during the early eighteenth century and previously. Thomas Elder, a figure of considerable longevity, is mentioned in estate documents between 1714 and 1780. He was employed by the sixth Duke of Somerset (1662-1748), and is described as agent to the second Earl of Egremont (1710-1763) and steward of the Wiltshire and Somerset estates.²⁵⁰ Elder appears to have controlled financial matters, and also dealt with estate rents, fines and quit rents. However,

²⁴⁹ See advice on ploughing, letter 30 Dec 1834, **WSRO, PHA1099**.

²⁵⁰ **WSRO, PHA 6644**.

Elder was based in London, rather than Petworth, and was in charge of the London house, bills and legal matters.²⁵¹

Following on from Tripp's appointment in 1772, there survives correspondence between the two, indicating that Elder assisted Tripp in the transfer of responsibilities and subsequently. In 1775, Elder advised Tripp on how to pay bank drafts, while in 1780 Tripp replied to an application for Elder's house and debates its value.²⁵² In the same year Tripp requested a certificate from one Mr Daintrey, solicitor, that was 'made out during Mr Elder's Stewardship'. These sources suggest that Elder acted as steward among other positions of responsibility prior to Tripp's employment. Elder appears to have died in 1780, ending over sixty years service to at least three landowners at Petworth.²⁵³

As Elder was based in London, it seems that one John Habbin acted as bailiff on the estate. Habbin is mentioned in the archive between 1765 and 1801 and, like Elder, saw the changeover to the employment of a full-time (professional) land agent, Tripp in 1772. It is likely that Habbin performed many of the roles that commentators such as Beckett and Mingay have commonly identified with land agents. The bailiff collected rent, kept husbandry

²⁵¹ **WSRO, PHA 7795-7804, 9198-9204; PHA 501, 2782-94; PHA 2804-20, 505; PHA 8540, PHA 12180, PHA 8538.**

²⁵² **WSRO, PHA 12180:** Thomas Elder, 10 March 1775; **PHA 8540:** 27 July and 5 Aug. 1780.

²⁵³ **WSRO, PHA 8540:** 15 Aug. 1780 Mr Daintrey.

accounts, and probably had a direct role in the day-to-day running of the estate, and possibly the practicalities of agricultural improvement.²⁵⁴

Habbin was succeeded by John Sherwin and later by his son Thomas, both of whom seem to have coexisted as bailiffs with the new agents between 1791 and 1850. John Sherwin held an account with William Tyler, Tripp's successor as agent, from 1796 to 1802, and was paid in 1801 for the wages of husbandry servants, and other farming matters. Sherwin had financial dealings with Tripp, and correspondence regarding livestock improvement. The bailiff is referred to in estate correspondence regarding a trip to Ireland in 1823 that may have been organised with similarly 'improving' intentions by Egremont. Sherwin is also mentioned in relation to a meeting with Tyler (1824), and crucially, the employment of labourers in 1830. These lists of labourers coincide with parish and estate correspondence that demonstrate Egremont's employment of poor labourers during a time of particular hardship and distress.²⁵⁵

In contrast to Thomas Elder, John Habbin and John and Thomas Sherwin were local tenants or landowners, described in the Land Tax survey of 1785.²⁵⁶ The employment of a tenant-bailiff seems to have been a common practice in eighteenth and nineteenth century rural communities.²⁵⁷ John Sherwin was a substantial tenant farmer of Petworth, occupying land

²⁵⁴ **WSRO, PHA 3087: 1774; PHA 7724-8.**

²⁵⁵ **WSRO, PHA 10642; PHA 4424; PHA 8638; PHA 8557.**

²⁵⁶ A. Readman et al, *West Sussex Land Tax 1785*.

²⁵⁷ G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward', pp.3-27.

owned by Egremont (£46 rent), and Peter Luttmann, including Hall Gate Farm. His son, Thomas Sherwin, can be found in the tithe apportionments, with over 20 acres of meadowland primarily in Byworth, near Petworth, and Kelsham Farm. Similarly, Colonel Wyndham accepted an application in 1843 for the drainage of Moor farm by Thomas Sherwin. John Habbin, however, seems not to have been a tenant of Egremont, but owned a house in Rumboldswyke near Chichester, a Malthouse in Chichester, and also rented a storehouse in the city.²⁵⁸

It is clear, therefore, that estate management before 1772, and even following the employment of the full-time agents Tripp and Tyler was far from straightforward. Nevertheless, it can safely be suggested that immediately prior to 1772, there was no resident agent at Petworth, and that the management of the estate was coordinated in London. The employment of Tripp, and later the construction of the estate office at Petworth during the time of Tyler indicate a change of estate policy initiated by Egremont following his twenty-first birthday. The Petworth agents were involved in the management of the wider Egremont estates, Tyler in particular acting as overseer of agents in Somerset, Yorkshire and Ireland. Both Tripp and Tyler made annual visits to Yorkshire, sometimes accompanied by their employer. They also made regular visits to London and Brighton, and occasionally to Somerset and Cumbria. The relocation from London to Petworth is an important decentralisation of estate management that demonstrates the increased significance of

²⁵⁸ Tithe award maps and Apportionments, Petworth 1838; **WSRO, PHA 5104**; A. Readman et al. *West Sussex Land Tax 1785*, pp191; 77-78.

Petworth to the landowner during this time (although preceding his own move from London), which resulted in considerable 'improvements' to the estate landscape.

5.4 The estate office

The estate office was built at Petworth during 1803 to 1804.²⁵⁹ This building is adjacent to the eighteenth century servants' quarters that seem to mimic the sober architecture of Petworth House located directly opposite.²⁶⁰ The estate office was therefore proximate to the House, town, and parish church at Petworth, and was in an excellent position for the supervision of servants and estate staff. The office also occupied a symbolic position between the House, town and church, and arguably represented a barrier to traditional movement between the Great House and Petworth's inhabitants, perhaps in a small way hastening the disintegration of rural society.²⁶¹

It is likely that the estate office was constructed and organised under the influence of William Tyler, agent at the time. The estate office, which still stands, consists of four rooms, one large and two small, and a comfortable office with fireplace and separate entrance, which would most likely have been Tyler's.²⁶² The rooms are light with high ceilings, containing

²⁵⁹ The construction of the estate office is recorded in workman's books for these years (McCann, personal communication June 2004). The National Trust is now undertaking research on this building, formerly the home of the Petworth House Archives collection.

²⁶⁰ Little research has been done on the Servant's Quarters at Petworth, despite its magnificent kitchens and alterations due to fires. The main section of the block is eighteenth century, since it appears on the 1779 map of the house.

²⁶¹ F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*.

²⁶² Only Tyler and Challen had keys to this office, **WSRO, PHA 2681**. James Challen (1779-1834) was Tyler's clerk. For more on Challen, see Figure one.

mahogany desks and other office equipment. The large room would probably have contained two or three desks for clerks, who would copy letters and accounts here. The office seems to conform to William Marshall's recommendations for an estate office to have 'a commodious business room' and 'a strong room for valuable documents'.²⁶³ Before the construction of the estate office, it is likely that Tripp had an office in Petworth House itself or at least in close proximity to it. Tyler found letters from Tripp's wife to the former agent in a drawer of his office.²⁶⁴

The large room of the estate office contained an impressive filing system of alphabetical pigeon holes, draws and trays for named farms. This system demonstrates the importance placed on the rational collection and organisation of financial and legal material regarding Egremont's farms at Petworth and the estates in Yorkshire, Cumbria and Somerset. The financial cost of the reorganisation, relisting and rearranging of estate documents after the construction of the estate office was in fact a source of complaint.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, it could be argued that the estate office acted as the hub of estate management and rationalisation during this period.

Estate correspondence provides evidence for the possible layout of the estate office and for the importance placed upon maps. A letter to a Mr Traden of London (1805) recounts:

²⁶³ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*, p.345.

²⁶⁴ **WSRO, PHA 8635.**

²⁶⁵ A. McCann, personal communication, Sep. 2010.

'I yesterday directed to be sent to you by the wagon 4 maps – viz – one of Sussex and other counties, one of Yorkshire, one of Cumberland and one of Somersetshire to the first of these, Lord Egremont wishes that you would add (on the same scale and by the joining of the canvas) the map of Kent – and then the four are to be fitted up with springs rollers and boxes, in a neat manner, and in the same way as those which ... the height of the space which is to receive them is 10 feet 6 inches...'.²⁶⁶

It is possible that these roll-up maps were intended for the high ceilings and large wall-space of the estate office, where they could have been used for planning improvements, or considering land disputes. There are certainly fittings for a roll-up map in the small office. Maps were important tools for overseeing the running of such a vast estate, and it is likely that Tripp had maps in the previous estate office. A letter from Thomas Yeakell to Tripp of 1779 requested payment for two coloured sheets of a map of Sussex in order 'to enable us to print off our second sheet which only waits for the paper'.²⁶⁷ Yeakell's map, made with Mr Gardner between 1778 and 1783, is an example of a large-scale eighteenth century plan, which provides detailed information regarding the topography and human landscape of Sussex.²⁶⁸ This would have been both a useful tool and a decorative object in the estate office of Tripp. Marshall recommended that the estate office should also be 'furnished with

²⁶⁶ **WSRO, PHA 12184:** 26 Feb.1805.

²⁶⁷ **WSRO, PHA 12184.**

²⁶⁸ Yeakell and Gardner. 1778-1783, 2inch to 1 mile. A later map of Sussex by Gardner and Gream (1795) was modelled on this edition, although it is less detailed, at one inch to one mile.

mechanic instruments' for surveying and improvement. However, it seems unlikely that any such instruments were to be found at Petworth.²⁶⁹

The construction of a new office during Tyler's time as agent suggests an increased emphasis on rational estate management, and a willingness on Egremont's part to provide the financial means for construction. The importance of the estate office is demonstrated by the building's proximity to Egremont's home, and its central location relative to Petworth town and estate. Tyler's office was the administrative centre of the estate, and therefore a prime site of rationalisation, and could be considered in Foucauldian terms.²⁷⁰ While the office was clearly no Panopticon, it was a site designed for the rationalisation of knowledge, the construction of archives, and the supervision of the estate. Furthermore, the Petworth office could be considered a centre of calculation for the estate, acting as a polarising force on the paths or networks surrounding it; the estate and local activities, the London and Brighton houses, banks and solicitors.²⁷¹ The estate office was the site where the processes of legal and financial management and social and political activities took place. These processes will now be examined in greater detail.

²⁶⁹ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*, p.349. There seems no obvious location for tools such as soil borers, theodolites, etc in the estate office, and no observed evidence in the estate archive to suggest that the agents carried out such work, which was probably left to surveyors and estate bailiffs.

²⁷⁰ C. Philo, 'Edinburgh, Enlightenment and the geographies of unreason'.

²⁷¹ B. Latour, *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Milton Keynes, 1987).

5.5 Augmentation of the wider estate

Egremont undertook a vast programme of land acquisition and rationalisation through purchases, sales, exchange and enclosure. Between 1788 and 1823 the average annual spending on purchases was over £5,000, although in most years it was considerably less than this, with the exceptions of the years 1788, 1807, 1815 and 1820 when over £10,000 was spent. There was a wide range of spending, with the peaks being due to high value purchases, such as that of an estate in Yorkshire in 1807 for £21,000.²⁷² In contrast to the high number of land purchases, Egremont only sold 1,000 acres, demonstrating a determined policy of acquisition and rationalisation, rather than the activity of a more disinterested dealer in land. Egremont's land exchanges demonstrate that he was concerned with consolidating his landholdings, and creating rational pockets of cultivation. In only three years between 1801 and 1821 did income from land sales rise above £2,000; the average sale income was £438, although a more common position was that of no profits from sales (1801-1821).²⁷³

Each land purchase involved complex legal processes, as well as negotiations between the buyer and seller regarding a suitable price, the production of deeds, and obligations regarding tithes, fines and heriots. Exchanges of land involved similar transfers of abstracts

²⁷² **WSRO, PHA 8620:** Letters calling in debts to Lord Egremont, November 1807 'as Lord Egremont has a large sum to pay for a purchase in Yorkshire on 23rd instant'.

²⁷³ **WSRO, PHA 7981; PHA 4424-4425.**

of title and other papers, negotiations that could continue for months or even years.²⁷⁴

Egremont also purchased tithes, requiring Parliamentary debate, and Sussex rectories.

These complex procedures were managed by the land agent, and part of the role involved

being aware of available land and an appropriate price.²⁷⁵ These activities are illustrated in

estate correspondence. Mr Johnson, a Petworth solicitor advised Tripp (1787): 'I would not

advise you to bid more than £210 being 35 years purchase' for land which the owner

seemed 'very anxious for my purchasing... at any price'.²⁷⁶ Tyler, too, was able to downplay

the value of a farm. In 1818 he wrote to a Mr Budgen:

'I have had your land at Heyshott looked over according to my promise and the

report made to merit, that it is very poor and is in very bad condition and not a hedge

has a fence upon it; and I cannot make it worth near so much as the £1000 which

you ask for it, if, however, you will sell it on a valuation, I am willing to purchase it for

Lord Egremont.'²⁷⁷

Nevertheless, it remained Egremont's rather than the agent's decision, which land to

purchase, and the final price paid.²⁷⁸ The landowner on occasion influenced bargaining

²⁷⁴ **WSRO, PHA 12009**: 13 Sep 1800 Letter from William Tyler to Mr Scott, York, regarding the exchange of Property, 1783.

²⁷⁵ **WSRO, PHA 12009**: Letter from Egremont to Mr Young at the Commons Office, regarding Tithes of Petworth Park, 1799. **PHA 8535**: 8 Dec 1774: letter to legal agents Gapper and Baldwin from JU Tripp re. the purchase of Pulborough rectory at 4000 guineas, 1774. **PHA 8620** requests information regarding Rowfold Farm in Billingshurst which was advertised for sale, asking the present rent, annual land tax, quit rent, heriot, price by private contract and when the purchase money is expected to be paid.

²⁷⁶ **WSRO, PHA 726**: 12 Mar.1787: Mr Johnson's note to JU Tripp. Lawyers, such as Nathaniel Clayton, also advised the agents on the construction of deeds and other legal documents, for example, **PHA 12181**: 29 July 1776, Nathl Clayton Esq to Tripp.

²⁷⁷ **WSRO, PHA 2681**: 7 Sep 1818.

²⁷⁸ **WSRO, PHA 726**: N.D. Letter from Egremont regarding purchase of 'estate belonging to Ives'.

procedure, stating in 1787 that he wished 'for the purchase upon liberal terms'.²⁷⁹ Occasionally the agents disagreed with their employer over negotiations. Tyler in 1807 listed 'the points of which we do not agree' including the number of year's purchase, quit rents, and the price of the heriots for an exchange, although finally admitting that 'I must submit to your lordships decision'.²⁸⁰ It is likely that the points of difference between them were due to Egremont's generous, although not unbusiness-like standpoint. Egremont's attitude was perhaps ideally suited to the most common exchanges between the primary landowners of (West) Sussex, including the Dukes of Richmond and Norfolk, the Earl of Chichester, and Lord Sheffield.

5.6 Estate administration and other responsibilities

David Spring has suggested that land agents were expected to oversee the administration of the estate including the home farm, house, gardens and park, and to mediate between landowner and tenants.²⁸¹ While the negotiation, construction, and copying of leases were important tasks undertaken at all levels in the estate office, little evidence has been found in the Petworth archives to suggest that the agents took a prominent part in managing new tenants.²⁸² Surprisingly few letters petition or advise Egremont on potential tenants,

²⁷⁹ **WSRO, PHA 726**: Letter from Egremont, 3 Apr.1787.

²⁸⁰ **WSRO, PHA 8620**: 22 Apr.1807 Letter from William Tyler to Egremont regarding exchange with Mr Mitford.

²⁸¹ D. Spring, *The English landed estate*.

²⁸² For example, James Challen (**WSRO, PHA 2857**) undertook the copying of leases. An example of correspondence regarding the preparation of leases can be seen in **WSRO, PHA 12010**: Letter to Mr Sayers and the correspondence between Tyler and Gell in the same. Challen's work was closely supervised by Tyler, and recorded in a book of daily tasks (**WSRO, PHA 2857**).

suggesting that this may have been a role performed by bailiffs, rather than agents.²⁸³ This may also have been a result of a relatively stable tenant-base. In fact Egremont's record in choosing new tenants suggests that on occasion reasons of patronage trumped any concern for efficiency.²⁸⁴

The negotiation of leases, and the settling of disputes caused by tenant actions in violation of these agreements were central tasks performed by the agents. Leases contained complex covenants to ensure the maintenance, and if possible the improvement, of agricultural conditions on each farm.²⁸⁵ Breaking these covenants led to stern warnings from the agent, and on occasion to fines, court cases, or eviction. In a letter to a Mr Sandham regarding a damaged wall, Tyler warned that 'you are bound by your lease to repair by a certain day: that certainly you have not done, and therefore your covenant is broken, and you are liable to be sued upon it'. Despite this, the agent suggested a method for attaining a fair price for the repair, neatly combining elements of both coercion and of conciliation towards tenants.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ An exception being a letter from Col. Wyndham to Tyler regarding a potential tenant, although in this instance, the advice comes from the former, rather than the latter: 'I cannot but think it very desirable to close with him upon fair terms, the farm being at present useful to no one, and the feed that is upon it for Beast and Sheep spoiling...There is far more land upon hand than there is strength in horses to be worked, and feed for a great deal of stock, which it is a pity should not be turned to some good account' (**WSRO, PHA 9856**: 1817).

²⁸⁴ Egremont sometimes selected a tenant due to his family, rather than wealth or particular skills the tenant may offer the estate (**WSRO, PHA 1099**): Letter to Mr Charles Challen at Pulborough: 'I am authorised by the Earl of E to say that if you will pay 65£ a year for the premises at Heyshott late occupied...his lordship has been offered a much better rent by a solvent and respectable tenant but prefers you as having known you and considering that you may be useful in the parish' (8 Aug.1835).

²⁸⁵ **WSRO, PHA 9639**.

²⁸⁶ **WSRO, PHA 2681**: William Tyler to Mr Sandham of Storrington, 10 Oct 1803. Tyler suggests that two surveyors could value the repairs in order to compromise and find a fair price. This letter, among others, demonstrates Tyler's method of both coercing and conciliating tenants, threatening legal action, although rarely resorting to it. This benevolent approach is similar to Lord Egremont's actions regarding the prosecution of poachers and trespassers, demonstrated in **WSRO, PHA 4443-4444**. For example, in the prosecution of William Pierce for poaching (1820-1821) 'Lord Egremont on the morning of the sessions and before the indictment was ingrossed directed the prosecution to be abandoned and the man forgiven', an action repeated for John Deadman and James Hunt, although not John Dilloway who received four months further imprisonment. For Mr Matthews, prosecuted for Trespass, 'his lordship

It is likely that bailiffs at Petworth, rather than Tripp or Tyler, undertook the management of the Home Farm. However, the agents performed a supervisory role in regard to servants and other estate employees, keeping accounts of both wages and conduct.²⁸⁷ In 1819 Tripp berated the housekeeper at Brighton for her behaviour and reported that:

'I have represented to L[ord] E[gremont] as I told you I would do, your very improper behaviour when I was at Brighton, and I am sure that the state of intoxication in which you then was is not at all uncommon [sic] to you; and that you are frequently exposing yourself to the contempt and ridicule of your fellow servants. I am instructed by Lord Egremont to give you warning that at the end of six months from this day, you must quit his lordships service'.²⁸⁸

Despite this, it appears from later correspondence that Mrs Peacock managed to retain her position as housekeeper.²⁸⁹ Both Tripp and Tyler advised on the employment of servants, and made moral judgements to justify these recommendations.²⁹⁰ Tyler claimed in 1808 that 'I cannot find any one of your lordships people for a housemaid in London', but

after the Revival of judgement, directed the Execution not to issue (as he considered that the Man's conduct had been misrepresented by (I think) Mr Mitfords Keeper'. These cases illustrate Egremont's attempts to scare his tenants into good behaviour (despite the high cost of prosecution), although his refusal to punish them to the full force of the law, suggesting a benevolent if somewhat inconsistent approach to law and order in Egremont's 'little kingdom' (Richard Jefferies, quoted in P. Brandon and B. Short, *A regional history of England: the South East* (London, 1990), p.331.

²⁸⁷ **WSRO, PHA 726.**

²⁸⁸ **WSRO, PHA 2685:** Letter from William Tyler to Mrs Catherine Peacock, Housekeeper at Brighton, June 1819. In a letter from Egremont regarding arrangements for the Hollands to stay at Egremont's Brighton home, Mrs Peacock is described as 'only a head housemaid and a strange sort of nondescript and not fit for the company of the ladies and gentlemen of the stewards room...[she is] very vulgar'. London **BL Add Ms. 51725, f.41** (26 Dec 1819).

²⁸⁹ **WSRO, PHA 2685.** See note above regarding Egremont's leniency.

²⁹⁰ **WSRO, PHA 2685.**

recommended Elizabeth Elliott, who 'lived as a servant with me two years ago'.²⁹¹ This suggestion would have seemed more appropriate if Tyler's household had been of an equal social footing to Egremont's; the obvious chasm in social status rendered the recommendation perhaps a little comic, despite Tyler's helpful intentions.

Tripp and Tyler were also involved in the construction of marriage settlements, the enfranchisement of property and the resolution of legal disputes.²⁹² The last of these dominates the agents' private legal correspondence, and also feature heavily in estate documents. Legal correspondence was primarily concerned with cases for debt, although the agents were also involved in a limited number of criminal cases. The bankruptcy of a Mr Dale (the miller at Coultershaw near Petworth), and the attempts to recover debts owed to the Smith estate in Barbados were continuing sagas throughout the correspondence.²⁹³ More sensational cases such as the murder of Captain Sargent following the pursuit of a footpad are brief interludes in more mundane disputes over land and timber rights,

²⁹¹ **WSRO, PHA 8621**: Letter Tyler to Egremont, 1808.

²⁹² **WSRO, PHA 12010**. Enfranchisement relates to making land freehold, or not subject to manorial customs, as were copyhold or leasehold properties. The resident of a property worth at least 40 shillings could vote, perhaps partially explaining the motivation for this complex legal action. D. Hey, *Oxford companion to local history*, p.154. Court cases prepared by the agents are described in **WSRO, PHA 726, PHA 8536, PHA 12010, PHA 12012, PHA 12181 and PHA 12186**.

²⁹³ **WSRO, PHA 12010; PHA 8536; PHA 12012-12013**: Correspondence with the Smith family, for whom it appears Egremont was a trustee, demonstrates a souring relationship with Tyler, although it is uncertain why this is the case. The estate in Barbados indicates a theme which could be examined in further research; that of colonial connections between English landed estates, and their moral and financial management, as demonstrated by Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, 1814. Egremont describes a neighbour who has an estate in Barbados in the Holland house papers, where he compares the high price of sugar with low rents in Britain (4 Feb 1823). London, **BL Add. Ms. 51725**.

inheritance and debt.²⁹⁴ These disputes are clearly connected to an equally important element of the agent's work, that of financial management.

The Petworth agents were involved in the management of the wider Egremont estates. An equally important role was that of Egremont's 'viceroy' in Sussex during his absence and of representative for the estate on committees and local government more generally.²⁹⁵ The Petworth agents held a significant role in local government that was closely connected to the legal management of the estate. David Hainsworth has described the office of steward-of-courts, a position with medieval origins that 'lasted as long as manorial courts survived'.²⁹⁶

The agents represented the estate 'in the county court or at assizes, engrossing leases, suing recalcitrant tenants and tradesmen or encroaching neighbours, but in addition [...]presided over the courts leet and courts baron of the manor', keeping a record of these courts. Requests were made for the agents to attend manor courts, and the agents' correspondence refers to the preparation necessary for the courts or assizes.²⁹⁷

The Petworth land agents were involved in the improvement of roads through the supervision of local road construction and maintenance, as well as holding positions on

²⁹⁴ **WSRO, PHA 8620**: Letter to Egremont, 2 Oct. 1807. Coroners Inquest found verdicts of wilful murder against Allen and of justifiable homicide against Machin and Dale.

²⁹⁵ D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, lords and people. The estate steward and his world in later Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1992)

²⁹⁶ D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards*, p.11.

²⁹⁷ A letter of 1773 referred to Tripp as 'steward of the manor of Byworth and Warningcamp' (**WSRO, PHA 8538**: 29 May 1773). **PHA 8536**: 9.10.1778 Thomas Longcroft to JU Tripp. Tyler (**PHA 12014**: 24 Mar.1806) even appears to organise a manor court for Pallingham: 'I will hold a special court in Pallingham manor for the admission of Mr Finckler, on Mr Gregory Haines surrender'. **PHA 12011** and **12013** (1804): 'I much regret that I am so much engaged in preparing for the assizes, as to be unable to come over to Arundel or Littlehampton to examine the persons you refer me to'.

boards of trustees for turnpikes. Tyler acted as Secretary to the trustees of Five Oaks Turnpike, a position with a likely property qualification for gentlemen with estates yielding £100 a year. Similarly, Tripp was a Surveyor of Highways. The agents may also have been influential in the distribution of outdoor relief in the parish, although further research would be needed to distinguish this from the charity distributed directly by the Egremont estate.²⁹⁸

Estate correspondence reveals the agents' involvement in matters of civil defence, and local politics, including preparation for elections, and payment of entertainment for voters.²⁹⁹ Minute negotiation was necessary for the persuasion of individual voters before the Reform Act (1832):

'There is one John Puttock of Upperton [who] has been applied to [to] vote for Sir James Peachley at the election but refuses to come without Lord Egremont's permission, I should take it [as] a favour if you will be so good as to signify his lordships pleasure to Mr Puttock which will oblige Sir James Peachley.'³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ William Marshall claimed that 'planning, forming and repairing roads is a subject with which (for various reasons) every manager of a large estate ought to be familiarly conversant' *On the landed property*, p.275. **WSRO, PHA 8159**. In the position as secretary, Tyler was in charge of subscriptions (**WSRO, PHA 726**). J.V. Beckett, *Aristocracy*, p.381. **WSRO, PHA 12183**: 6.7.1778 addressed to Upton Tripp one of the surveyors of the highways, Johnson enclosing an order of the last turnpike meeting.

²⁹⁹ Letters regarding Colonel Wyndham's militia, for example **WSRO, PHA 12011. PHA 80, PHA 12186** Duke of Richmond to JU Tripp.

³⁰⁰ **WSRO, PHA 8535**: Mr Wardroper to JU Tripp, Chichester 11 Nov. 1774.

The agents' correspondence reveals close tracking of the parliamentary progress of Yorkshire enclosure bills, and the readings of Lord Egremont's Bill of 1780.³⁰¹ As John Beckett has argued, however, local government was organised by both formal and informal structures. One such informal arrangement in Petworth involved an economy of gifts. The agents frequently distributed gifts of venison, cider, and even puppies and plants to local landowners, stewards and other influential people.³⁰² It is clear, therefore, that Tripp and Tyler held influential positions in society, due both to their employment by the third Earl, and by the legal and political tasks, formal and informal, associated with this position.

5.7 Financial management of the home estate

The agents were involved in the collection of rents twice a year, recording their receipts at the time of collection, and later in accounts following an annual audit. William Marshall argued that the 'superiority of accounts is to be estimated by their clearness and brevity: and by simplicity of method, only, these excellencies are to be obtained'.³⁰³ It is difficult to compare the accounts of Tripp and Tyler because Messrs Stephens and Watson, employed by the Earl to restore clarity to Tripp's chaotic records, constructed only sparse accounts while Tyler's reveal a mastery of detail and accounting technique. Tyler even lectured

³⁰¹ **WSRO, PHA 8621; PHA 8540.** An Act to effect an Exchange between Sir James Peachy Baronet, and others, Trustees of an Alms-house or House of Charity at Petworth, in the County of Sussex, and George Obrien Earl of Egremont, of certain Lands and Tenements belonging to the said Charity, for other Lands and Tenements belonging to the said Earl of Egremont. March 1780 11-20, *Journal of the House of Lords* vol. 36: 1779-1783 (1767-1830), pp. 62-77.

[http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116659&strquery=egremont.](http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116659&strquery=egremont)

³⁰² J.V. Beckett, *Aristocracy*. **WSRO, PHA 726, PHA 12186; PHA 12186; PHA 726; PHA 2681.**

³⁰³ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*, p.401.

tradesmen on accounting.³⁰⁴ A similar contrast in clarity and level of detail can be seen in financial correspondence, recording the payment of bills, tithes and taxes, and the establishment of loans and mortgages.³⁰⁵ The correspondence also included requests for money by Egremont's family, demonstrating interesting power relations between the agent and his employer and his family.³⁰⁶

Despite Tripp's disorganised records, the agent's personal bank account provides an intriguing insight into the financial dealings of a land agent, although further research would be needed to confirm and explain the ideas suggested by this document.³⁰⁷ Tripp's bank account with Pybus, Grant and Hale of London holds on average a staggering £14,519 between 1789-1801. However, this value fluctuates wildly, showing an increase in the total between August and December (1791), a peak in January (1792), a trough in March (1792), and another peak in November (1792).

There is a correlation between these undulations and the cycle of rent collection, which took place at Lady Day (25 March) and Michaelmas (29 September). The reduction in balance of over £11,000 between January and March (1792), and the subsequent rise of £13,000 between March and November (1792) could be explained by the collection and distribution of

³⁰⁴ **WSRO, PHA 8620**: 6 Aug.1807.

³⁰⁵ For example, **WSRO, PHA 8577**, **WSRO, PHA 9378**. Examples of money lent by Egremont include **WSRO, PHA 8540, 8570, 12009, and 12014**. An example of a Mortgage can be seen in **WSRO, PHA 8570**, while money lent by Tripp (which resulted in often unrecoverable debts, **WSRO, PHA 8638**) can be seen in **WSRO, PHA 8570**.

³⁰⁶ For example, **WSRO, PHA 12010**: William Tyler to Mrs Wyndham, 26 July 1802

³⁰⁷ **WSRO, PHA 7982-4**: 1789-94, 1798-1801.

rental income. It is likely that Tripp guaranteed rental incomes to Egremont by transferring his own money, and then collecting rents (in November), which were generally in arrears by half a year from most tenants. Alternatively, Tripp could have collected rent, and then paid them when they were due to Egremont in March. It is difficult to speculate without further information whether Tripp was first guaranteeing rental income with personal finances, or whether he was simply using his account to collect the money before payment. Nevertheless, it is clear that Tripp's employer placed a considerable proportion of the money in this account. This level of trust, combined with such large quantities of money, and Tripp's inability to record such transactions with consistency and clarity, made allegations of his financial misconduct inevitable, if ultimately unprovable.³⁰⁸

It is clear that legal and financial management formed a significant, if complex, element of the role of the Petworth agents. In comparison to Tripp's hazy records, Tyler's apparent mastery of financial matters demonstrates the relative competency of the two agents in one of their most important responsibilities. Nevertheless, Tripp's bank records provide an insight into the multifaceted nature of the financial interactions with Egremont and his family, which cannot be understood simply by an examination of agents' wages.

³⁰⁸ **WSRO, PHA 8638.**

5.8 Petworth as a model farm

Contemporary agricultural commentators recorded Egremont's interest and enthusiasm for agricultural improvement. In his report on the agriculture of Sussex, surveyed in 1808 and reprinted in 1813, the Reverend Arthur Young (1769-1827), son of the renowned agricultural observer, described Egremont's estates as 'conducted upon a great scale, in the highest style of improvement'.³⁰⁹ Young championed the landowner's experiments with livestock, farming equipment, crop rotation and bread substitutes. Similarly, William Marshall praised Egremont for such 'broad-minded patriotic work' in his experiments with livestock breeds.³¹⁰ The importance of Egremont's enthusiasm must be considered in relation to the size of Egremont's land holding, his wealth, and political influence.³¹¹ That these experiments were considered 'patriotic' suggests agricultural improvement at Petworth was of symbolic, if not economic, value to the nation.

A particular example of Egremont's agricultural interest is the conversion of part of Stag Park into a model farm. Stag Park is shown on the 1779 survey as a large piece of partially wooded land stretching over four parish boundaries, in contrast to the small and medium sized farms that surround the Petworth home parks. The northern end of Stag Park, however, was enclosed and developed into a model farm around 1782. Although this was

³⁰⁹ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, p.17

³¹⁰ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.246.

³¹¹ Egremont was part of a 'tiny elite' of 1,688 landowners with over 3,000 acres, who collectively owned 43% of the nation's acreage. J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, p.51.

not unique among the great agricultural estates, Stag Park's conversion was celebrated by Reverend Arthur Young in a section entitled 'wastes':

'The greatest improvement that I know undertaken in this country...[t]he undertaking of converting between 7 and 800 acres of land, was an exertion to be expected only from an animated and enlightened improver. It was begun about sixteen or seventeen years ago; the timber sold, the underwood grubbed, and burned into charcoal upon the spot; and every part of the park has been since drained in the most effectual manner: the whole of it enclosed and divided into proper fields, and planted regularly with white-thorn, all of which has been trained in the neatest manner. All the crops upon the ground succeed each other in a system of correct cultivation, and so luxuriant, that few tracts of 20s. or 30s. per acre, can be said to be more productive'.³¹²

While disparking was often associated with a shortage of funds, Stag park was not part of the Petworth home parks. Young's promotional praise for the model farm suggests a successful conversion of 'waste' to economically productive farmland through the twin processes of enclosure and drainage. Stag Park was farmed using a rotation which substituted turnips for a fallow period (probably to feed sheep) and returned crops of wheat and oats during the poor harvests in 1794 and 1795.³¹³ Crop rotation and field layout for the

³¹² Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, pp.188-189.

³¹³ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*.

model farm are shown on a plan from around 1800.³¹⁴ Young's admiration for Stag Park was further demonstrated by publishing plans for the design of a barn that has similarities to one still in use on the farm, as well as printing illustrations of drainage, navigation and a piggery at Petworth.³¹⁵ Young also examined timber management, drainage and soil conditions (after William Marshall) on the estate. According to Young, crop rotation at Stag Park farm consisted of a sequence of 'tares and rye', followed by turnips, oats and clover.³¹⁶ The early date of Young's research (c.1799) suggests that such practices of crop rotation were tried out first on the home farm, and later introduced into tenant leases, illustrating a potential time-lag between developments on the home farm, and their dissemination to the estate and Sussex landscape. This corresponds with Marshall's argument that a home farm should introduce to 'the exemplary tenants of an estate (and other leading men in its neighbourhood) the valuable practices of other districts'.³¹⁷

Reverend Young's *Report* was not however universally accepted amongst national observers of the agricultural scene. William Marshall criticised Young's account for its lack of practical knowledge, and claimed 'a more "slovenly" written book I have rarely read: not even in toiling through the learned and unlearned Reports of the Board of Agriculture'.³¹⁸ It is likely

³¹⁴ **WSRO, PHA 3608**, a plan of Stag park Farm (Lurgashall, North Chapel, Tillington and Petworth), attributed to Thomas Upton c.1780. The farm is measured at 176a, 3r. and 26 perches. The map shows two years of crops and the layout of farm and parish boundaries. These crops may be projected, although it is more likely that the map was drawn c.1800.

³¹⁵ The design for the barn by John Upton (1795) seems remarkably similar to a single storey barn still standing at Stag park farm.

³¹⁶ Revd. A. Young, *General view of Sussex*, p.78.

³¹⁷ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*, p.417.

³¹⁸ W. Marshall, 'Sussex' in W. Marshall, *The Review and abstract of the county reports to the Board of Agriculture, vol. 5 Southern and Peninsular Departments*, 1818 (Newton Abbot, 1968), pp.453-514, quotation at p.456.

that Marshall disapproved of Young's amateur status, his lengthy prose and his method of research, which, like his father, consisted of brief tours rather than practical agricultural experience in a county. Marshall stated that Young provided no information regarding the mode of research for the Report, and that it was unclear when this research was undertaken for the second edition (Marshall thought that 1799 was a likely date). The writer suggested in a humorous tone that Reverend Arthur Young was relying on his father's reputation:

'Had the younger Young been initiated in the practice of the sovereign art [agriculture], on which he has been induced to write, while his mind was sensible to practical impressions; instead of being, reluctantly perhaps, led into the labyrinth of imagination, by the study of 'dead tongues' – the bane of active life and practical knowledge, - he might, by a Survey and Report of the Agriculture of Sussex, 'have done the State some service'.³¹⁹

It is likely, too, that both Youngs were motivated by the hope of ecclesiastical patronage for Reverend Young, which was successful.³²⁰ Nevertheless, both Marshall and Young seem to agree on the centrality of the Petworth estate to agricultural improvement in Sussex. Young depicted Egremont as a conscientious and benevolent landlord, providing an incentive for

³¹⁹ P. Horn, 'The contribution of the propagandist'.

³²⁰ J.H. Farrant, "'Spirited and intelligent farmers": the Arthur Youngs and the Board of Agriculture's reports on Sussex, 1793 and 1808', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 130 (1992).

agricultural improvement through patronage of the Sussex Agricultural Society (est. 1797), and the granting of prizes for cattle, and the 'industrious poor'.³²¹

Petworth was a site of experimentation for the growth, development and acclimatisation of multiple crops, plants and trees. Egremont's association with the Royal Society of Arts and his interest in agricultural experimentation enabled the transition of modern scientific ideas from London to the farms of Petworth. Tyler wrote to his employer regarding a new wheat crop (1808):

'There are paragraphs in several of the newspapers recommending the adoption of spring wheat; but nobody here knows where to get it. Sir Joseph Banks, I believe, is very desirous of promoting its introduction; and probably he may know where the seed can be got: if, without much trouble to your lordship, you could learn where it is to be had, Mr John Salter, who has a good wheat season prepared where the autumn sown seed has missed, would be glad to have any quantity from 2 bushels to a sack, sent him...'.³²²

This request seems to have been fulfilled, as the following letter states that 'Lord Egremont has ordered for you a sack of spring wheat but it cannot be got in London till Saturday, when

³²¹ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, p.466-468. Egremont subscribed £12 to the Sussex Agricultural Society in 1801 and £9 in 1803 (**WSRO, PHA 2358**). The Agricultural Society appears to have been used as a site for debate (**PHA 2685**: letter 22 Dec 1807). In 1818, Tyler made an application for two people to join the society (**PHA 2685**). **PHA 2685**: 'Mr Tyler begs his compliments to Messrs Whitfield and Co and will request the favour of them to exhibit the inclosed certificates of the Sussex Agricultural Society for the award of premiums to the industrious poor'. Sep 30 1812.

³²² **WSRO, PHA 8620**: Letter 25 April 1808.

it will be sent to his house in Grosvenor Place, and forwarded by wagon'.³²³ This letter demonstrates the influential position held by Egremont amongst those interested in promoting agricultural improvement and his role as facilitator or coordinator of improvements on his estate. It further demonstrates the interest of his agent in scientific improvement and the extent that Tyler and the tenants he supervised went to in order to experiment with modern agricultural crops. Furthermore, this letter provides an interesting link between practical and symbolic elements of agricultural improvement, and the culture of science that was gradually imported into the realm of agriculture. Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society from 1778-1820, supported explorations undertaken by the African Society, and had also experimented with Spanish merino sheep to improve breeds sent to Australia.³²⁴ Banks therefore represented a merging of values of the exotic and exploratory, with the practical and economic. The letter demonstrates the importance of promotional material, and the influence of figures such as Joseph Banks and Egremont on local agricultural practice, and the complex networks of transition between intellectual (agricultural) societies and practising farmers.

³²³ **WSRO, PHA 8620:** Letter 27 April 1808.

³²⁴ R. Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world* (London, 2000) p.148; J. Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*; J. Gascoigne *Science in the service of empire*.

5.9 Timber management and estate repairs

The oaks that grew on the Petworth estate acted as a symbol of patriotism during a period of European war and economic hardship.³²⁵ Estate timber, however, also proved to be a valuable source of income; Young claimed that £3,000 was raised from the sale of 200 trees.³²⁶ The high proportion of coppiced areas on the 1779 survey suggests a commercial approach to the production and sale of wood on the estate, the profit from which was often greater than the rent of an equivalent acreage of farmland (although this depended on the nature of the products, access to markets and the nature of the soil). However, evidence concerning the Petworth land agents' timber management is limited to the organisation of timber valuations, and timber rights.³²⁷ Timber management, valuations and sales were undertaken by the timber surveyor, John Upton, and probably by the estate bailiff, John Sherwin. As such, little assessment can be made regarding any changes in timber management practice at Petworth. It is likely, though, that commercial timber sales increased in relation to improvements in road and rail communications; improvements sponsored by Egremont himself.

Land agents may have played a greater role in the organisation of estate repairs. Although it is likely that bailiffs and surveyors supervised the practical work, Tripp and Tyler made decisions regarding the necessity of and financial responsibility for repairs, according to

³²⁵ S. Daniels, 'The political iconography of woodland in later Georgian England' in S. Daniels and D. Cosgrove (eds.) *The Iconography of landscape* (Cambridge, 1988), pp.43-75.

³²⁶ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, p.172.

³²⁷ **WSRO, PHA 12181, 726, 8538, 2681, 8620.**

lease conditions and the circumstances of each case.³²⁸ Egremont and his successor Colonel Wyndham were generally willing to pay for repairs if the tenant made a contribution to the labour required, and often consented to support estate repairs disregarding legal responsibility.³²⁹ Nevertheless, it was in the landowner's interest to have well-maintained estate buildings in order to retain rental values and economic efficiency.³³⁰ The processes of estate maintenance and development are evident in the correspondence between the agents Tripp and Tyler and one Mr Gell. Gell was Egremont's tenant at Applesham, near Shoreham in (West) Sussex, and was described by Reverend Young as 'one of the most spirited and intelligent farmers in the country', although the correspondence reveals that Gell was illiterate.³³¹ The improvement of Applesham farm was on a significant scale.³³² In 1787, Gell reported the progress of fencing, the construction of barns, and a well, and deliveries of sand, bricks and lime to Applesham farm, claiming that 'I should be glad if you could come or send over a person to say how we should proceed'.³³³ This request for advice may suggest

³²⁸ For example, in **WSRO, PHA 5019**, Henry Upton recommends that flint walling, rather than a timber fence be constructed on Mr Hodson's farm for £29, 7s., 6d. (21 Feb 1839).. **PHA 8620**: Letter from William Tyler to Mr Hinde, Attorney in Arundel, 27 March 1807: 'Mr Rich Ede the tenant of Medhone farm has applied for a considerable portion of timber for repair, and, as I have not the lease, I do not know under what terms he holds the premises. I shall therefore be much obliged by your sending to me the lease and to inform me where any and what timber has been lately assigned to Mr Ede for repairs'.

³²⁹ **WSRO, PHA 2685**: Letter to Mr Cleaver, London, 8 July 1818.

³³⁰ S. Wade Martins, 'The farm buildings of the agricultural revolution', *The Local Historian* 12, 8 (1977), 407-423.

³³¹ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, p.81; **WSRO, PHA 12009**: 20 Sep 1806 Letter from William Tyler to Gell reads 'you cannot understand my letters because you cannot read them; and I cannot understand yours when I do read them'. Mrs Gell wrote to the agents on her husband's behalf (**WSRO, PHA 726**). The fact that Gell was illiterate may indicate that agricultural literature did not always play a vital role in creating 'improving' farmers. This example suggests that landlord encouragement and finances may have been more influential in this process.

³³² In the **1785 Land Tax** register, Francis Gell occupied Applesham farm and copyhold, at the time owned by Rt Hon Sir John Shelley (£195 and £20), and glebe land and tythe owned by Revd Thomas Collins (£50). Francis Gell also collected the land tax, at £53 (Readman et al 2000:95). It is likely that Lord Egremont purchased the Applesham farm between 1785 and 1787. The collecting rental for 1792 states that Gell's rent is £550, and that £378 was received in four payments (**WSRO, PHA 8003-8004**). The significant rise in rent (£285) may be explained by extensive improvements including the construction of barns and drainage that may have increased the acreage and productivity of this estate.

³³³ **WSRO, PHA 726**: Letter from Mr Gell to JU Tripp, 28 June 1787.

that Tripp possessed technical knowledge regarding the construction, or, more likely, that the agent was able to authorise further work and costs. Repairs to stables and embankments were also made in 1792.

Between 1802 and 1803, Francis Gell and his son negotiated an extension of the Applesham lease, arguing that a lease of four years was 'too short to encourage the improvement which the son thinks necessary'.³³⁴ Tyler advised Gell 'in the capacity of your friend, and not as his lordships steward' that he should accept a seven-year lease, which was apparently a suitable compromise. In 1806, permission was granted for ploughing a section of pasture, although a request for fencing was denied.³³⁵ In August of the same year, Gell was granted further permission for ploughing, although Tyler hoped 'no more such applications will be made: as I am very averse to destroying good meadow land'.³³⁶ In 1807, Gell was sent '155 feet of stone pipes' for drainage, and requested permission for the construction of a mill at Applesham.³³⁷ The correspondence also reveals the sale of timber, and cattle by the agents on Gell's behalf.³³⁸ It is clear that Francis Gell and his son were ambitious agricultural improvers, who received considerable support from Egremont for their endeavours until the son's death in 1837.³³⁹ This example, if it were repeated, suggests that Egremont may have

³³⁴ **WSRO, PHA 12009**, Letter from William Tyler, 30 July 1802.

³³⁵ **WSRO, PHA 12009** Letter to Mr Gell 27 Feb 1806

³³⁶ **WSRO, PHA 12009** Letter to Mr Gell 30 August 1806

³³⁷ **WSRO, PHA 8620**: Aug 6 1807, letter 134. William Tyler to Mr Hill concerning the delivery of pipes via sailing ship to Shoreham, West Sussex. This request was denied as 'Lord Egremont has great objection to mills on his estate; and is by no means disposed to lay out any more money in their erection: as the repairs of them are very expensive, and the lettings of them well very casual', **WSRO, PHA 12009**: 4 March 1806.

³³⁸ **WSRO, PHA 8620, 12009**

³³⁹ **WSRO, PHA 4592**: Executors of Frances Gell quitted at Michaelmas 1837 to John Hampton, rent £641.14, land tax £43.

significantly improved many parts of (West) Sussex through financial and practical support for farm development. This correspondence further demonstrates the role of Petworth land agents in the negotiations for estate repairs and improvements.

5.10 The improvement of agricultural equipment and livestock

One of Egremont's achievements described by the Reverend Arthur Young was the improvement of agricultural implements, which had already by 1813 'had a considerable effect in the neighbourhood of Petworth, and induced some farmers to adopt the use of those which promise the greatest advantage'.³⁴⁰ This improvement of agricultural equipment is evident in correspondence regarding ploughs and threshing machines for the Egremont estate.³⁴¹ A letter from the Reverend Cleaver, former Rector of Spofforth, to Tripp in 1787 concerns the conveyance of a plough which would be 'particularly useful to me and to the neighbourhood' in the West Riding of Yorkshire.³⁴² Egremont provided materials for the construction of a threshing machine by Mr Gell of Applesham (1812), but was solemnly informed of the destruction of a similar machine in 1835, 'where wilfully or not I do not know'.³⁴³ Following 14 years of agricultural depression, demographic change, demobilisation

³⁴⁰ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex*, p.58.

³⁴¹ **WSRO, PHA 1099, PHA 726; PHA 2682, PHA 8618.**

³⁴² **WSRO, PHA 726:** Jan 16 1787 Revd E. Cleaver, Leeds, to JU Tripp.

Euseby Cleaver (1746-1819) was presented to the rectory of Spofforth in 1774, which he held till 1783, when Lord Egremont presented him with the rectories of Tillington and Petworth. As Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin in Ireland his palace was plundered in the rebellion of 1798, although he was unharmed. He was raised to the archbishopric of Dublin in 1809. See 'Cleaver, Euseby' in L. Stephen (ed.) *Dictionary of National Biography* 11 (1887), p.22.

³⁴³ **WSRO, PHA 2682:** 20 Dec 1812; **PHA 8618:** 13 July 1835..

and a particularly thin harvest of 1830, the sporadic Swing Riots of 1830, and the threat of them, must have impacted on Egremont's motivations for improvement.³⁴⁴

Egremont also introduced smaller-scale agricultural implements, such as the iron dibble, while an enigmatic correspondence of 1805 mentions the delivery of an 'engine', the purpose of which is unclear.³⁴⁵ From these short examples, it is apparent that the construction and use of modern agricultural machinery was an important part of Egremont's strategy for improvement. It was also a part in which the land agents Tripp and Tyler featured, probably due to the high costs of such equipment.

A vast investment made in livestock further demonstrates Egremont's interest in agricultural improvement. Cattle were purchased from the royal herd at Windsor, paying £30 for a Hereford bull.³⁴⁶ Agricultural experiments were carried out in order to determine which breeds of cattle fattened most effectively, and the relative costs, work rate and value of an ox to a plough horse. Egremont's faith in oxen led him to offer a rebate of three percent from the rent of tenants who only worked oxen; seemingly out of character, and an unusual example

³⁴⁴ A. Charlesworth, B. Short and R. Wells, 'Riots and unrest' in K. Leslie and B. Short (eds.) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex* (Chichester, 1999), p.74.

³⁴⁵ The iron dibble was invented in Ireland for sowing seed by hand. H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.246. **WSRO, PHA 12012.**

³⁴⁶ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*.

of the landowner artificially postponing the demise of what was in effect an inefficient and antiquated method.³⁴⁷

More characteristic was the Earl's promotion of the local Southdown breed of sheep, and his interest in the improvement of his tenants' livestock more generally. The selective breeding of sheep on the estate was enabled by loans of excellent home estate rams made to his tenants. Tyler suggested to Mr Gell in 1806 that the selective breeding encouraged and enabled by Egremont, as well as Mr Sherwin the bailiff, had produced a stock superior even to Mr Ellman (1753-1832), a national authority on sheep breeding who developed the Southdown breed.³⁴⁸ Further improvement, though, according to Sherwin, could be made through the use of one of Egremont's rams with fine wool, which would 'considerably improve your stock'.³⁴⁹ Gell's sheep were subsequently objects of considerable commercial interest, being later transported to Newcastle.³⁵⁰

This letter of Tripp's illustrates the central role Egremont played in the promotion and facilitation of improvements in livestock. It also indicates the central role of the bailiff, rather than the land agent, in agricultural improvement; a point further demonstrated elsewhere in

³⁴⁷ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.249. J. Langdon, *Horses, oxen and technological innovation: the use of draught animals in English farming from 1066-1500* (Cambridge, 1986); J. Urquhart, *Animals on the farm. Their history from the earliest times to the present day*, pp.81 and 120.

³⁴⁸ **WSRO, PHA 12014**: Gell 30 Aug 1806. S. Farrant, 'John Ellman of Glynde in Sussex', *Agricultural History Review* 26.2 (1978), 77-88.

³⁴⁹ **WSRO, PHA 12014**: Gell 30 Aug 1806.

³⁵⁰ **WSRO, PHA 8620**: 18 Aug 1807.

the correspondence.³⁵¹ It is clear that the land agents held a relatively unimportant role in livestock improvements. It seems likely that their role was limited to the financial aspects of the matter.

5.11 Drainage and enclosure

Despite being key processes of agricultural change in national rhetoric over agricultural improvement and elsewhere on the Egremont estates, drainage and enclosure were not as significant for the Sussex estates, albeit for different reasons.³⁵² According to the Reverend Young, drainage was 'not yet thoroughly understood', and 'confined to a few spirited individuals' in Sussex.³⁵³ Although it is clear that complex hydrological systems were already in place for the supply of water to a series of lakes in the Park and home farm, Young reported a series of unsuccessful undertakings in drainage at Petworth.³⁵⁴ Young's report also included a printed map of Petworth drainage showing wide meadows (5-20 acres) near the river Rother.³⁵⁵ This map was adapted from a plan of water meadows drained between 1794 and 1796 that indicates open and covered drains under the river and road, and sluices

³⁵¹ **WSRO, PHA 1099.**

³⁵² A.D.M. Phillips argues that investment in drainage made least progress in eastern, southeastern and southwestern parts of England, but was most developed in northeastern, west-midland and western counties. This is supported by a contrast between the level of drainage that took place at Petworth, with that in Yorkshire for Lord Egremont. A.D.M. Phillips, *The underdraining of farmland*, p.206.

³⁵³ Revd. A. Young, *General View*, p.191.

³⁵⁴ Revd. Young described drainage undertaken by Mr Elkington, including the failure to produce a satisfactory water supply for a forcing-engine to supply the town of Petworth with water. Nevertheless, Mr Elkington 'drained an acre of boggy meadow very well and successfully, though at great expense of £40. Lord Egremont considers him as a very good common drainer, though a very expensive one; but without any particular skill or knowledge not possessed by any other good drainer'. Revd. A. Young, *General View*, pp.196-197.

³⁵⁵ Revd, A. Young, *General View*.

'which if shut down will make the water flow over Hole Meadow, the Rough piece, and Pike Shoot in a few hours in the driest season'.³⁵⁶ Tyler's technical proficiency and knowledge of drainage is evident from papers on alterations to field drainage following the Rother navigation in Sussex.³⁵⁷

Most landowners met the full cost of drainage, often supplying tiles while tenants laid them. However, by the mid nineteenth century, drainage had become a complex process, needing expert supervision. The relative scarcity of evidence linking land agents to drainage improvements suggests that estate bailiffs and drainage engineers rather than agents undertook the supervision of this improvement. Despite the high financial outlay, drainage rarely increased returns any more than 3%, in contrast to the rapid returns from enclosure.³⁵⁸ It is likely that due to geological and geographical considerations, the high cost of drainage was considered more valuable when utilised elsewhere on the estate (see chapter six).

There is a similar contrast between the home and Yorkshire estates in the matter of enclosure. Only 150 acres of land were enclosed on the Egremont estates in Sussex (which had already undergone early enclosure); whereas the Yorkshire and Cumberland estates were significantly extended by enclosures. The land agents' correspondence regarding

³⁵⁶ **WSRO, PHA 3232**, 1796 by 'G.W'..

³⁵⁷ **WSRO , PHA 2685**: Letter regarding Mr Biddulph's meadow, no. 254. 21 April 1819. Both Tyler and Tripp were involved in the Rother Navigation; Tripp helped to choose a contractor for the navigation, and organised meetings for owners/occupiers of land. Tyler was involved in deciding the route of the navigation itself. See P.A.L. Vine, *London's Lost Route to Midhurst*.

³⁵⁸ J.V. Beckett, *Aristocracy*.

Sussex enclosures concerns the parliamentary and local activities needed to gain permission for this process. Enclosure involved a negotiation between large landowners and by committees representing tenants and small-scale farmers. Such a case was North Heath, where in 1807 a meeting regarding the North Heath enclosure carried the motion, although further meetings were still taking place in 1809.³⁵⁹ Similar delays were experienced with the Warningcamp enclosure near Arundel (1809).³⁶⁰ At least one enclosure, that at Duncton near Petworth was not expected to encounter any hindrances, as 'the Earl of Egremont is Lord of the Manor and owner of nearly all the property in it'.³⁶¹

By contrast, the Yorkshire and Cumbria Parliamentary enclosure bills were of far greater expense and inconvenience, as constant additions were to be made to the Croglin enclosure bill as it passed through the Houses of Commons and Lords.³⁶² Egremont's response was to request to Tyler in 1808 that 'in future, before any inclosure be brought so forward as to be introduced into the house, the rights and claims of the different parties may be fully understood, and accommodated: for the expense and trouble in this instance...'.³⁶³ Tripp and Tyler were influential in conducting the negotiation and preparation of enclosure bills, as well as gaining agreement between landowners in cases where a private agreement was

³⁵⁹ North Heath, near Pulborough, West Sussex. **WSRO, PHA 8620**: 12 Aug 1807, 24 Dec 1807. **WSRO, PHA 8621**: Jan 19 1809.

³⁶⁰ **WSRO, PHA 2681**: 23 April 1809.

³⁶¹ **WSRO, PHA 2681**: 17 Oct 1813.

³⁶² Croglin is situated on Croglin water, a river in Cumbria. William Marshall argued that 'through the uncertainty and expense attending private acts, a great proportion of the unstinted common lands remain nearly as nature left them'. W. Marshall, *On the landed property*, p.116.

³⁶³ **WSRO, PHA 8620**: 7 May 1808.

considered more suitable. The legal, social and political considerations of enclosure necessitated involvement by the land agents in this element of agricultural improvement.

5.12 Estate management post 1835

Following the death of Tyler in 1835, Charles Murray (c.1769-1847) was employed as land agent. Murray was already an old man when he moved to Petworth. Like Tripp and Tyler before him, he was a trained attorney, although he had set up practice in London (1796) rather than as a county solicitor. Unlike the previous agents, though, Murray was already an established member of polite society, having been born to a 'distinguished surgeon and noted philanthropist', campaigned with Alexander Jenner for vaccination for smallpox, and acted as secretary for the 'Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress', the London Fever Hospital and the controversial 'Constitutional Association'.³⁶⁴ Such a polite figure must have charmed the elderly Egremont, although he apparently infuriated the Earl's heir, Colonel Wyndham.³⁶⁵

It could be argued that the employment of Murray was a step backward in the professionalisation of land agents at Petworth. Such a polite and aged figure could probably have only taken an amateur interest in the workings of the estate, in contrast to the thorough and conscientious efforts of Tyler, although one being closer to the secure employment of

³⁶⁴ A rightwing group dedicated to the suppression of radical ideology, particularly through prosecution. See House of Commons Debates 23 May 1821 vol 5 cc890-3.

³⁶⁵ P. Jerome, 'Article regarding talk by Robin Healey on Charles Murray' *Petworth Society Magazine* 112 (2003), 7-8.

Tripp due to Egremont patronage. The inheritance of the estate by Colonel Wyndham, a figure with less capital at his disposal and less enthusiasm for agricultural improvement, too, may have stalled the rationalisation of estate management on this great estate. A comparison can be made here between the fortunes of the estate of the second Earl of Sheffield and the Petworth estate under Wyndham's direction. An efficient, if elderly estate steward, William Cooke (c.1828-1832) could not halt a decline in quality and production on the Sheffield estate due to the Earl's political prioritisation of other matters.³⁶⁶

Chapter five has explored the many and varied activities of Egremont on his home estate at Petworth. It has examined the routine legal and financial management of the estate as well as its integration into wider social and political structures. It has also considered the improving works made in relation to timber production, livestock, agricultural equipment, drainage and enclosure. In particular, this chapter has suggested that estate improvement at Petworth was supervised by legal agents, and undertaken in practice by bailiffs and surveyors.³⁶⁷ This mixed structure of estate management does not seem to have been unique to Petworth. On the Leveson-Gower estates in the West Midlands, agents were employed during the eighteenth century to oversee tenant bailiffs in tasks of rent collection

³⁶⁶ M. Lill, 'William Cooke, a Steward of the Sheffield Estate, (c.1828-1832)', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 144 (2006), 177-190.

³⁶⁷ F.M.L. Thompson (1968) argued that, in regions where improving farming methods were not being adopted, there remained many advantages to the employment of agents with legal training. These included a 'familiarity with the routine of leases, agreements, covenants, rent collection, distraints, and for probity in presenting estate accounts'. Thompson suggested that one of the strands of professionalism was the emergence of stewards with legal training who 'made estate management their whole-time occupation and conducted little if any ordinary private law practice'. F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*, p. 29-30. However, Petworth continued to employ legal agents, despite its emphasis on agricultural improvement.

and estate supervision. Similarly, the Dukes of Devonshire and Rutland relied on bailiffs for estate management during this period.³⁶⁸ By documenting improvement processes at Petworth, the chapter has also introduced the complex interaction between Egremont, his land agents and bailiffs with the wider network of local and national experts and commentators. The following chapters will further pursue the nature of this web of rural professionals on the wider Egremont estates.

³⁶⁸ J.R. Wordie, *Estate Management in Eighteenth Century England: The Building of the Leveson-Gower Fortune* (London, 1982). J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy* (1986), p.144.

CHAPTER SIX:

YORKSHIRE: THE BEVERLEY AND BARMSTON DRAINAGE

Chapter six introduces the Egremont estate in Yorkshire, and concentrates on a particular improvement scheme in the East Riding: the Beverley and Barmston drainage (1799-1810). It provides a case study in the management of a distant project using multiple agents working in relation to competing local interests (in contrast to the home estate improvements in chapter five). This chapter will examine Egremont's role and the role of his 'agents' in the Beverley drainage, and will examine the relative success of this improvement by a comparison of the 1796 survey, and one undertaken after the drainage in 1811 to assess the impact of the scheme on land use and rental values.

Egremont's estate in Yorkshire consisted of 24,733 acres in Wressle and Leconfield (East Riding), Catton and Seamer (North Riding), and Spofforth and Tadcaster (West Riding).³⁶⁹

These estates were part of the Percy estates which the second Earl of Egremont inherited in 1750, and were inherited by the third Earl, together with the Sussex and Cumberland estates in 1763. The Yorkshire estates were extensively reorganised by the London surveyor firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce from 1796 (whose work is more fully examined in chapter eight).

³⁶⁹ Contemporary agricultural surveys for the East and North Ridings indicate that the estate lands were characterised by soils of 'fertile clayey loam' in the Cleveland (Seamer), Holderness (Leconfield) and Howdenshire (Wressle) regions. H.E. Strickland, *A General View of the Agriculture of the East-Riding of Yorkshire* (1812, London); C. Howard, *Report of the Farming of the East-Riding of Yorkshire* (1848, York); J. Tuke, *General View of the Agriculture of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (1800, London). The Yorkshire rental was £19,443 in 1803, and in 1809 the Spofforth rental for this estate was £3,232. **WSRO, PHA 4111.**

Drainage and enclosure were significant factors in the improvement of Egremont's Yorkshire estates. The degree to which the Yorkshire estate became central to the family's self-image is indicated by the fact that Colonel Wyndham took the title Lord Leconfield in 1859. Egremont's aspiration for agricultural improvement is indicated by the landowner's sizeable investment in drainage on the Yorkshire estate. Between 1797 and 1812, Egremont spent £26,000 on draining and fencing in the county.³⁷⁰ The most significant of these investments was the Earl's contribution to the Beverley and Barmston drainage scheme in the East Riding from 1799, for which he paid more than £25,000 towards the total cost of £115,000. This initiative was based in the valley of the river Hull in Holderness. When complete, the scheme transformed often flooded and waterlogged carrs or boggy ground into some of the richest agricultural land in England.³⁷¹

6.1 The Beverley and Barmston Drainage (1796-1810)

Medieval and earlier sources record that the Hull valley had been an extensive area of marshland, with three marshes stretching northwards for about twenty miles from Kingston Upon Hull to Driffield, and from between two to five miles east to west from the clay land of Holderness to the Yorkshire Wolds. The Hull River was central to the local drainage system. Although some improvements were made to the southeast part of the valley up until the mid

³⁷⁰ H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.333.

³⁷¹ B. English, *The Great Landowners of East Yorkshire 1530-1910* (Howden, 1990), p.193-194; A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman (1749-1832) Civil Engineer', *Transactions of the Newcomen Society*, 46 (1973-1974), 45-82, at 54; H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p. 302. Carr is a local term for 'a pond or pool; a bog or fen; now, usually, wet boggy ground; a meadow recovered by draining from the bog.' Oxford English Dictionary online, 2007. A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman', p.55.

eighteenth century, the waterlogged carrs remained much as they were in medieval times.

The surveyor John Grundy measured winter flooding in 1763 at up to 1.4 metres deep, while

Thomas Browne surveyed a carr at Brandesburton, east of the river Hull and found that it

was under water for nine months of the year.³⁷² The agricultural writer William Marshall felt

unable to visit this 'fen country' in the 'extreme wetness' of 1787, although found 'a flat of rich

marshes' and 'a considerable extent of fen lands' between Hull and Beverley on his visit in

1791 which, Marshall believed, were 'a disgrace to the county'.³⁷³

It is clear from the Egremont estate surveys of the period just how necessary drainage was.

Parts of the estate at Leconfield were frequently flooded, and were consequently of very little

value. Kent, Claridge and Pearce reported in 1797 that while Leconfield itself (at only two

miles from Beverley) was very well managed by 'opulent' tenants, buildings in the

neighbouring village of Arram were in 'the most deplorable condition imaginable'. The 1797

survey described Arram Carr as a 'miserable unhealthy and unproductive swamp'.³⁷⁴

Similarly, Arthur Young described his patron's land there as 'a horrid scene, worth nothing;

and most of the rest similar'.³⁷⁵ Arram Carr covered 565 acres, one quarter of which was

used as occasional summer pasture, while the remainder was recorded as unproductive

³⁷² J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, East Yorkshire Local History Society, 8 (1958, 1976), p.1 and 11. C. Hadfield, *The Canals of Yorkshire and Northeast England*, 2 vols. (Newton Abbot, 1973), vol. 1, p.83.

³⁷³ W. Marshall, *The rural economy of Yorkshire Comprising the management of estates, and the present practice of husbandry in the agricultural districts of that county*, 2nd ed. Volume 2. (London, 1788, 2 vols), p.260-261.

³⁷⁴ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, valuation and new arrangement of the estates belonging to The Right Honourable George O'Brien Earl of Egremont situate in Wressell, Thornton, Leconfield, Arram, Scorbrough, Cherry-Burton, Catton, Fullsutton, Wilberfoss, Newton, Stamford-Bridge and other adjoining parishes in the East Riding of the County of York. By Kent, Claridge and Pearce, 1797.

³⁷⁵ **PHA 91 letter 28**, Arthur Young to Lord Egremont, 24 October [1797].

wasteland. Despite this, the soil quality was good and suitable for cultivation, and if it were drained it could receive a probable rent of 15 shillings per acre.³⁷⁶

While the current state of the carrs was apparently viewed as worthless by large landowners, agricultural improvers and government, they were in fact valuable sources of fuel and thatching material, and sometimes fish for the poorer members of Holderness communities. The carrs provided pasture during the summer months, and were used by landowners for fish and waterfowl when flooded. However, they were let in 1763 between 2 pence, and 2 shillings 6 pence per acre while other land fetched between 10 shillings, and 20 shillings per acre.³⁷⁷ Landowners such as Egremont therefore had a powerful incentive to improve their land, although this would be to the detriment of poorer cottagers.

The draining of the Hull valley increased at a rapid pace from the mid eighteenth century. In his tour of northern England published in 1770, Arthur Young commented on drainage schemes being undertaken between Cottingham and Hull in the southwest of the valley, where old ditches were being cleaned and new ones created. Young recorded the sight of a number of drainage windmills or 'engines' in the east, which, while not so numerous as those in the Fenlands, demonstrated how effective drainage could enable the planting of arable crops and improved pasture. Young recognised the potential for land in the area that could

³⁷⁶ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey by Kent, Claridge and Pearce, 1797. **PHA 91 letter 28**, Arthur Young to Lord Egremont, 24 October [1797].

³⁷⁷ J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, p.11. See also H. Cook and T. Williamson, eds., *Water management in the English landscape. Field, marsh and meadow* (Edinburgh, 1999), p.10 for a similar description of the East Anglian Fens in the seventeenth century.

be let for high rents if drainage and enclosure were complete, and if road widths were minimised.³⁷⁸ Isaac Leatham (1774-1815), author of the first *General View* of agriculture for the East Riding, commented upon drainage in the Hull valley but claimed in 1794 that much remained still to be done. He considered both the benefits of drainage and improved navigation on the river Hull, and the need to maintain drains once they had been created. Leatham, like Young, stressed the benefits of drains that extended 'beyond a temporary improvement', and was active in the promotion of improved drainage and navigation in the county.³⁷⁹

The Beverley and Barmston drainage scheme (1799) was preceded by the Holderness level Drainage passed by Act of parliament in 1764.³⁸⁰ The Holderness Drainage was organised by landowners on the eastern side of the valley who formed an independent body with the power to make new banks and drains. While the scheme was not completed, it achieved one major drain that brought improvements to the southern carrs, where land had increased in value by more than 5 shillings an acre, and inspired other parts of the valley to attempt to improve drainage. Subsequent improvements in the west of the valley included the

³⁷⁸ A. Young, *A six months tour through the North of England*, 2nd edn, Vol 1, letter IV (London, 1770, 1771), pp.172-173..

³⁷⁹ I. Leatham, *General View of the East Riding of Yorkshire, and the Ainsty of the city of York* (London, 1794), p.11, 19-24; Leatham took part in the promotion of the navigation of the river Derwent in 1799, and was an enclosure commissioner in the East and West Ridings. C. Hadfield, *The Canals of Yorkshire*, vol. II p.317, 327; F. Steer et al. *Dictionary of Land Surveyors*, p.162.

³⁸⁰ 1764 (4 Geo. III), c.47 Holderness (Yorkshire East Riding) drainage, preserving and improvement. See also 1766 (6 Geo. III) c.74 Rendering more effectual an Act concerning Holderness drainage and 1832 (c.1). Chronological Table of the Private and Personal Acts, *Office of Public Sector Information* www.opsi.gov.uk.

Cottingham joint enclosure and drainage Act (1766), the Beverley and Skidby drainage Act of 1785, and drainage in the Hessle lowlands from 1792.³⁸¹

6.2 Proposals for the Beverley and Barmston Drain (1796-1798)

The employment of the surveyor firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce by Egremont on the Yorkshire estates coincided with the planning of the Beverley drainage. It is clear from the firm's initial report on the estates that some progress towards the drainage had already been made, and that 'several surveyors have seen [Arram Carr] and no doubt given their opinion upon it'.³⁸² From the onset, the agents were optimistic, and their support for the scheme can be understood after reading Nathaniel Kent's discussion of drainage in his text *Hints to gentlemen of landed property*, in which he described draining as 'the first improvement that wet lands can receive'.³⁸³ Drainage at Arram would then be complemented by the 'new modelling and laying out [of] lands' on the estate.³⁸⁴ In the survey, John Claridge reminded Egremont that it was in his interest to assist draining in each township as this would 'bring more land into cultivation and increase the produce to tenants and ultimately add to your rental'.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, p.13-14.

³⁸² **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797.

³⁸³ N. Kent, *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property*, Second edition, (London, 1776), p.24.

³⁸⁴ **WSRO, PHA D22/12**, Yorkshire letters from Messrs Kent, Claridge and Pearce to Lord Egremont and his Petworth agents. Claridge to Egremont, 7 Oct. 1796.

³⁸⁵ **WSRO, PHA D22/12**, Claridge to Egremont, 9 Oct 1797.

In their Yorkshire report, the agents offered two approaches to the drainage of the land at Arram, firstly:

'By making it a public drainage under the sanction of parliament and carrying the water from the river to a lower level across the country to an outfall near Hull, and the other by embankment and engines. [This] would be extremely expensive in purchasing of the line for cutting through, as well as for the act of parliament, the commissioners survey etc... [Secondly,]...the most easy as well as the most independent method appears to be, first to embank out the river and the adjoining property (save Sir Charles Hotham's) which should be joined in the scheme, making parallel drains on each side to catch the ooziings of the bank - these dykes being cut sufficiently deep nothing would remain to be done but to lift the water into the river at it's lowest mark, by a very capital engine, which if constantly attended to, and kept regularly at work for a few years, would not fail of success; and the expense of the digging, the engine and the bridges etc might perhaps cost from £5,000 to £7,000, and the object when completed, would be worth from 12 to £15,000 which now is a miserable unhealthy and unproductive swamp.'³⁸⁶

The practicability of the second scheme for draining the estate by engine was evidenced by the actions of some of the tenants (led by a Mr Wilkinson) who had erected private engines for draining their farms, and was confirmed by Nathaniel Kent. However, this mode of

³⁸⁶ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797.

drainage was seen as advisable 'in case the application to parliament should fail'.³⁸⁷ It is clear then that the public drainage scheme had already been set in train.

Between 1796 and 1798 there was much discussion by landowners and engineers regarding the method of draining the undrained carrs in the northern part of the Hull valley. The engineers all emphasised the necessity of embanking the river Hull and its tributaries, and of carrying water away from the carrs by a separate drain at a lower level. However, the engineers disagreed on the direction the lowland drain should take, the outlets including the sea at Barmston, and both the rivers Humber and Hull.³⁸⁸ In his *Annals of Agriculture* (1798), Arthur Young printed the various proposals made in 1796 for the Beverley drainage, with estimated costs that ranged from £34,318 to £64,000. In January 1796, the engineer Richard Hodgman proposed to direct the drain into the sea at Barmston without improving the river Hull. This would involve 15,000 acres, at a total estimated cost of £52,594. The engineer William Jessop (1745-1814)

'...agreed with Mr Hodgman in reporting against the river Hull as the means of draining, but differed from him respecting the retrograde course to Barmston, which he thought would cost £64,000 and proposed a cut to [Hessle] Haven, in the Humber.'³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797. **PHA D22/12**, Kent to Egremont, 7 Sept 1797.

³⁸⁸ J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, p.15.

³⁸⁹ A. Young, 'Holderness-Beverley-Hull', at 122.

However, the successful and most economical proposal was made in October 1796 by the engineer William Chapman (1749-1832), who 'proposed to carry part of the waters to the sea, at Barmston, and part to the Humber' for £34,518.³⁹⁰ Chapman was an engineer and inventor who had returned to reside in his hometown of Newcastle in 1794 after eleven years in Ireland, where he was the engineer of the Kildare canal, the Limerick-Killaloe Canal and, with William Jessop, consulting engineer to the Grand Canal of Ireland (1789-1794).³⁹¹ Chapman had developed the successful method of building oblique (or eschewed) arch bridges and invented self-acting machinery for lowering coal wagons into ships.³⁹² In 1796, the engineer had been commissioned by the Beverley and Barmston drainage commissioners to prepare plans and estimates for two large drainage and flood protection schemes in Yorkshire, between Beverley and Barmston, and between Muston and Yedingham (near Scarborough). Chapman was employed by the commissioners from 1799 until 1810, for a fee of £2,158.³⁹³

As A.W. Skempton has correctly argued, Chapman's scheme for the Beverley drainage was more imaginative and thoroughly worked-out than those of his competitors. Chapman's proposal involved the diversion of upland waters from the drainage area (by diverting streams from Skipsea and Burton Agnes eastwards to the sea at Barmston), and separating

³⁹⁰ A. Young, 'Holderness-Beverley-Hull', at 122-123.

³⁹¹ The Limerick and Killaloe Canal (Act 1768), costing £22,500. Chapman was engineer between 1791-1794. This canal would have passed parts of the Egremont estate in County Clare.

³⁹² 'His genius and fame are well-nigh forgotten'. R. Welford, *Men of Mark 'Twixt Tyne and Tweed*, 3 vols, (London, Walter Scott Ltd, 1895), I, p.520-525, at 520; J. Weale, 'Life of William Chapman', *Weale's Quarterly Papers on Engineering*, I: 2, 1-28; A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman (1749-1832)', p.45-47; A. McConnell, 'Chapman, William', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004).

³⁹³ A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman', p.55.

land drainage from the 'living waters' of the river and tributaries through the construction of drainage cuts that were independent of the watercourses. This meant that the embanked river was not burdened with the flow of the land drains.³⁹⁴ While Chapman's original proposal to divert water into the Humber was most efficient in terms of gradient, a promised contribution of £600 by the Hull Corporation, the Dock Company and Hull Trinity House led landowners to favour the river Hull.³⁹⁵

6.3 Opposition and a defeated Bill (1797)

Egremont's enthusiasm for the Beverley drainage can be seen both in his significant financial contribution, and in his public support for the drainage. The Beverley drainage Bill (1797) described the area as 'incapable of any considerable improvement' without drainage and flood protection. However, after two readings, the bill was rejected.³⁹⁶ This was not altogether unexpected, as Claridge had reported in September 1797 that 'the business appears to be in an unpromising state'. No landowners except Egremont had made a financial contribution to the scheme, and the agent believed that opposition to the bill had increased to a significant extent.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman', p.55.

³⁹⁵ J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, p.15.

³⁹⁶ Journal of the House of Commons, 22 May 1797 and 16 June 1797; *Failed Legislation 1660-1800, extracted from the Commons and Lords Journals*, ed. by J. Hoppit, (London, 1997), p.548.

³⁹⁷ Egremont had so far contributed £1,600 to the drainage, and sent a further £2,300 in October 1797. **WSRO, PHA D22/12**, Claridge to Egremont, 4 Sept. 1797; **PHA D22/12**, Claridge to Egremont, 19 Oct. 1797.

In response to the failure of the Bill, Egremont requested that Arthur Young, a national figure in favour of agricultural change (whom he believed to be at Hull) might find out the cause of opposition. Although Young was now at the Earl of Exeter's Burghley House at Stamford in Lincolnshire, he offered to undertake a further journey for Egremont, probably partly in the hope of patronage for his son, the Reverend Arthur Young.³⁹⁸ In dismissing his patron's protests regarding 'a troublesome and retrograde journey', Young claimed that he was 'too much interested in everything you have at heart to see any difficulties'.³⁹⁹ In a friendly tone, Young asked for details on the drainage scheme, a map, and introductions to those involved. Young claimed that:

'All depends on my understanding it fully and clearly – tell me where the shoe pinches – on what grounds they are opposed – don't write in a hurry for business is never well done in a hurry and I should be sorry to go and then do no good'.⁴⁰⁰

In Yorkshire, Young met with local proprietors and members of the company established to organise the Beverley drainage. These men explained the situation and the objections of a Mr Lloyd [of Watton] as 'the apprehension of not being able to raise £6,000 by mortgage in such times' [of war and the associated credit problems], which Young thought might be overcome by private negotiation, and by the company of landowners raising £36,000 rather than £30,000. Lloyd, with only a life estate, had 'made nothing on his 2,000 acres which is

³⁹⁸ London, **BL Add Ms. 35127, f.456**, Lord Egremont to Arthur Young, 17 October 1797; **WSRO, PHA 91, letters 9 and 28**, Young to Egremont, 14 October [1797] and 24 October [1797].

³⁹⁹ London, **BL, Add. Ms. 35127, f.456**, Lord Egremont to Arthur Young, 17 October 1797; **WSRO, PHA 91, letter 9**, Young to Egremont, 14 October [1797].

⁴⁰⁰ **WSRO, PHA 91, letter 9**, Young to Egremont, 14 October [1797].

nearly under water', and hence could not borrow for his share of the drainage. On his visit, Young had time for a nine-hour ride that followed the Holderness bank and which provided an opportunity to compare the drained, with the undrained environs. Young described 'the watery desert on one side of the river and cultivation with 20 s[hillings] an acre on the other by means of drainage'.⁴⁰¹

Young's visit and sense of loyalty to his patron provided ample material and motivation for an article in his *Annals of Agriculture* (1798). Here, Young celebrated the improvements in land quality and rent achieved on 40,000 acres of drained land, and a further 30,000 acres in progress. He concentrated, though, on one marsh on the west side of Hull owned by Egremont, the drainage of which was opposed by a Richard Bethell on the advice of his steward. Young criticised Bethell, claiming that:

'...so marvellous is the stupidity of mankind, that they are often instigated by ignorance or prejudice against measures, which, of all others, would be the most decisive for their real and palpable interest!'⁴⁰²

It is intriguing that Young's acerbic comments fell on the Bethell family, who were great landowners in Holderness (with a rental of £10,000 in 1799 and with 13,395 acres recorded in 1873). Surprisingly, the Bethells were active in agricultural improvements and land

⁴⁰¹ **WSRO, PHA 91, letter 28**, Young to Egremont, 24 October [1797]; B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p.194.

⁴⁰² A. Young, 'Holderness-Beverley-Hull, some notes, in 1797', *Annals of Agriculture* 31 (1798), 113-164, at 116-117; B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p.194.

drainage; Richard Bethell and his mother were involved in improvements to the Drifffield Navigation, and built the Leven canal. It was probably the latter, built between 1801 and 1804, but planned with William Jessop from 1786 and located on the east side of the Hull proximate to Arram, and part of the Holderness drainage, that led to this early opposition to the Beverley scheme.⁴⁰³

However, Messrs Bethell and Lloyd were not the only objectors to the drainage scheme. Sir Christopher Sykes, who was the largest landholder in the East Riding during the nineteenth century, did not support the bill because he distrusted the clerk and disliked some of the promoters.⁴⁰⁴ Other, even more powerful opposition included the proprietors and commissioners of the Holderness Drainage that benefited from the same flooded carrs that the Beverley Bill attempted to remove as it reduced pressure on the Holderness banks. As June Sheppard described, the Holderness trustees stipulated limitations on the proposed drainage works to the west of the valley in order to safeguard the Holderness level Drainage. These stated that the banks on the west side of the river Hull must be at least 150 ft from the Holderness level banks to give the river space in times of flood; that new banks on the west side should not exceed the height of the Holderness level banks opposite; and a stretch of 300 yards of the new banks must be at least six inches lower than the lowest 100 yards of the Holderness banks. While these stipulations ensured that any flooding of the Hull would

⁴⁰³ C. Hadfield, *The Canals of Yorkshire*, vol. II, p.306-307; B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p.23, 31, 56, 60. *England and Wales Return of Owners of Land, 1873* (London, HM Stationery Office, 1875); J. Bateman, *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*.

⁴⁰⁴ B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p194, and 63. The 'clerk' referred to here could be either the resident engineer, or the commissioner of the Beverley drainage.

be to the detriment of the new drainage scheme, the landowners had no choice but to accept them if any improvement was to be obtained.⁴⁰⁵

Opposition to the Beverley drainage from elite East Riding landowners such as the Bethells and the Sykes, as well as competing drainage and navigation schemes in the area provide an illustration of the limited local influence that Egremont held in the region as an absentee landowner. Although the 1873 survey revealed that the Wyndhams owned 13,247 acres in the East Riding (not so dissimilar to the Bethell's 13,395 acres), this was dwarfed in comparison to the Sykes' 34,010 acres. Local elites such as the Bethell and Sykes families, together with other great Yorkshire landowners including the Duke of Devonshire and the Earl Fitzwilliam, would all have held more influence over local affairs than the Earl of Egremont.⁴⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Egremont, like his Yorkshire aristocratic counterparts, held national political and social influence, demonstrated in this case by the proclamations of Arthur Young.

Having dismissed those who had defeated Egremont's proposals, Young described in his article the 'wretched state' of undrained land in the area. The opposition to the scheme was perplexing to Young, who claimed that proprietors must have been 'fast asleep!' not to see

⁴⁰⁵ J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, p.15.

⁴⁰⁶ B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p.31; *Return of Owners of Land*, 1873; J. Bateman, *The great landowners*.

the contrast between improved land, and the potential of flooded waste. A clear indication of

Young's motives for publication can be seen in the following:

'The present Earl of Egremont... has, in union with some other proprietors, tried once to get an act, but was opposed and defeated. I know not how to suppress the indignation I feel at such a recital. Surely there must be some gross fault in the forms and modes of making these applications to parliament, which must give to wrong-headed men greatly too much power to impede undertakings so imperiously demanded for the public good!'⁴⁰⁷

Although we should not dismiss the necessity for drainage on these estates, this article, like his son the Reverend Arthur Young's *General View of the Agriculture of Sussex*, reads like a hymn to a patron.⁴⁰⁸ Nevertheless, it is likely that Young's assistance, both public and private, may have forwarded the progress of the Beverley and Barmston Act.

6.4 The Beverley Drain (1799-1810)

The Beverley and Barmston Drainage Act was finally passed on 21 June 1798.⁴⁰⁹ The engineer William Chapman was assisted by a resident engineer, William Settle (with a salary of £175 a year), and four surveyors. In the next few years, the new drain was cut for twenty-three miles, various channels were deepened at the northern end of the valley, and the river

⁴⁰⁷ A. Young, 'Holderness-Beverley-Hull', at 119-120.

⁴⁰⁸ Revd. A. Young, *General View of Sussex* (London, 1813).

⁴⁰⁹ 1798 (38 Geo. III), c. 43 East Riding Drainage. *Statutes at Large*, Vol 17, 1794-1798, p.940.

Hull was embanked for twenty miles. Water that had previously drained westwards to the Hull was diverted to the sea at Barmston. The drainage involved the construction of eleven tunnels leading drainage cuts under Beverley Beck, Driffield Canal, the river Hull and its tributaries. It also produced twenty-seven road bridges and numerous culverts and occupational bridges. This resulted in the drainage and flood protection of 12,600 acres between Beverley and Lissett near Barmston.⁴¹⁰

Although Egremont made a significant financial and political contribution to this speculation, his involvement in the management of the drainage itself was limited. In August 1796, Egremont's Petworth agent James Upton Tripp wrote to him reporting that:

'I returned from Beverley last night. The drainage to the sea is totally given up and the drainage onto the Humber or the lowest part of the river Hull to be adopted. A Mr Chapman is to be sent directly to point out the proper line and take the levels'.⁴¹¹

This early correspondence implies that the drainage commissioners, likely to have been led by local proprietors, were making initial decisions regarding the drainage without involving all parties, particularly absentees. Tripp suggested that 'perhaps it would be much to your satisfaction to send a man here on your account to take the levels' as a check and balance to the engineer and drainage commissioners.⁴¹² Nevertheless, the Yorkshire agent John

⁴¹⁰ A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman', p.54.

⁴¹¹ **WSRO, PHA D22/17**, James Upton Tripp to Egremont, 3 August 1796.

⁴¹² **WSRO, PHA D22/17**, James Upton Tripp to Egremont, 3 August 1796.

Claridge played a significant role in directing the drainage across Egremont's land. Claridge was also updated on the progress of the drainage commissioners by Christopher Keld (d.1806), a Beverley landowner and mayor between 1804 and 1805.⁴¹³ Furthermore, as correspondence between Claridge and a Mr J. Lockwood demonstrates, Claridge directed Egremont's proxy vote for the drainage commissioners, thereby indirectly influencing the progress and maintenance of the drainage.⁴¹⁴

Work on the drainage was suspended during 1799, probably due to heavy flooding, which resulted in a poor harvest.⁴¹⁵ While the following summer was dry, the draining continued to make slow progress. Perhaps unreasonably, Claridge complained that the 'commissioners have let the work at too low a price and the undertakers have been [too] incompetent to complete their engagements'.⁴¹⁶ By November 1801, however, Claridge reported that the drainage was in a respectable 'state of forwardness'. He had consulted with the resident engineer regarding the line of the cutting through the Egremont estate, which he considered satisfactory. Claridge now turned his attention to the improvement to be obtained on this estate following the drainage, and proposed to give all tenants notice to quit at Michaelmas [29 September 1802]. Claridge hoped 'to see the effect of the drain next summer [1802] and

⁴¹³ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 13 Oct. 1804. In 1792, Keld's 227-acre estate was the largest in Tickton, two miles northeast of Beverley. Keld also owned over 100 acres in Weel, at a similar distance east of Beverley, and close to the river Hull and the route of the drainage scheme. Both estates were close to Lord Egremont's land at Leconfield and Arram. 'Lists of Officers', 'Outlying townships: Tickton' and 'Outlying townships: Weel', *A History of the County of York East Riding: Vol.6: the borough and liberties of Beverley* (1989), p.198-205, 301-308, 308-313.

⁴¹⁴ **WSRO, PHA 1094**, Copy of letter from J. Lockwood to Claridge, 1 July 1810.

⁴¹⁵ **WSRO, PHA D22/12**, Claridge to Egremont, 7 Feb. 1799; 18 Aug. 1799 and Sept. 1799.

⁴¹⁶ **WSRO, PHA D22/14**. Claridge to Egremont, 31 October 1800.

prepare a plan or arrangement to lay before' Egremont.⁴¹⁷ Like enclosure, drainage provided an opportunity for the rearrangement of farms, and for re-letting the estate at improved rents.

In April 1803, Claridge met with William Chapman, and reported to Egremont that he wished to make a 'tolerably good account of the progress of the drainage'. With considerable autonomy, Claridge had established the route of drainage through the estate, and had:

'settled with Mr Chapman as to the culvert, which [he] is now making under the Arram Beck, so that the vessels will pass over it, up the course as usual, to land their goods at Arram'.⁴¹⁸

At Beverley, Chapman's drain again passed beneath a tributary of the Hull (called Beverley Beck) and the engineer was employed by the navigation corporation to produce a lock to maintain the sufficient depth of water in the channel. As Charles Hadfield has demonstrated, drainage and navigation interests on the river Hull and its tributaries were in continual conflict.⁴¹⁹ The Driffeld navigation commissioners requested the assistance of the Hull M.P. William Wilberforce to help them get protective clauses into the Beverley and Barmston Bill before Parliament in 1798, the first of many conflicts between navigation and drainage authorities. As late as 1839 the Beverley and Barmston Drainage Commissioners

⁴¹⁷ **WSRO, PHA D22/14**, Claridge to Egremont, 1 November 1801.

⁴¹⁸ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 27 April 1803.

⁴¹⁹ C. Hadfield, *The Canals of Yorkshire*, vol. I p.84, vol. II pp. 298, 300.

complained that the river water was kept too high, 'whereby injury was occasioned the Drainage of the adjoining Lands'.⁴²⁰

It was not just navigation interests that were opposed to the Beverley drainage, but other drainage interests also obstructed progress. Claridge reported to Egremont in 1803 that landowners on the Holderness level were objecting to a breach of the Beverley Drainage Act, under which no drain should come within 50 yards of the Holderness bank.

Unfortunately:

'Just about the entrance to your estate, Mr Chapman has got within 40 yards of the Holderness bank, which has caused a great alarm and a violent blame on the engineer, and the Holderness proprietors insist upon this drain being filled up again, which is I believe 35 chains in length and will cost upwards of £300'.⁴²¹

Despite this setback, the agent was confident that the great drain 'will be perfected, all through your estate, this year, and that we may begin our operations next spring'. In preparation, Claridge had organised the production of 200,000 bricks for the construction of new farm buildings on the estate.⁴²² Rebuilding was an essential part of the rationalisation of the newly drained estate, and, as F.M.L. Thompson has argued, drainage without new

⁴²⁰ C. Hadfield, *The Canals of Yorkshire*, vol. I p.84, vol. II pp. 298, 300.

⁴²¹ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 27 April 1803.

⁴²² **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 27 April 1803.

buildings might be largely a waste of money. The total cost of new buildings including cottages and barns at Arram in 1804 was £900.⁴²³

Claridge reported in 1803 that he was prepared to give notice to quit to all tenants at Lady Day [25 March 1804]. It is clear from the two-year difference between this and the agent's previous estimate that there were significant delays in the drainage construction at Arram, probably caused in part by flooding and also by the objections of the Holderness drainage commissioners. However, as Claridge recorded, a nearby estate where drainage had been completed was now let for £470 per year, while it had previously been let for only £56. Promised financial gains, though, came at a considerable cost, and principally benefited large landowners. Drainage was limited to landowners with large amounts of capital available. For those without such resources, Claridge recognised, 'the demand for money involved many small owners in great distress and inconvenience'.⁴²⁴

Claridge confirmed that the main drain through the Egremont estate was complete in October 1803. A 'minute examination' with William Chapman had led to Claridge's conclusion that it 'will drain all the low ground and Arram carr most perfectly'. Claridge had

⁴²³ F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*, p.248; **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 13 Oct 1804.

⁴²⁴ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 27 April 1803 and **WSRO, PHA D22/14**, Claridge to Egremont, 1 Nov. 1801.

applied to the commissioners for compensation for land lost by the drainage, and had 'set out (with Mr Chapman) such interior public drains as I think will be beneficial'.⁴²⁵

For 'boggy' land such as this, Nathaniel Kent recommended to readers of his *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property* the construction of deep open drains that were sunk parallel to the river. This method was preferable to covered drains filled with brushwood as the latter on wet ground were 'more liable to be choaked [sic]'.⁴²⁶ Open drains were also recommended by William Marshall due to their low cost and efficiency. It is likely then that Claridge and Chapman set out small open trenches here on the Arram estate. Establishing underdraining on an estate after the construction of great open drains was not uncommon in East Yorkshire, although in this case Claridge had cannily arranged that this was undertaken at the Drainage Company's expense, rather than Egremont's. The landowner here had only to pay for partitions and fence drains between properties, which cost Egremont a further £600.⁴²⁷

In November 1803, Claridge supervised eighty men at work on the interior drains of Arram Carr; such a large number being due to the agent's enthusiasm to get the land 'cropped next year'.⁴²⁸ However, the agent had 'not yet relet the estate' from March 1804 because he

⁴²⁵ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 13 Oct.1803.

⁴²⁶ N. Kent, *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property*, p.24, pp.34-35.

⁴²⁷ W. Marshall, *On the landed property*; B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p.195. **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 13 Oct. 1803.

⁴²⁸ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, Nov. 1803.

wished to see the effect of a further new drain 'now ordered to be made by the proprietors, in the lowest part of the carr'. Nevertheless, he was confident that:

'Your Lordship will receive a thousand pounds per annum increase of rent from lady day next besides 5 per cent on buildings and 5 per cent on all the drains to be cut at your expense.... and I think your tenants will be satisfied and will agree to my wishes respecting the low land, in the mode of cultivating it'.⁴²⁹

This ideal mode of cultivation for Arram included turnips, which would previously have been difficult to cultivate on such waterlogged land. It is remarkable that land formerly described as a 'miserable unhealthy and unproductive swamp' could be thought capable of sustaining such vigorous cultivation.⁴³⁰

As F.M.L. Thompson has demonstrated, most landlords who had undertaken the complete funding and work of underdraining charged their tenants a percentage on draining outlays, and five percent was a common interest charge. However, very few great estates charged interest on building outlays. A desire to recoup part of the £25,000 Egremont had contributed towards the greater drainage project is understandable. However, interest charges placed much of the financial burden of underdraining on tenants.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont.

⁴³⁰ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797. **PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont; H. Cook and T. Williamson, eds., *Water management*, p.2.

⁴³¹ F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p.248. H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p. 302. I have found evidence for payments of at least £15,226 between 1797 and 1805 (**WSRO, PHA D22; 405**). If private estate drainage and building costs at Arram (1804) are included, the total is £16,726 (**PHA**

The progress of the drainage was again impeded by heavy snow and flooding in early 1804. At first, Claridge reported that 'nothing very material has happened to impede the works in Arram Carr and the ground continues to drain as fast as the drains are cut'. However, a month later the agent reported that as a result of a succession of floods 'much mischief has happened to the works', and the culvert which carried the great drain under Arram Beck had 'blown up', resulting in a 'general deluge' of the Carr and low lands, with communication only possible by boat. This meant that the agent could not charge rent for land which tenants 'could not get upon to cultivate'.⁴³² Despite this further delay and expense to the drainage, Claridge's correspondence from October 1804 revealed that '...every drain I have made into the main cut is effective and a considerable part of the land has been cultivated and produced some tolerable oats and rape'.⁴³³

By April 1805, even the lands affected by the 1803 flood promised productive cultivation. In October, Claridge found 'nearly the whole of Arram Carr cultivated', and reported that it had 'produced an abundant crop of both rape and oats'.⁴³⁴ With the supervision of a clerk of works (paid for by Claridge), the new barns, cottages, dykes and bridges were by then nearly completed. Claridge reported the 'great satisfaction in seeing this miserable village of Arram assume a new shape' and stated that 'I should rejoice much to ride over the place with your

D22/15). However, more payments would have been made subsequent to this. A.D.M. Phillips, *The Underdraining of Farmland*, pp.189-190.

⁴³² **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 4 Jan. 1804, 16 Feb. 1804, 25 Apr. 1805 and 13 Oct. 1804.

⁴³³ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 4 Jan. 1804, 16 Feb. 1804, 25 Apr. 1805 and 13 Oct. 1804.

⁴³⁴ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 25 Apr. 1805.

Lordship which at your last visit was not accessible by boat'. In April 1806, Claridge could also report that Arram carr was 'in a prosperous state', the whole of which would be in cultivation that year (see the subsequent revaluation of the estate, below).⁴³⁵

This drainage correspondence is evidence of the independence that Claridge enjoyed as Yorkshire agent. While he could not control the drainage commissioner's decisions regarding the broad location of the drains, he could arrange these in negotiation with William Chapman to Egremont's advantage. Claridge also advised Egremont on the deduction of drainage costs from his income tax.⁴³⁶ Furthermore, the agent appears to have had autonomy over the re-letting and reorganisation of the estate, and the method of cultivating it.

6.5 William Chapman's reports (1796-1809)

The participating proprietors of the Beverley and Barmston level were provided with printed reports from William Chapman during the drainage, although only the last of these survives in the Petworth House Archives. In this last report, Chapman explained the reasons for 'the very uncommon floods' in the early months of 1809. The restrictions of the Drainage Act meant that '...it was scarcely to be expected [that it]...should escape the almost general inundations which took place on the fens and low ground of this kingdom'.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 25 Apr. 1805, 20 Oct. 1805 and 27 Apr. 1806.

⁴³⁶ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 4 Nov. 1803.

⁴³⁷ London, Archive of the Institute of Civil Engineers: Mr Chapman's reports on the Beverley and Barmston drainage, 1796 to 1809. **WSRO, PHA 1094**, Printed report by William Chapman on the state of the Beverley and Barmston drainage, 15 July 1809.

The limitations on the height of the banks of the river Hull imposed by the Holderness drainage, as well as 'the compulsion of forming new banks' at a distance from the river and the 'parliamentary restriction of having an overfall' six inches lower than the Holderness banks were all factors in the flood. Together with the 'legal causes', Chapman reported that the 'loose and light nature of the soil', the construction of a new lock for the Driffield Canal from 1801 and the self-interested actions of proprietors regardless of injury to land below them were further reasons for the damage to agricultural land. Nevertheless, Chapman reported that on the whole, 'the Barmston drainage may be pronounced sufficiently perfect, excepting what remains to be done'.⁴³⁸

Despite its limitations, the completed drainage scheme deserves to be recognised as a 'classic civil engineering work' that resulted in the drainage and flood protection of 12,600 acres of valuable agricultural land. It did, however, cost an incredible £115,000 instead of the original estimate by William Chapman of £34,518. As Claridge recognised, delays due to flooding, and the high prices demanded for land near Hull (needed for the outfall), promised to make it 'a very expensive business' that may, and indeed did cost more than £100,000 before it was completed.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ **WSRO, PHA 1094**, William Chapman on the state of the Beverley and Barmston drainage, 15 July 1809.

⁴³⁹ A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman', p. 54 and 55. B. English, *The Great Landowners*, p.193-194; A.W. Skempton, 'William Chapman', p.54. A. Young, 'Holderness-Beverley-Hull', at 122-123. **WSRO, PHA D22/14**, Claridge to Egremont, N.D. [c.1807].

6.6 The revaluation of the Leconfield estate

Egremont's Leconfield estate underwent two rental revaluations in this period. These were in 1797, as Kent, Claridge and Pearce took over the agency, and in 1811 after the drainage. In the first valuation, Claridge reported that tenants were 'very desirous of knowing their new rents'. However, according to Claridge the tenants appeared 'satisfied' and knew that the rents were 'fair and reasonable'.⁴⁴⁰ Leases were from year to year 'as the tenants were not pressing for leases', probably due to the risk of flooding, and rents were not altered for elderly tenants.⁴⁴¹

Claridge's revaluation of the Leconfield estate in 1811 revealed the extent of farm rationalisation following the drainage, although this cannot be easily separated from the effect of wartime inflation. While only one tenant was replaced, and one habitation pulled down, over sixty percent of the remaining forty-nine tenants faced increased rents. Eight tenants saw an amplified rental for enlarged farms, while for a further eighteen tenants, rent increases did not involve an alteration to the acreage of their farms, but probably reflected the perceived increased productivity of the farms following the drainage and reorganisation of the estate, and included interest charges for building and underdrainage work, that were not listed separately in the rental.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ **WSRO, PHA D22/12**, Claridge to Egremont, 16 April 1797.

⁴⁴¹ **WSRO, PHA D22/12**, Claridge to Egremont, 7 Sep 1797.

⁴⁴² **WSRO, PHA 1471**, Survey and valuation of the Earl of Egremont's estates at Leconfield, Arram and Scorbrough, Yorkshire, by John Claridge, 1811.

included thirteen tenants who did not see any changes in rent or acreage to their holdings, who were perhaps not affected by the drainage, or who were elderly.

Calculations of rent per acre enable a clearer picture of rent change at this revaluation. Sixteen out of the forty-nine tenants saw an increased rent of less than fifty per cent on their previous rent, while a further sixteen tenants experienced a doubling of rent per acre. Three tenants saw rents more than double, including Samuel and William North at Leconfield, whose rent per acre in 1811 was nearly two and a half times more than the valuation in 1797 as a result of a significant reduction in their farms, from thirty-nine to ten acres and from a sixty-two acre farm to a smallholding of two acres respectively. These were two of only six tenants who saw a decrease in rent that generally involved a loss of acreage. Four of these tenants lost between twenty-nine and sixty acres, and their rents fell between sixteen and seventy-four pounds. It is likely that these large farms were not reduced in size and dispersed to smaller tenants, but were re-let to other large tenants such as William and Thomas Lee, John Brandham and John Clarke.⁴⁴⁵

The changing rental at Leconfield did not significantly alter the distribution of farm size. There was no change in the number of farms valued at fifty pounds or less, but a limited loss of medium-sized tenant farms valued between seventy-six pounds and ninety pounds. There was also a rise in the number of 'extra large' farms with rents over £400. As Stephen Daniels

⁴⁴⁵ **WSRO, PHA 1471**, Survey at Leconfield, 1811.

and Charles Watkins have observed for Uvedale Price's Foxley estate in Herefordshire, Egremont's Leconfield estate falls far short of Nathaniel Kent's model estate, despite being reorganised by the firm of which he was head.⁴⁴⁶

Although an anti-monopolist and advocate of small farms, Kent argued that 'the nature of our soil' (in England) could not support the farms of twenty to thirty acres that were common in Flanders. Kent suggested, therefore that no farms should have rents of less than thirty pounds.⁴⁴⁷ However, at Leconfield, forty-one and forty-seven percent of farms had rents of less than thirty pounds in 1797 and 1811, and thirty percent of the total number of farms were less than five acres in both surveys.⁴⁴⁸ Nevertheless, while holdings this small may have provided land for a house, pasture and shelter for a small number of animals and some land to grow vegetables, it is unlikely that they represented the main source of income for households. As such, they could be considered cottage smallholdings, or land for poor cottagers to enable them to keep a cow, a strategy for which Kent was a well known.

The Leconfield estate was also divided into several much larger properties. In his *Hints*, Kent argued that large farms did not offer the conveniences and economies that many landowners credited them with, and that the contemporary engrossing of farms at the expense of smaller

⁴⁴⁶ Table adapted from S. Daniels and C. Watkins, 'Picturesque landscaping and estate management. Uvedale Price at Foxley, 1770-1829'. *Rural History* 2 (1991), 147. N. Kent, 'Advantages resulting from small farms and those of the most profitable size described', in *Hints to gentlemen of landed property* (London, 1775), pp.204-222.

⁴⁴⁷ N. Kent, *Hints to gentlemen* (London, 1775), p.215.

⁴⁴⁸ **WSRO, PHA 1471**, Survey at Leconfield, 1811.

tenants was based on 'ill-digested calculations' that led to 'considerable private loss, and public calamity.' Kent suggested that the largest farm on his model estate should have a rent of only £160.⁴⁴⁹ The Leconfield estate farms were considerably larger than this ideal, the largest being William Lee's farm of 533 acres, with a rent of £501. Twenty-four and thirty-one percent of farms in 1797 and 1811 had rents greater than £160 at Leconfield. Large farms were not limited to the Leconfield estate, though but can also be seen at Wressle and Thornton in the 1797 survey. Nevertheless, the high rents of some of the Leconfield farms may be in part explained by the dominance of horse breeding in the parish. As Claridge observed:

'Many of the tenants have expended very considerable sums on their farm buildings and particularly on their stabling - but it may be necessary to observe that some of these buildings are calculated mostly for their own private convenience as horse dealers... at present the chief return in the parish seems to be made by breeding and mostly by making up young coach horses for the London market'.⁴⁵⁰

This valuable trade assisted in the creation of large 'opulent' tenants and well-constructed farm buildings at Leconfield, such as those at Castle Farm on the site of the former Percy castle. Of the ten tenants with the largest acreages in the 1797 and 1811 surveys, seven and eight of the farms were located at Leconfield respectively. Only three farms over 160 acres were situated at Arram in both surveys, probably due to the restricted cultivation of the flood-

⁴⁴⁹ N. Kent, *Hints to gentlemen*, p.206, 216.

⁴⁵⁰ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797.

prone carrs and the limited number and quality of farm buildings. Although both factors received some attention during the drainage improvements on the estate, Arram remained the poor neighbour to nearby Leconfield, from which George Wyndham took his title as Lord Leconfield in 1859. As in 1797, most farms were let in 1811 from year to year, although some larger farms from two- to five-hundred acres were let for nineteen years. Crops grown on the heavy loam soil at Leconfield included wheat, oats, barley, beans and turnips, with rape and mangold wurzel on the carrs.⁴⁵¹

Taking Kent's model for 1,000 acres, we can infer that a 4,000 acre estate should support sixty-four families. However, at Leconfield in 1797 and 1811 between twenty-six and twenty-nine tenants held land valued at thirty pounds or more. As Daniels and Watkins also found, though, this number of tenants was at least greater than Kent suggested was the norm, where 'the generality of large estates do not support above a third part of these families'. As at Foxley, if smallholders with farms valued at less than thirty pounds but with more than five acres are included in the calculation, the number of families supported on the estate rises to thirty-four, and if tenants with less than five acres are also included, forty-nine tenant families could potentially live on the estate – a figure much closer to Kent's model.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵¹ **WSRO, PHA 1471**, Survey at Leconfield, 1811; *History, topography and directory of East Yorkshire (with Hull)* (Preston, T. Bulmer and Co., 1892).

⁴⁵² N. Kent, *Hints to gentlemen*, p.217-218; **WSRO, PHA 1471**, Survey at Leconfield, 1811; S. Daniels and C. Watkins, 'Picturesque landscaping and estate management', p.148.

Importantly, the total acreage of the Leconfield estate remained constant between 1797 and 1811 at 4,084 acres, suggesting that the drainage had not increased the amount of land rented, but had improved its potential for cultivation and reflected the enhanced quality of farm buildings. There was a significant rise in total rental income from the estate under the new arrangement, with an increase of £1,075 that brought the total rental to £6,453. This is close to the thousand pounds per annum increase in rent estimated by Claridge in 1803, although the later figure probably also included interest repayments, which were not listed separately and was also influenced by wartime speculation. Although impressive, the total rental falls far short of the first optimistic estimate of an increase in value of the land at Arram to between £12,000 and £15,000.⁴⁵³

While it has been noted above that the five percent interest repayments placed a burden on tenants, the 1811 revaluation recorded that only one tenant was replaced, and another removed when their habitation was pulled down. This suggests that those tenants who remained were happy to pay the improved rents and costs; and this was certainly the impression given by Claridge's correspondence with his employer. In October 1805, the agent reported that 'the tenants are all satisfied and happy in their new engagement and the whole of the advance of £1,600 per annum will be cheerfully paid'.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ **WSRO, PHA 1471; PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 13 October 1803; **PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797.

⁴⁵⁴ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 20 Oct. 1805; Claridge to William Tyler, 14 March 1805.

However, earlier the same year Claridge had written to the Petworth agent William Tyler and remarked 'what violent people we have at Arram'. As a result of this unidentified protest or damage to property, two dwellings ('which are mere huts') were pulled down. This relatively minor protest can be seen in the light of a long tradition of rioting, such as in 1628 following the drainage of Hatfield Chase in South Yorkshire by Cornelius Vermuyden (1590-1677). Other such protests include the destruction of a mill and fences by commoners in the parish of Stokesby in the Norfolk Broads during 1725, and the prolonged obstruction and later rioting at Otmoor in Oxfordshire following the attempted implementation of an unpopular drainage act in 1829.⁴⁵⁵

It can be implied from Claridge's correspondence with his colleague that not every tenant was content with the rent increases. It is likely, too, that these evicted tenants were cottagers, who suffered further from the loss of the carrs.⁴⁵⁶ Contemporary observers noted that the carrs were formerly extensive in the Hull Valley, but were in a 'great degree destroyed by the drainages'. As H.E. Strickland claimed 'such small matters of comfort, or rather of luxury' as the production of fish and wildfowl on the carrs had been 'overlooked in [view of] great national improvements'. However, it could be argued that the carrs were not

⁴⁵⁵ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 20 Oct. 1805; Claridge to William Tyler, 14 March 1805. C. Hadfield, *The Canals of Yorkshire*, vol. 1, p.64; W. Malcolmson, *Life and labour in England 1700-1780* (London, Hutchinson, 1981), p.127. C. Taylor, 'Post-medieval drainage of marsh and fen', in H. Cook and T. Williamson, eds., *Water management*, p.11. See C. Tilly, 'A change of repertoires', in *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (Harvard, 1995), p.60, and C. Griffin, 'Knowable geographies? The reporting of incendiarism in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English provincial press', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 32, 1 (2006), 38-56.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Thus when fen and marshlands were drained, reclaimed and parts given to outsiders, local people with common rights faced ruin'. C. Taylor, 'Post-medieval drainage', p.149. See also J. Thirsk, *Fenland farming in the sixteenth century* (Leicester, 1953) and J. Thirsk, 'The isle of Axholme before Vermuyden' *Agricultural History Review*, 1 (1953), 16-28.

sites of luxury, but sites of necessity for poorer cottagers.⁴⁵⁷ Smaller tenants would also have suffered disproportionately from the continued flooding of the area, and from the burden of interest charges. It is intriguing that even on an estate managed by the renowned firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce who viewed their role as one with responsibility to tenants as well as to employers, drainage resulted in hardship for some tenants, and even limited protest.⁴⁵⁸

Nevertheless, it was not just small tenants that had difficulties. In December 1830 John Brandham, a tenant of 310 acres at Leconfield Park relinquished the farm that he and his father had occupied 'for more than seventy years'. Brandham and his family had overseen the replacement of all the buildings on the farm, including a new house, and had paid for all labour for these improvements. He had accepted Claridge's 1811 revaluation, which had 'advanced the farm from £300 to £480 per annum' and which he believed 'was £100 per year above its value'. Furthermore, he had suffered heavy flooding during 1828 and 1829, when crops were 'entirely wasted', and when Claridge, despite returning the year's rent to some tenants, saw fit to reimburse Brandham for his damaged thirty acres with an allowance of only sixteen pounds. When Brandham asked for abatement in 1829, Claridge had apparently refused, and suggested he give up the farm, which was quickly re-let to another person for '£130 or £140 less'.⁴⁵⁹ It is clear then, that some tenants, both large and small, resented the

⁴⁵⁷ H.E. Strickland, *General View of the Agriculture of the East Riding of York* (London, 1812), p.28-29.

⁴⁵⁸ B. English, 'Patterns of estate management in east Yorkshire c.1840- c.1880' *Ag. Hist. Rev.* 32 (1984), 29-48.

⁴⁵⁹ **WSRO, PHA 1095**, Yorkshire estate papers; John Brandham to Earl of Egremont, 28 Dec. 1830.

rent increases following the Beverley drainage. Furthermore, even large tenants struggled in years when flooding damaged crops.

6.7 Summary: the impact of the Beverley and Barmston drainage

As June Sheppard has demonstrated, the Beverley and Barmston level was drained more efficiently than the Holderness level that had provided such opposition to the scheme. However, as suggested by William Chapman's 1809 report, many parts of the Beverley level were flooded in winter, and in July 1828 the surveyor of the drainage 'sailed in a boat, without much interruption, over land and fences, in a direct line from Hull Bridge to Frodingham Bridge' (the length of the river Hull).

Despite the risk of flooding, most of the Beverley carrs were ploughed and grew wheat, oats and barley although some of the lowest parts remained pasture.⁴⁶⁰ Arable land once described as a 'miserable unhealthy and unproductive swamp' at Arram now supported turnips and other root crops that were crucial to the enhancement of soil fertility. In conjunction with the drainage, the rebuilding of barns, cottages, dykes and bridges transformed the 'miserable village of Arram' into a more respectable, but still lesser hamlet of Leconfield.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶⁰ J.A. Sheppard, *The Draining of the Hull Valley*, p.16-19.

⁴⁶¹ **WSRO, PHA 3075**, Survey, East Riding, 1797. **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 13 Oct. 1803, 25 Apr. 1805, 20 Oct. 1805. H. Cook and T. Williamson, eds., *Water management*, p.2.

The revaluation of the Leconfield estate examined above produced a rental increase of £1,075 that reflected probable improved crop yields, as well as the rationalisation of farm layout and buildings, and the influence of wartime inflation. Nevertheless, this increase does not seem to be as significant when compared with the £25,000 outlay made by Egremont. As scholars have recognised, drainage brought a very low rate of return on investment.⁴⁶² Despite this, the provision of land drainage was one of the greatest influences on landscape change from the late eighteenth century, and brought large areas of wetland into cultivation.⁴⁶³ Nevertheless, as argued above, these areas were not the 'wasteland' characterised by Arthur Young and others, but may have been productive wetland landscapes in their own right.

An understanding of the Beverley drainage and the many other schemes in the Hull valley goes some way to correcting the view that 'during the war period there is very little evidence...that the landowners were financing any permanent improvements apart from enclosures'.⁴⁶⁴ It also suggests that the picture presented by current agricultural literature that little draining had taken place in England by 1800 may need reinterpretation.⁴⁶⁵

The Beverley and Barmston drainage scheme was of course not the only 'improvement' on Egremont's East Yorkshire estates. Notable amongst the others were Claridge's drainage

⁴⁶² A.D.M. Phillips, *The Underdraining of Farmland*, p.17.

⁴⁶³ S. Wade Martins, *The English Model Farm. Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914* (Macclesfield, Windgather, 2002), p.13.

⁴⁶⁴ F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p.226.

⁴⁶⁵ A.D.M. Phillips, *The Underdraining of Farmland*, p.46.

and embankment of the Thornton estate, which by 1799 had cost £400, the construction of the Pocklington Canal (1816-1818) and other ventures in Yorkshire in enclosure, drainage, rebuilding and mineral prospecting (the latter examined in detail in chapter nine).⁴⁶⁶ The development of the Pocklington Canal gives a brief insight into the political manoeuvrings by aristocratic landowners and proprietors of inland navigations such as Lord Rockingham and his heir the second Earl Fitzwilliam (1748-1833). Fitzwilliam was a member of the Board of Agriculture, and a correspondent with Egremont regarding proximate estates in the East Riding, and (as a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), potential absentee taxes in 1798. The engineers William Chapman, and later George Leather and son designed and constructed this canal that made Egremont's Thornton estate more accessible, and carried coal, fertiliser, corn, timber and flour between Pocklington and the river Derwent until it was purchased by the York & North Midland Railway in 1848.

The story of the Beverley and Barmston drainage illustrates many themes common to the whole enterprise of improvement. John Claridge's concern that 'in the case of expenditure [...] I think I am acting perhaps contrary to Lord Egremont's wishes' is indicative of the recurring difficulties inherent in the management of distant estates.⁴⁶⁷ This particular theme is further explored in chapter seven on the Wyndham investment in Australia. The Beverley and Barmston scheme was complicated further by the multiple agents acting on Egremont's

⁴⁶⁶ WSRO, PHA D22/12, Copy of letter from Mr Thomas Whitaker (surveyor of highways) to John Claridge, 29 Nov. 1799; Claridge to Egremont, 18 Aug. 1799.

⁴⁶⁷ **WSRO, PHA D22/14**, Claridge to W. Tyler, 26 Feb. 1802.

behalf: the firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce (acting solely as Egremont's agent); the journalist and commentator Arthur Young, as well as the engineer William Chapman, whose loyalties were divided between multiple landowners. The relationships between these various landowners were also complex and in need of careful management, a theme that also emerges in relation to the Pocklington Canal.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE WYNDHAM INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

1838-1864: 'These distant things only produce vexation and trouble'

This chapter considers the investment in the new province of South Australia by Colonel Wyndham (1787-1869) on his inheritance of the Wyndham estates in 1837: a significant, if abortive attempt at colonial land speculation, estate management overseas, and assisted emigration.⁴⁶⁸ The chapter examines the Wyndham investment in early South Australia in the context of other earlier interests in the Swan River settlement in Western Australia, in Van Diemen's land (Tasmania) and in New South Wales. It examines how the estate was established, and the role played by key figures such as Wyndham's land agents and the settlers sent out to the estate, in both the management, and the failure of the venture. It will examine the motives for this investment, and why such a failing estate should have been held onto for so long.

To the extent that the investment involved assisted emigration, Wyndham was following the tradition of benevolence and shrewd expenditure created by his father, the third Earl of Egremont and the Reverend Thomas Sockett at Petworth. Between them Egremont and Sockett had established the Petworth Emigration Committee that had assisted over 1,800

⁴⁶⁸ The Province of South Australia was founded in February 1836, and the government of South Australia was inaugurated at Holdfast Bay on the 28 December of the same year. South Australia was called a province to distinguish it from the penal colony of New South Wales. P.A. Howell, 'Clearing the cobwebs: a re-consideration of the beginnings of the Province of South Australia' *History Forum* 13, 1 (1991), pp.4-21.

people to emigrate to Upper Canada between 1832 and 1837.⁴⁶⁹ Egremont's policy of assisted emigration was in response to population pressure, underemployment, incendiarism (from 1830 to 1831) and rising Poor Rates in Sussex during this period and it was facilitated by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 that gave parishes, rather than government, responsibility for assisted emigration.⁴⁷⁰ Although the Petworth emigrations resulted in a doubtless welcome reduction in Poor Rates, Egremont was not simply 'shovelling out paupers' for economic gain.⁴⁷¹ This is evident from the care which the Petworth Emigration Committee took with the selection of emigrants, their outfitting prior to departure, the supervision on the voyage and their concern that the emigrants were found employment, as well as the apparent gratitude of emigrants' letters home, all of which suggest that the assistance was mutually beneficial. In contrast to Egremont's philanthropy, however, the Wyndham investment in South Australia appears to have been primarily concerned with creating personal wealth, rather than alleviating rural poverty. The critical difference between the two colonial investments was that Colonel Wyndham's speculation was in land, livestock and South Australia Company shares, rather than emigrants. A number of people received assisted passages to Australia, but on a smaller scale than under the third Earl.

⁴⁶⁹ W. Cameron and M. McDougall Maude, *Assisting emigration to Upper Canada. The Petworth project 1832-1837* (Montreal, 2000). Reverend Thomas Sockett attributed a reduction in the cost of parish relief 'to emigration because those people who went were not only taken off the funds of the parish, but also the children were no longer a burthen and do not go on to increase the burthen' **Parliamentary Paper** 1827, XVII (1) Select Committee on Poor Law Amendment Act, p4, Sockett's evidence.

⁴⁷⁰ The population of Petworth increased from 2000 to 3000 between 1801 and 1831. This was partly due to Lord Egremont's renowned generosity. The severe regulations of the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834) were, however, vigorously opposed by Lord Egremont and Colonel Wyndham. S. Thomas, 'Power, paternalism, patronage and philanthropy: the Wyndhams and the New Poor Law in Petworth. *The Local Historian* 32, 2 (2002), 99-117.

⁴⁷¹ The parish rate, which was over £1400 in 1831, declined to £426 in 1836, the fall attributed widely to the actions of the Petworth Emigration Committee. S. Thomas, 'Power, paternalism'.

7.1 Early interest in Australia

The first mention of Australia in the Petworth archives appears to be a letter from a Thomas Barrister to the Earl of Egremont in November 1829.⁴⁷² Barrister described a conversation he had with Egremont in the past regarding the Swan River settlement in Western Australia. On his arrival at this fledgling colony, Barrister wrote to Egremont of his disappointment at the reality, as opposed to the earlier reports of the landscape of Swan River: 'our hopes were high – and on communicating with those who had arrived before us and on their telling us that we had all been greatly deceived, many amongst us were greatly depressed'. Barrister reported, however, that he 'was determined after coming from one end of the globe to the other, to go, and see, and judge for [himself]'. At Swan River:

'There are parts on the river not exceeded in beauty or fertility by any country – a river has been found forty miles to the south, the banks of which are described in the most glowing terms – and great hopes are entertained of the south – and equal hopes of the north end a report is now current, that a fine district has been found there – on the whole [I] think that the country will turn out well.'⁴⁷³

Despite these positive impressions, Barrister 'would not yet take upon [himself] to recommend any person to come here for the present'. The letter suggests that Egremont was interested in the developing Swan River colony, which already had considerable

⁴⁷² **WSRO, PHA 136.**

⁴⁷³ **WSRO, PHA 136**, November 1829.

aristocratic investment.⁴⁷⁴ It also implies that promotional material on the colony may have misinformed potential colonists. Despite his enthusiastic report on the landscape, Barrister dissuaded Egremont from considering the colony as an investment in its still embryonic stage. By September 1830, however, the same Barrister reported that 'considerable progress has been made in exploring the country', describing potential timber and agricultural practices. The colony 'is extremely healthy' and failed farms are 'thro[ugh] bad management' rather than poor quality land.⁴⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Egremont seems not to have taken the idea of the Swan River colony any further.

It is clear that at the time of the establishment of the Petworth Emigration Committee, the Reverend Sockett had at the very least considered Australia as a potential destination for emigrants. Sockett had written to the Duke of Richmond, a local landowner with an estate at nearby Goodwood, and one of the Government's five Emigration Commissioners (1831 to 1832), claiming that '[w]ith the rapidly increasing population, emigration must be respected and I have been looking towards Australia'.⁴⁷⁶ Nevertheless, it appears that Egremont did not regard Australia as an advantageous alternative destination for emigrants until he was persuaded otherwise by the armed revolt by part of the French population in Lower Canada in 1837, '[t]he Canadas [being] in that state as not to invite settlers there'.⁴⁷⁷ North America had been Egremont's natural choice due to the extensive experience and contacts made

⁴⁷⁴ E. Scott, *Australia*, reissue of vol 7 of the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988).

⁴⁷⁵ **WSRO, PHA 136.**

⁴⁷⁶ **WSRO, Goodwood MS 1474**, 3 Aug 1832; S. Thomas, 'Colonel Wyndham, 1st Lord Leconfield'.

⁴⁷⁷ **WSRO, PHA 1071**, Egremont to Sockett, January 1837.

through the assisted emigration scheme from 1832. The increasing instability of the province, however, led to a shift in interest to the developing Australian continent. The urgent necessity of finding an alternative location to settle poor (and riotous) English tenants was recognised by the Reverend Sockett, who argued that,

'[w]hile we have the rapidly increasing population, emigration must be resorted to... a stream must be kept flowing unless the landed proprietors be overflowed. With these impressions strongly upon me I have been looking towards Australia confident that you will give such assistance as can be reasonably looked for'.⁴⁷⁸

Reverend Sockett may well have encouraged Colonel Wyndham's interest in Australia following his father's death in 1837, the year of this correspondence. Sockett had been Wyndham's tutor, and as such, may have been particularly influential on the new landowner. However, while Egremont had been only eleven years old when he inherited the estate, Colonel Wyndham was fifty when he gained control of much of this land, and may well have had interests in colonial development already, formed through his experience in the British Navy and his service in the West Indies.⁴⁷⁹ It was Wyndham's own suggestion that:

'I would like to purchase 1,000 acres of good land in Sidney or Van Diemens [*sic*] land ...send out these young men fitted out with a certain quantity of live stock, and

⁴⁷⁸ **WSRO, PHA 1071**; S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham'.

⁴⁷⁹ A memorial to Colonel Wyndham (Lord Leconfield) in Petworth church states that '[h]is Lordship served in the Royal Navy as midshipman in the Amelia frigate and in the Malta. At the age of 15 he joined the Army and served in the West Indies on the staff of Sir Eyre Coote – accompanied the expedition to Stralsund on Sir James McDonald's staff; Was present at the bombardment of Copenhagen, the siege of Flushing and the capture of the Danish Fleet 1807. Served in the Walcheren expedition, 1809, at the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, 1812, And with the army under command of Lord William Bentinck, in Catalonia, Genoa, Malta and Sicily'.

implements of husbandry...allow them something for the first 4 years to enable them to overcome difficulties... oblige them to pay a small rent, to prevent any mistake of whose property it is, and to secure myself against their selling it and moving away, should they turn out badly'.⁴⁸⁰

This outline scheme already contains the essence of the South Australia investment. The idea was shifted geographically after the advice of James Marr Brydone, (who had been superintendent on the Petworth Emigration Committee's first Canadian emigration ship and later became agent to Colonel Wyndham at Petworth), and on the examination of information obtained by Sockett on the South Australia Company and province. This information from Mr Wheeler, the manager of the South Australia Company and a frequent correspondent, was probably similar to that current in 1840, which indicated that over £300,000 had been invested in the Company, and that it owned 10,000 sheep, 1,000 cattle, 35,000 acres of land, and two whaling and three coastal vessels. Its buildings at Adelaide and the Port were worth £20,000 while £700,000 was on deposit in the bank and in outstanding loans to tenants.⁴⁸¹ This impressive prospectus, or something like it, must have persuaded Wyndham to invest in the province. Other promotional material found in the archives includes individual copies of *The Emigration Gazette and Colonial Advocate* (1842), *The South Australian*

⁴⁸⁰ **WSRO, PHA 1060**, 18 Feb 1838.

⁴⁸¹ **WSRO, PHA 738**.

(1841) and *The South Australian Record* (1841) that provided regular news of events in the colony.⁴⁸²

It is clear from these documents that Australia held a considerable fascination for both Egremont and his son. It is clear, too, that the timing of the South Australian investment was influenced both by the uprising in Lower Canada (1837) and by the death of Egremont in the same year. Colonel Wyndham's inheritance provided an opportunity to invest in Australia, and he was probably persuaded by the Reverend Sockett as to the suitability of this ambition for both public benevolence and for private gain. The establishment of the province of South Australia in 1836, (just two years before Wyndham began investing there), the province's rapid development, combined with favourable reports and celebratory promotional literature, probably determined the location of Wyndham's investment.

7.2 The Purchase of land in South Australia

In 1838 Colonel Wyndham purchased 960 acres of land (in twelve 80-acre sections) in the province of South Australia at the cost of £1 an acre.⁴⁸³ A letter of August 1838 from one James Waddell to Sockett suggests that the holding may have been extended to 4000 acres as it relates that Waddell and his colleagues

⁴⁸² For more on the influence of such promotional material, see John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: the manipulation of British opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984).

⁴⁸³ **WSRO, PHA 7917.**

'shall be happy to learn that the subject we addressed Col. Wyndham upon before he left London about extending his purchase to 4,000 acres with the objects of sending out those of his tenantry in England and Ireland who might wish to emigrate meets his views - every account from the colony gives more and more flattering prospects of its advantages and prosperity.'⁴⁸⁴.

Spencer Thomas has maintained that 4,000 acres were in fact purchased by Wyndham.

However, this is difficult to establish given the indefinite nature of the letter (above), and the absence of this potential purchase from the accounts or from later correspondence.⁴⁸⁵

Waddell's letter certainly does indicate, nonetheless, that Wyndham considered reproducing the earlier Canadian emigration scheme on an equally large scale.

Assisted emigration did take place from both England and Ireland to Australia, although the exact number of Wyndham emigrants is unknown. As a result of purchasing 12 sections (960 acres) from the South Australia Company, Wyndham was entitled to send out 48 emigrants as steerage passengers, although the eventual number was greater. Over 100 emigrants are named in the archives, while others are referred to anonymously.⁴⁸⁶ A figure of 300 was mentioned in 1841 and subsequent references suggest at least double this total.⁴⁸⁷ A loose, undated note from Wyndham to Sockett stating that '600 souls went to Australia' appears to

⁴⁸⁴ **WSRO, PHA 1067**, 21 Aug. 1838.

⁴⁸⁵ S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham'; **WSRO, PHA 7917**.

⁴⁸⁶ S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham', p.9.

⁴⁸⁷ **WSRO, PHA 7917, PHA 734, PHA 742, PHA 1062-1066; WSRO, Goodwood MS 1474, 197/38/1**.

corroborate this.⁴⁸⁸ The fact that these emigrants remain anonymous and even uncoun-
ted suggests that this scheme was less systematic than the previous emigrations to Canada.

The assisted emigration and settlement of the Ayliffe family from Devon on two eighty acre
sections near Adelaide forms a significant part of this South Australian estate record. Colonel
Wyndham's purchase of nearly 1000 acres enabled the Ayliffe family and others to rent land
in the province, rather than needing to wait to obtain public land only after working as
labourers to earn the capital for such a purchase. This policy of settlement was not
compatible with the ideals that established the colony, and was contrary to the wishes of the
government. While assisted emigration was a welcome source of labour, a corresponding
assisted settlement policy was discouraged as it conflicted with contemporary concepts of
colonial development promoted by Edward Gibbon Wakefield.⁴⁸⁹ In correspondence with the
Colonial Office, Wyndham was informed that:

'The difficulty is to find the means of defraying the transport of the people, and that
once landed in the Colony they are as well, and better disposed of as labourers than
as settlers upon the land. I do not at all mean by this that the purchase of colonial
lands may not prove a profitable investment and in that manner facilitate the
measures of a Proprietor who is liberal enough to assist Emigration. All I mean is

⁴⁸⁸ **WSRO, PHA 1071.**

⁴⁸⁹ E. Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862), *A view of the art of colonization* (London, 1849); C. Nance, 'Wakefield's scheme and landownership' *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia* 84 (1984), 28; W.K. Hastings, 'The Wakefield colonisation plan and constitutional development in South Australia, Canada and New Zealand' *Journal of Legal History* 11, 2 (1990), 279-299.

that it is a question of investment that it would be required to be considered and not as an indispensable part of Emigration'.⁴⁹⁰

Nevertheless, Wyndham persisted with his plans of assisted colonisation. The landowner's instructions to the Ayliffes in 1838 were that:

'I retain to myself the property in all the land, the houses and other buildings of every description that may be erected thereon, and in all the live stock implements of husbandry and other things now sent, or hereafter to be sent by me (excepting such provisions as are intended for immediate consumption) as a landlord in this country retains the property in houses and lands which he lets to tenants...The rent I shall require for the lands including the buildings, is one shilling per acre to be paid half yearly, on the 24 day of June and the 25 day of December in each year immediately succeeding the day when my agent shall have put the person or persons in question in possession of the land by a regular memorandum or agreement to that effect.'⁴⁹¹

It is intriguing that Colonel Wyndham was attempting to establish an English agricultural estate in South Australia. His habitual reading of the Australian landscape in terms of English aristocratic property rights and even aesthetic values sat oddly in a colony founded by dissenters who dreamed of a society of social and religious equality.⁴⁹² Nevertheless, it

⁴⁹⁰ **WSRO, PHA 1061.**

⁴⁹¹ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 14 May 1838.

⁴⁹² D.H. Pike, *Paradise of dissent: South Australia 1829-1857* (London, 1957); B. Nairn, 'Pike, Douglas Henry (1908 - 1974)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.16, (Melbourne, 2002), pp 1-2.

appears that this was an attempt to retain some control of this investment, and to secure his investment if the settlers failed. Most importantly, the Australian estate was intended for Wyndham's second son Percy to inherit, a key point when attempting to understand the large scale of investment, and Wyndham's reluctance to relinquish this speculation when it became apparent that there was 'no prospect of making fortunes here'.⁴⁹³

In October 1840 Wyndham purchased 40 old shares in the South Australia Company at 20 pounds, two shillings each for a total of £823, indicating a further financial speculation on the prospects of the colony. In 1845, Wyndham's contribution to 'the colonization both of Canada, and of South Australia' was recognised by Henry Maxwell, who canvassed for changes to Australian land systems.⁴⁹⁴ However, Wyndham regretted his purchase of land in Australia. The difficulties of managing this investment also resulted in a reduced appetite for further colonial investment. Wyndham stated brusquely that 'I have no intention of buying a single foot of land in Canada', claiming that 'these distant things only produce vexation and trouble'. However, in the same letter, Wyndham considered investing 'some [more] capital' in Australia as Captain Bagot, a friend, was there 'on the spot'.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ Captain Bagot to Col. Wyndham, 19 Oct 1841 (**WSRO, PHA 7917**). Col. Wyndham to Bagot, 13 Oct 1841: 'This property will go to my second son and I am anxious about it on that account' (**WSRO, PHA 7917**).

⁴⁹⁴ **WSRO, PHA 738, PHA 1071**.

⁴⁹⁵ **WSRO, PHA 1071**, Wyndham to Bagot, 29 Nov. 1840.

7.3 The Ayliffe emigration and settlement

A significant amount of this 'vexation and trouble' can be attributed to a troublesome family who were offered assisted emigration and settlement by the Petworth Emigration Committee in 1838. The Ayliffes were a family from Bovey Tracey in Devon, and comprised Thomas Ayliffe Senior and his wife Elizabeth, their son George Ayliffe and his wife Elizabeth and two children, and two brothers Thomas H. Ayliffe junior and Henry Ayliffe. Two of the Ayliffe sons were medical practitioners, the other a joiner. This family were in fact related to Colonel Wyndham as his mother, Elizabeth Ilive/Ayliffe, former mistress and later wife to the third Earl, was the sister of Thomas Ayliffe senior. While Spencer Thomas uses the evidence that Wyndham appealed successfully to Queen Victoria to drop the name Ilive entered on his birth certificate as an indication that he wanted his cousins banished to Australia, it is probably more likely that he considered them a suitable case for assisted settlement, and that dropping the name Ilive was an unconnected attempt to remove the social stigma of illegitimacy.⁴⁹⁶ No mention of this family connection is made in the archive, although Wyndham states elusively 'and if you please we will drop altogether any reference to the past with these persons' [the Ayliffes]. Nevertheless, the Ayliffes certainly seemed to have had generous allowances made for them by Colonel Wyndham.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ S. Thomas, 'Colonel Wyndham'.

⁴⁹⁷ A. McCann, personal communication, Sep. 2010, 'Thomas the elder was in prison for debt shortly after his sister Elizabeth died (various family members having been living with her, and presumably off her before her death). Tyler's letter books include a reference to having to redeem some monogrammed Egremont sheets from a pawnbrokers, to whom Thomas senr had pawned them after the Countess' death...it seems to me that Col. George mistrusted them so much, that he would not trust them with proper leases, let alone with ownership...'

As stated, Wyndham's land purchase enabled him to send out forty-eight emigrants as steerage passengers, at a cost of 17 pounds, 10 shillings each. Nevertheless, due to a 'wish to put Petworth Emigration Committee passengers on a superior footing to others', an extra £17 per person was paid by the Committee for the Ayliffes to convert it to an intermediate passage that provided the emigrants with their own berth, and a further £70 to ensure fresh provisions three times a week and wines and spirits daily for them. The Ayliffes also received generous provisions, that can be seen for example in the bill for clothing and materials bought in Newton Abbot by the family (£145/9/6).⁴⁹⁸ Other materials purchased included tents, sacks, rope, line, twine and nets. Even more interesting are two lists of agricultural implements purchased for the estate, including ploughs, ox chains, scythes, sheep shears, brick-layer trowels, pick axes, a cart and a milk skimmer and many others, costing nearly £200, a further £200 being spent on two other lists. The accounts record that the emigration committee sent out materials for building houses, and food provisions. They also sent one stallion, one bull, and forty sheep and pigs with the settlers.⁴⁹⁹ Other prize Petworth animals followed, and were influential in the development of high quality sheep and horse breeds in the region.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁸ **WSRO, PHA 1067, PHA 631, 22 May 1838; PHA 1067**, April 1838.

⁴⁹⁹ **WSRO, PHA 1067**. George Ayliffe describes 'about 40 sheep and pigs'. However, some of the sheep died on the voyage (**WSRO, PHA 1067**).

⁵⁰⁰ The motivations and consequences of transferring animals from Petworth to Australia is an element of this research that could be researched further. For example, while Lord Egremont did not invest in the Swan river colony, a potential area of influence would have been in the uncertain outcome of a request by a Thomas Heuty to purchase and send out to his son in Swan River a horse from Lord Egremont's stock, and one bred from the same stock, in order to breed horses intended for the East Indies market (**WSRO, PHA 136**, 28 August 1830). Colonel Wyndham also enquired about sending cattle to Australia in 1841 (**WSRO, PHA 1071**), and much of the correspondence from the Australian settlers and agents in this archive relates to the value for sale and hire of particular animals, especially sheep, used for breeding in the region. The transfer of animals, seeds and products necessary for cultivation to the colonies, as well as the returning products for sale including wool, is an important element of this colonial research.

Despite this apparent generosity in the provisioning of the Ayliffe family, their correspondence before embarking on the *Pestonjee Bomanjee* contains continuous requests for more money.⁵⁰¹ A Mr Chudleigh, writing to Wyndham to request payment of debts honoured by him on behalf of the Ayliffes stated that 'notwithstanding your kind liberality towards him he was to the last moment in want' and that 'his debts on one examination I found to be more than I expected (through the misconduct of his sons) over whom he had not sufficient control'.⁵⁰² It appears that the ship was expected at Plymouth sixteen days earlier than her arrival, causing apparent hardship among the Ayliffes and other families waiting for it. Thomas Ayliffe reported that the family had applied for assistance from the Emigration Commissioners at Plymouth for twelve shillings a day and 'have been told "this allowance is only made when the vessel is in the sound, and the goods shipped" and this [I] suppose is to prevent imposition on the part of any persons who might represent themselves as intended emigrants to obtain this sum from the commissioners'.⁵⁰³

The Ayliffes had received, by their own recollection, £275 within five months 'independent of outfit'.⁵⁰⁴ Such generosity appears unique even to the amply supplied assisted emigration schemes of Egremont. Nevertheless, even on the day of boarding the ship, the Ayliffes complained that the agent would not advance money to them until they reached Australia,

⁵⁰¹ The *Pestonjee Bomanjee* sailed from the River Thames on 9 June 1838 and called at Plymouth en route to pick up the Ayliffe family and others from Devon. It arrived at Holdfast Bay in South Australia on the 12 October 1838.

⁵⁰² **WSRO, PHA 1067**, 8 June 1838.

⁵⁰³ **WSRO, PHA 1067**, 27 May 1838.

⁵⁰⁴ Although given the nature of this letter as requesting money from another source, it seems far from reliable. **WSRO, PHA 1067**, 27 May 1838.

and that they would not own, but rent the Australia property until they had proved their worth.⁵⁰⁵ The Ayliffes' eventual arrival in South Australia in October 1838 began a barrage of cantankerous correspondence, particularly in relation to Wyndham's agent, Frederick Mitchell, which is examined below.

7.4 Frederick Mitchell, land agent

Frederick Mitchell was appointed as agent to the Petworth Emigration Committee in South Australia in May 1838 following an interview with Colonel Wyndham. His employment was in response to Sockett's advice not to invest such large sums in the colony 'unless some person were going as your manager in whom you had perfect confidence both as to ability and integrity'.⁵⁰⁶ Mitchell appears to have volunteered for the position, although he does not seem to have had previous experience as a land agent. Mitchell was described by Reverend Sockett as:

'Mitchell of Haslemere who is married to the daughter of Hankey-Smith. The Smiths of Sutton speak highly of him and they are eager to go to Australia. If his training in his father's house has been good and his subsequent conduct will bear close scrutiny (he has been in some employment recently in the Royal Chelsea hospital) he may be an efficient Agent'.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁵ WSRO, PHA 1067, 9 June 1838.

⁵⁰⁶ WSRO, PHA 729.

⁵⁰⁷ WSRO, PHA 729, 7 April 1838.

The agent's annual salary was £150 a year. A wonderfully detailed account and correspondence book provide a comprehensive description of Mitchell's responsibilities.⁵⁰⁸

The agent was expected to act as superintendent to the emigrants, and take responsibility for the goods and materials carried by the ship. The most significant responsibility, however, was to select suitable land near Adelaide on arrival and to establish the party for a year or two near supplies and assistance. Mitchell was expected to select 160 acres, and provide three dwellings and settlements of 40 acres for Mr Ayliffe, for his son George and his family, and for his brothers Thomas and Henry jointly. Another house and 40 acres was intended for Mitchell and his family. He was then required to purchase stock and report back regularly to his employer with accounts and receipts.

Mitchell held a great deal of responsibility and the length of time that correspondence took to travel between them (up to six months) meant that the agent was given some independence in such crucial decisions as the selection of land. His position, then, appears to have been much more influential than his equivalent agents back at Petworth. Nevertheless, his employer continued to consider the estate as an extension of Petworth. In a second set of instructions to Mitchell (18 July 1840) the landowner advised his agent that the Ayliffe family were not to interfere in the management of the estate, and furthermore that 'you are to have no more to do with them, than my agent or bailiff in England has to do with my tenants in this country'. In the same correspondence, Wyndham sent 'a form of agreement to be entered

⁵⁰⁸ **WSRO, PHA 7917.**

into by the Messrs Ayliffe – its provisions are similar to those under which my English farms are [rent] but you may make such variation as are suited to the seasons and the general system of letting practised in the colony'.⁵⁰⁹

Although the instructions gave Mitchell freedom to choose the land at Adelaide and further afield, they attempted to influence this choice by stating the importance of being near water, considering soil quality and that land near a settlement, though of inferior quality, would be of greater value than land elsewhere. The instructions are highly specific, and reflect extensive research on literature regarding the province (however incorrect this might have been). Mitchell was to pay 'Mr Ayliffe senior and Mr George Ayliffe monthly each at the rate of seventy pounds a year – you will also pay Mr T.H. Ayliffe and Mr Henry Ayliffe monthly each at the rate of thirty pounds a year – your payments to Mr Ayliffe and his sons are to begin to become due from the day of their landing in South Australia'. These allowances, Wyndham later claimed, were 'to enable them to establish themselves', and were not intended to be continued beyond this point, however it was to be determined.⁵¹⁰ The (half yearly) rent of one shilling per acre for the Ayliffe and Mitchell families appears to have been a nominal fee that was intended by Wyndham to have symbolic, rather than financial consequences.

In summary, Mitchell as agent was expected to 'make all such purchases as you may consider indispensable to the success of the undertaking, to devote your time and use your

⁵⁰⁹ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, July 1840.

⁵¹⁰ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 10 May 1842.

best exertions to cultivate the land in a husbandlike manner, and improve the same for the benefit of Colonel Wyndham being guided at all times by a proper economy'.⁵¹¹ This description of conduct for agents, similar to that portrayed by William Marshall, required the balancing of duties of economy and improvement that were not always complementary.⁵¹² These tasks were made even more difficult for Mitchell by an unknown environment, an unstable financial landscape, and by troublesome settlers.

Mitchell's initial choice of land appears to have been limited to a few sections.⁵¹³ His choice of two eighty-acre country sections south of Adelaide, however, soon came under criticism from the Ayliffe family. Mitchell describes the sections as having 'a potato and barley soil' with a stream running through it. He claims there is an '[a]bundance of good pasture, [and] plenty of timber', with '[m]any situations resembling the South Downs'.⁵¹⁴ The agent appears to have been so pleased with the prospect that he purchased section fourteen adjacent to this land for his own use. However, the Ayliffes claimed that Mitchell had demonstrated a significant 'failure of judgement' in this selection:

'The 2 sections selected are very bad land - it would be impossible to question Mr Mitchell's motives for selecting the 2 sections 12 and 13 for you when he has actually purchased for himself section 14 which is infinitely worse than 12 or 13. I beg distinctly to be understood as not feeling the slightest disrespect for Mr Mitchell's

⁵¹¹ **WSRO, PHA 7917.**

⁵¹² W. Marshall, *On the landed property.*

⁵¹³ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 26 Oct 1838.

⁵¹⁴ **WSRO, PHA 7917.**

private character I believe him to be possessed of an upright disposition perfectly sober and industrious: but he is generally thought incapable of managing a farm or an estate.⁵¹⁵

FIGURE 6: MAP OF ADELAIDE (1839), PHA 3492



⁵¹⁵ WSRO, PHA 7917, 21 Jan 1839.

The inferior quality of this land was confirmed by subsequent surveys. Captain Bagot, who eventually replaced Mitchell as agent described the Adelaide sections in 1846 as 'on three spurs of the south end of the Mount Lofty range and do not contain 20 acres of available land [with] very little soil upon a cold clay slate formation'. Despite the earlier criticisms, some of the Ayliffes remained on the land, 'but the part they had in cultivation was not profitably productive and has been allowed to run out. Very little value is put upon land here except in favourable situations. A bushel of wheat per acre [is] considered a fair rent for hard tillage land and that is about 3/ [shillings]'. Mitchell's poor initial choice, therefore, appears to have thwarted any chance of success by the Ayliffe family. However, this family's determination to farm the estate may also be questioned, as it certainly was by Colonel Wyndham in later years, who stated: 'I consider them all incapable and unwilling to exert themselves', and 'I do not suppose there is one amongst them capable of managing anything beyond a common garden'.⁵¹⁶

The agent's failure to control estate expenditure or to significantly improve the value of the Adelaide settlement were due to inadequate finances, and, I would argue, an uncertainty as to the direction that the estate should take in relation to the competing economies of wool and agriculture in the fledgling colony. This can be seen in the inconstancy of Mitchell's advice regarding the future of the colony, and the suitability of Wyndham's estate for the production of either wool, or agricultural crops. This vacillation can be tracked in the

⁵¹⁶ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 10 May 1842 and 13 Oct 1847.

correspondence of PHA 7917. In 1839, Mitchell recommended that he should purchase 500 sheep on Wyndham's behalf, to which Wyndham gave his approval. This recommendation concurs with Governor Gawler's report that the country was suitable for grazing, and not for agriculture (2 Feb 1839). However, Sockett's letter in December 1839 indicates that Mitchell has been considering the production of leather (tanning), from which he was dissuaded, and the sale of milk to the developing town of Adelaide, for which he was supplied with milk tins from Britain. In May 1840, Mitchell claimed that his employer should not lose sight of agriculture, as stock was now cheap due to the transportation of sheep overland from New South Wales. By July of this year, Mitchell declared that 'agriculture is now considered to be the best speculation'. However, in January 1841, he encouraged his employer to become a large-scale sheep farmer, as '[d]oubtless sheep will prove the best speculation'.⁵¹⁷

It is possible, though, that Mitchell considered the Adelaide estate as suitable for pasture and limited agriculture, but recognised the potential of the second section of land on the Hutt River near Perth in Western Australia, as a site for large-scale sheep farming. Wyndham's land there was described as possessing 'most beautiful and extensive sheep runs, exceeding any in the colony, excellently adapted to agricultural pursuits and cattle resembling the finest parkland in England'.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁷ **WSRO, PHA 7917.**

⁵¹⁸ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 11 Apr. 1841.

Nevertheless, Mitchell's uncertainty regarding the selection of this second section, and his tendency to report the opinions of others as justification for his actions, his infrequent and apparently muddled accounts, and his resignation (withdrawn) citing the Ayliffes' harassment (12 Oct 1839) could well be read as signs of weak agency. The agent's ability to manage the estate was continually undermined by the Ayliffes, by the time lag in correspondence with Petworth, and by a lack of funding. The Ayliffe complaints were probably exacerbated by jealousy, and by delays in the payment of remittances from England. George Ayliffe's complaints against Mitchell's ability (24 Jan 1840), however, were noted in the text as 'absurd, malicious, vindictive and disgraceful' after a report from Mr John Hallett, confirmed that many of the practices mentioned by the Ayliffes were common in the colony, while others were not based on facts; but many of the difficulties Mitchell faced were in fact due to the limited means at his disposal.⁵¹⁹ However, when Mitchell's necessity led him to borrow £200 from the Colonel without prior permission, Wyndham claimed that Mitchell had 'done a dishonest thing in a straightforward way which does not give me confidence'.⁵²⁰

A month later, Wyndham asked Captain Charles Harvey Bagot, a friend from Ireland and a South Australian landowner for advice.⁵²¹ He also wrote to Governor Gawler (27 Dec 1840), who was quitting the colony, inviting him to Petworth to discuss Mr Mitchell and the

⁵¹⁹ Mr John Hallett was one of the original thirteen Principal Officers appointed by the Board of Commissioners. S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham'.

⁵²⁰ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 27 Dec 1840.

⁵²¹ Captain Charles Harvey Bagot (1788-1880) was a former agent to Sir Montague Chapman, of Killeen Castle (Kilmessan, county Meath) in Ireland, north west of Dublin, who had emigrated in 1840 to supervise 224 tenants sponsored by his employer to immigrate to South Australia. Captain Bagot was involved in the politics of the early colony, and was a successful mine owner. 'Bagot, Charles Harvey (1788-1880)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 1. Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp.47-48; F.S. Dutton, *South Australia and its mines* (London, 1846).

management of his affairs in the colony. On the following day he instructed James Marr Brydone, his Petworth agent to write to the new Governor, Captain George Grey, requesting an interview before he departed for South Australia. In January 1841, Bagot was given the freedom to make immediate changes to the estate and its agency if they were considered necessary. In February of that year, Wyndham complained that there had been 11 months' silence in the estate correspondence, and that he feared 'bad management'. In April, Wyndham wrote to Mitchell to relieve him of his position.⁵²²

The role of land agent on the Wyndham estate in South Australia was therefore 'unenviable'.⁵²³ Frederick Mitchell endured the hardships of early settlement alongside the Ayliffe family. However, he suffered from an inability to make decisions, a lack of funding, and unsupportive, even spiteful tenants. He suffered too from misinformation regarding the initial settlement, and from a landowner who seemed intent on recreating a British estate in Australia. The most significant factor, though, was perhaps that admitted by Wyndham (12 Aug 1841), that '[t]he place is too far off to be managed by an agent'. Distance, combined with infrequent and delayed correspondence resulted in poor awareness of the progress, or problems of this investment. As Wyndham confessed in March 1842, 'at this moment I do not know whether I have 5 sheep or 500'. Mitchell became insolvent in 1842.⁵²⁴

⁵²² WSRO, PHA 7917.

⁵²³ WSRO, PHA 1067.

⁵²⁴ WSRO, PHA 7917.

Captain Bagot received a surrender of the property on 13 October 1841. The Power of Attorney sent to him (April 1841) provided the agent with powers equivalent to ownership of the property, although it did not offer authorisation to reclaim Mitchell's debts to the estate. The transfer of agency appears to have corresponded with a downturn in the South Australian economy; by December 1841 Bagot claimed the region suffered from general distress.⁵²⁵ In January, Bagot reports that '[e]verything continues very dull in the colony and great distress prevails; everyday money becomes more and more scarce, and unless we have some relief from home it is hard to say what will be our fate'.⁵²⁶ The struggling economy, therefore, must also be a significant factor in the failed Wyndham investment.

It is significant that Captain Bagot, too, eventually fell out of favour with his employer for his infrequent and overly brief correspondence. Wyndham's resignation to the fact that 'I see no prospect of indemnity for the outlay of money to any man not residing in the colony, not even the probability of disposing of the property or stock to any advantage' (10 May 1842), may well have been influenced by the incredible success of Bagot's own mining enterprise at Kapunda, and Wyndham's continuing problems as an absentee landowner. It is clear that Wyndham considered relinquishing his investment in the province, but was persuaded that he would receive too little for his efforts: 'I think you had better not try to sell' (19 April 1842).

⁵²⁵ D.H. Pike, *Paradise of dissent*, C. Nance, 'Wakefield's scheme and land ownership'.

⁵²⁶ **WSRO, PHA 7917**, 26 Jan 1841.

Bagot's suggestion 'of doing without an agent' was accepted by Colonel Wyndham in 1852, who was by now convinced of the impossibility of directing estate management from afar.⁵²⁷

7.5 Conclusions

When Percy Wyndham inherited his father's property in 1864, the Australian estate had shrunk to nine sections on the Hutt River, rented by a single sheep farmer. Colonel Wyndham's Australian investment could, therefore, be read as a failure. However, this optimistic speculation placed Colonel Wyndham on a par with his father Egremont as a colonial patron. The Wyndham estate in South Australia illustrates some of the diverse motives for colonial investment: certainly the creation of personal and family wealth, but also a desire for colonial progress that may have been politically driven and influenced by Colonel Wyndham's military service, and for a potential solution for the alleviation of poverty on English estates. If the troublesome estate was retained long past the point at which its failure had become clear, this was only in order that it be inherited by Wyndham's second son.

The surviving Petworth documents relating to the Australian speculation reflect Colonel Wyndham's interest in his distant relatives, the Ayliffes, who cannot, therefore, be seen as

⁵²⁷ Kapunda is located 79km north of Adelaide. Francis Dutton first discovered copper at Kapunda in 1842. He went into partnership with Captain Bagot who had also noted the green colour of the rocks in the area. They purchased 80 acres of land for £1 an acre but it took two years for samples to be sent to Britain for testing and for their return. The results were remarkable. The copper was 22.5 per cent pure which was probably the richest ever found anywhere in the world. The first mining, driven by Bagot, was literally dug off the surface. In the first year 600 tons of ore were collected, worth £7000. By December 1844 the first Cornish miners had arrived in the area and underground mining began. The copper rocks were transported by bullock dray to Port Adelaide (a 6 day journey) where it was loaded for ships to Swansea. Kapunda was deserted during the gold rush in Victoria (1852), but produced 4103 tons of ore in 1857 (www.smh.com.au/travel); F.S. Dutton *South Australia*.

representative assisted emigrants. Assisted emigration did take place from both England and Ireland to Australia, although as suggested the exact number of emigrants is unknown. A figure of 300 was mentioned in 1841 and subsequent references suggest at least double this total.⁵²⁸ The fact that these emigrants remain anonymous and even uncounted suggests that this scheme was less systematic than the previous emigrations to Canada.⁵²⁹

Nevertheless, the Wyndham interest in Australia offers the researcher an opportunity to consider estate management in a colonial context, to examine small-scale investment in the colonies, and, more interestingly, to interpret the reasons why this might have failed. The three themes of people, capital and ideas may offer some suggestions; the unsuitability of the Ayliffes as settlers, and of Mitchell as agent; as well as the insufficient capital for the scheme all played a part. There were however additional reasons connected with the particular location in Australia and the sheer distances involved.⁵³⁰ Poor communication and an inadequate understanding of pioneer settlement, climate and land quality by landowner and agent alike, are some of these answers. Even had Mitchell been a more capable agent, the fate of the estate may not have been any better; and it is to the role of land agents in particular that we now turn.

⁵²⁸ S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham', p.9. **WSRO, PHA 7917, PHA 734, PHA 742, PHA 1062-1066, PHA 1071; WSRO, Goodwood MS 1474, 197/38/1.**

⁵²⁹ W. Cameron and M. McDougall Maude, *Assisting emigration to Upper Canada. The Petworth project, 1832-1837* (Montreal, 2000).

⁵³⁰ G. Blainey, *The tyranny of distance. How distance shaped Australia's history* (Melbourne, 1968).

CHAPTER EIGHT:

ESTATE MANAGEMENT, LAND AGENTS AND IMPROVEMENT

The role of land agents in the management and improvement of English landed estates between 1770 and 1850 is examined in this chapter. The focus is on the responsibilities of land agents, their contribution to agricultural improvement, and in particular the validity of a thesis of professionalisation of agents during this period. The Petworth House archives are used to compare the work of two legal agents at Petworth in Sussex with that of a professional land agency firm in Yorkshire, both employed by the third Earl of Egremont (1751-1837). This chapter suggests that the role of land agents in agricultural improvement at Petworth was limited to the financial, legal and political aspects of these developments rather than practical management. It proposes that legal agents remained more influential than has been supposed, even on estates renowned for agricultural improvement, and despite contemporary criticism that emphasised applied agricultural expertise. The belated professionalisation of the Petworth agents and the significant differences in their roles when compared with contemporary and historical accounts suggests that estate management was therefore far more diverse than is suggested in some recent literature.⁵³¹

⁵³¹ J.V. Beckett, 'Landownership and estate management'; G.E. Mingay 'The eighteenth-century land steward'; H.J. Habakkuk, 'Economic functions of English landowners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 6, 2 (1953), 92-102; J. Martin, 'Estate stewards and their work in Glamorgan, 1660-1760: a regional study of estate management', *Journal of Glamorgan History (Morgannwg)* 13 (1979), 9-28.

8.1 Land agents and estate improvement

Land agents played an important role in fostering improvement on landed estates by increasing the efficiency of estate management, thereby enabling improvement to take place, and also in disseminating agricultural knowledge to tenants. Agents mediated complex and wide-ranging estate improvements, such as the newly developed agricultural techniques, and supervised the 'moral improvement' of tenants. They were expected to oversee the administration of the estate including the home farm, house, gardens and park and were also involved in land purchases, surveying, accountancy, political campaigning, and legal issues, including the administration of Poor Laws.⁵³² These wide-ranging activities notwithstanding, in 1804 William Marshall claimed that the primary duties of an estate manager lay 'in the field', and involved the supervision of estate work, crop layout and 'the right ordering of servants and workpeople'. According to Marshall, estate management required 'the whole of any man's attention', and could not be undertaken by those without practical agricultural experience, such as lawyers.⁵³³

Despite Marshall's strictures, the employment of lawyers as agents was partly due to the predominance of precedent and custom, and the volume of legal disputes and tenures (especially regarding enclosure) in estate management. The activities of attorneys as estate agents cannot be separated from their work as political agents due to the close connection

⁵³² G.E. Mingay, *English Landed*; D. Spring, *The English Landed Estate*.

⁵³³ W. Marshall, *On the Landed Property*, pp.338-339, 422. One of the earliest complaints regarding the employment of lawyers as agents was made by Edward Laurence (1727), who claimed that lawyers were poorly qualified to act as agents, and pleaded for expertise and professionalism in estate management. F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*.

between the right to vote and the possession or tenure of land. According to John Lawrence in 1801, an agent was expected to 'introduce and fairly experiment upon the estates under his care, with the honourable and patriotic views both of private and national benefit'; however, the writer claimed that 'the too general custom of employing these attorney-stewards has been a great bar to agricultural improvement, and, in that light, a national loss'.⁵³⁴ The gradual emergence of professional land agency demonstrates an attempt to apply scientific and industrial management techniques to the estate in order to provide a more efficient and profitable resource for the landowner, replacing legal knowledge with technical expertise. Nevertheless, as F.M.L. Thompson states, professional agents continued to work in a field whose possession he was still disputing with others, principally attorneys and farmers. Furthermore, David Spring claims that the lawyer-agent was found on the majority of landed estates in the early nineteenth century.⁵³⁵

At Petworth, a succession of qualified solicitors were employed as land agents, while contemporary commentators actively discouraged this practice.⁵³⁶ In this chapter, I will examine the roles of Petworth solicitor-agents James Upton Tripp and William Tyler in comparison to changes made on the Yorkshire estates by the professional London firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce. An assessment will then be made regarding the level of 'professionalisation' achieved at Petworth in the period 1772 to 1835.

⁵³⁴ J. Lawrence, *The Modern Land Steward*. (London, 1801), p.44-45.

⁵³⁵ F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p.153. D. Spring, 'A great agricultural estate', pp.73-81.

⁵³⁶ E. Laurence, *The Duty of a Steward to his Lord*; W. Marshall, *On the Landed Property*.

8.2 The Egremont estates and the Petworth agents, 1772-1835

The Petworth and Yorkshire estates were inherited by Egremont on the death of his father in 1763. The engagement of James Upton Tripp, the first Petworth agent in this study, coincides with Egremont's twenty-first birthday, and an associated reassessment of the Egremont estate. Tripp (c.1747-1801) was employed as solicitor and land agent to the third Earl from 1772, retaining this position for 29 years until his death in 1801. This employment continued a pattern of Egremont patronage of the Tripp family, which may in part explain the continued employment of Tripp, despite demonstrations of incompetence and procrastination.⁵³⁷ Nevertheless, Tripp retained his position as agent, receiving a modest salary of £200 that may suggest the agent was part-time, whilst earning further income from a private legal practice.⁵³⁸

An investigation of Tripp's financial estate from the 1770s and a four-year examination of his accounts did not produce evidence of a misappropriation of Egremont's capital, although there was clearly enough suspicion of Tripp's financial dealings for this to be undertaken.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ James Upton Tripp was the second son of John Tripp (Deputy Recorder of Taunton under Charles, second Earl of Egremont) and his wife Anne, daughter of the Reverend James Upton, who was Sir William Wyndham's (1688-1740) tutor at Eton. John and Anne's first son, Dr John Tripp, attended Westminster School with Egremont, and was presented to the living of Spofforth in Yorkshire. John also acted briefly as superintendent of Egremont's Yorkshire estates. Robert, a fourth son, was given livings in Devonshire. The youngest son, Henry, was a barrister and agent for the West of England estates for over fifty years. Tripp family patronage continued in the following generation, John's son becoming Rector of Silverton in Devonshire and James' son, Rector of Upwaltham in West Sussex. See H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.312.

⁵³⁸ **WSRO, PHA 6285:** Papers of James Upton Tripp, solicitor, of Petworth, relating to his own family business, and general business transacted (1745-1791).

⁵³⁹ It is clear that William Tyler was suspicious of his former partner's financial dealings, his integrity and the prudence of some of Tripp's loans, despite fifteen years of working together. Tyler also made disparaging comments about the obscurity of Tripp's accounts, although this may be suggestive of Tyler's comparative competence at accounting and his attention to detail rather than Tripp's alleged dishonesty.

As Joanna Martin argues, the use of Charge and Discharge accounting meant that it was likely that neither steward nor owner usually knew the financial position of the estate in any great detail. In practice, however, it is difficult to distinguish genuine incompetence from dishonesty. J.R. Edwards describes the purpose of an account as a record to check the integrity and reliability of the agent. From the agent's viewpoint the report served to prove his honesty. The retention of charge and discharge accounting rather than a double entry system was partly due to there being less interest in performance assessment as activities were repetitive and usually followed a fairly consistent seasonal pattern. A gradual transition in accounting processes, however, was observed during the nineteenth century.⁵⁴⁰

The second agent, William Tyler (c.1764-1835) was the son of William Tyler, a yeoman from Lewes in East Sussex. As Eric Richards recounts, this was a relatively common upbringing for agents, who were primarily drawn from families of country gentlemen, farmers or lawyers.⁵⁴¹ Tyler acted as clerk to a Petworth attorney, William Carleton, (1781-86) and was employed by Tripp (1786-88) in the same position in his early twenties.⁵⁴² The successful nature of this agreement is demonstrated by Tyler's continued employment after this period

⁵⁴⁰ See J.R. Edwards, *A History of Financial Accounting* (London, 1989); J. Martin, 'Estate stewards and their work in Glamorgan, 1660-1760: A regional study of estate management' *Journal of Glamorgan History (Morgannwg)* 13 (1979), 9-28; G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward'.

⁵⁴¹ E. Richards, 'The land agent'.

⁵⁴² Tyler acted as Tripp's assistant and eventual partner in his legal practice, succeeding as agent following the death of Tripp; after which it is unlikely that Tyler continued much private legal business, with the exception of the writing of wills. Tyler did not have a deputy agent, although James Challen (1779-1834) was a reliable head clerk who may have succeeded Tyler as agent if he had not predeceased him. The Petworth archives demonstrate the diverse activities undertaken by this clerk. Challen collected debts, served notices to quit farms, arranged for the sale of timber, organised witnesses for court cases, and canvassed for Egremont's brother Charles Wyndham's election in 1807. However, he was not empowered to make decisions regarding the estate. See **WSRO, PHA 9026**; A. McCann, "The greatest rascal I ever heard of" – William Tyler, the 3rd Earl's man of business'. *Petworth Society Magazine*, 115 (2004), 24-27.

with a salary of £210 a year and Tripp and Tyler's partnership in legal practice from 1793. Tyler became Petworth agent to Egremont following Tripp's death in 1801, and continued in this position for a further 34 years until his own death in 1835. Shortly before this, Tyler was given responsibility for the Somerset estates, previously managed by Henry Tripp, a London barrister and brother to the former Petworth agent.⁵⁴³

Tyler's wages were increased to £500 a year in 1801. From 1813, Tyler was paid a commission of three-and-a-half per cent of Egremont's rental income in Sussex, the same figure given to the London firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce, who managed the Yorkshire estates, as both a reward and an encouragement for the agent's energies in improving rental income. This increased Tyler's wages from £824 to £969 between 1813 and 1822, although this total fluctuated with variable economic conditions, both local and national. The agent also charged Egremont considerable legal fees for his work as solicitor and travelling expenses.

Tyler's wages compare favourably with those of his contemporaries. For example, Francis Blaikie, steward to Thomas William Coke at Holkham, had a salary of £650 in the early nineteenth century, while Charles Bowns, the agent to Earl Fitzwilliam received £1,200 after

⁵⁴³ The employment of Tyler as agent following a period as a clerk to James Upton Tripp was not unusual, and acted as a source of education for prospective agents who did not have the capital to pay for apprenticeships. For example, Francis Blaikie, steward to Thomas William Coke at Holkham, was succeeded by William Baker, who was first employed there as clerk in 1821. R.A.C. Parker, *Coke of Norfolk, a Financial and Agricultural Study, 1707-1842* (Oxford, 1975); S. Wade Martins, *A Great Estate at Work: The Holkham Estate and its Inhabitants in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1980).

a similar pay increase to Tyler in 1811 from £400 a year.⁵⁴⁴ Salaries and commissions ranging from £600 to £1,200 placed these agents high on the scale of professional and country gentlemen. Tyler died leaving eleven properties and legacies of over £35,000; his fortune apparently made through efficient management, and an increasing salary, as well as through private business transactions and prudent investments, in contrast to his predecessor.⁵⁴⁵

Tyler's economic success and the patronage of his employer enabled the agent to hold a high position in local society. Tyler was a welcome dinner guest to both the Earl and his heir. He had the use of the Countess' carriage and the Earl's Theatre and Opera box in London, and he borrowed books from the Earl's library.⁵⁴⁶ However, the agent was extremely unpopular with some members of the Petworth community, in part due to his attempts to lower workers' wages on the estate in 1823, and his search for other ways to reduce spending, such as suggesting to his employer that fewer people should eat dinner at Petworth House. The agent's tone in much correspondence is impatient and forthright, and his behaviour described by his nephew Thomas Gould in 1826 as 'perhaps sometimes rather hasty', and even ungentlemanly.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ Blaikie's wages were cut by £100 in 1822 to assist the steward's employer during financial hardship. J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*; E. Richards, 'The land agent'; F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*, p.30.

⁵⁴⁵ Alternatively, this may indicate that Tyler was in fact more 'professional' at financial embezzlement. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 7, (1837), p.110.

⁵⁴⁶ **WSRO, PHA 8621**: Letter to Lady Egremont, Fulham 19 Dec 1808; **WSRO, PHA 12014**: Letter from Tyler to Egremont thanking him for opera ticket, 22.01.1807, See A. McCann 'The greatest rascal'.

⁵⁴⁷ A. McCann, 'The greatest rascal', p.25.

His inadequate treatment of some Petworth inhabitants notwithstanding, Tyler seemed to suffer excessive personal cruelty at their hands. Tyler was the subject of a hoax in 1812, possibly by a disgruntled London tradesman, receiving a note claiming that Egremont was dying, leading to great embarrassment and the expense of a chaise, hired at 1s 6d, to rush to London. A prosecution at the assizes in 1834 reported that four men had paraded effigies including one of Tyler through the town.⁵⁴⁸ A similar incident is recalled in *Tales of Old Petworth*, where John Osborn Greenfield (1802-1869), writing in the 1860s recalls:

‘To parade the effigies of men who had given offence was then a frequent practice in Petworth. I have seen our late Rector Sockett and afterwards Tyler and his man Goatcher thus exhibited. Once in Tyler’s latter time they were thus carried about at Egdean Fair on September 4th. Haslett and others hired a tramp with stentorian lungs and his woman to sing obscene songs about Tyler to such a degree offensive that no lady could venture to come into Petworth...For these songs were roared out day and night from many mouths not only in the town, but in every tap room also’.⁵⁴⁹

Both men were unpopular, although this was probably as much the result of the nature of their position as agent, involving the collection of rents and debts, and the discipline of tenants, as it was the result of their infamous tempers.⁵⁵⁰ However, Egremont’s support for

⁵⁴⁸ A. McCann, ‘The greatest rascal’.

⁵⁴⁹ J.O. Greenfield (1802-1869), *Tales of Old Petworth*, p.44.

⁵⁵⁰ R.J. Colyer, ‘The land agent in nineteenth century Wales’ *Welsh History Review* 8 (1976), 401-423.

Tyler, in particular, seemed to be unshakable. On numerous occasions, Egremont defended the manner of Tyler's correspondence; when writing to a Mr Wills, Egremont claimed that 'I am very sorry to hear that you thought that Mr Tyler had written to you in an uncivil manner and therefore, as he keeps copies of all letters, I looked at the copy and I can assure you that there is nothing in it which I should have considered as offensive if it had been addressed to me on a matter of business'.⁵⁵¹ This support does not seem misguided. Tyler appears to have been a diligent and fastidious agent to Egremont, in contrast to his seemingly less adept predecessor.

Despite their unpopularity, the Petworth agents were influential on both a local and national scale, and were involved in the management of the wider Egremont estates. Tyler in particular acted as overseer of agents in Somerset, Yorkshire and Ireland. Both Tripp and Tyler made annual visits to Yorkshire, sometimes accompanied by their employer. They also made regular visits to London and Brighton, and occasionally to Somerset and Cumbria. Large purchases or enclosure bills often prompted travel that was assisted by significant improvements in communications during this period. As D.R. Hainsworth has argued, stewards were located at the interface between London (and provincial towns) and the rural community, assisting in the flow of intelligence of national events and ideas from the metropolis to the locality.⁵⁵² This role as 'mediator' between rural and urban communities, and between aristocrats, tenants and rural labourers, seems to have been competently, if not

⁵⁵¹ **WSRO, PHA 2685:** Letter to William Wills Esq., Lancing from Lord Egremont, 4 Apr.1819.

⁵⁵² D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords and People*.

diplomatically realised by the two agents. The agents' movement between Petworth, Brighton, London and the Northern estates produced distinct networks of knowledge circulation. The extent of their mobility, the circulation of knowledge through correspondence and published texts, and networks of patronage will be examined further in this chapter, and more particularly in chapter nine.

In addition to Tripp and Tyler's mobility, the agents for Yorkshire, Somerset and Ireland met more regularly in London, where Egremont could be advised on the latest events on his geographically dispersed estate. While Tripp and Tyler do not seem to have held a straightforward position as head agent, their proximity to Egremont meant that they had greater influence than the other agents. For example, Thomas Crowe, agent in Ireland (1801-1851), inherited his father's position on the condition that he visited London every July to settle his accounts with Tyler. The Petworth archives also demonstrate an increased role for Tripp and Tyler in Yorkshire affairs during the early nineteenth century. It seems likely that the influence of the Petworth agents grew as Egremont's interest in the more distant estates increased; a process demonstrated by Egremont's measures for improvement in Yorkshire, Somerset and later in Ireland.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵³ As F.M.L. Thompson has argued, 'on an efficient and improving estate it was certainly normal to find an active owner, as well as an efficient agent, engaged in a joint enterprise, but it was not always so'. F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p.176.

The wider Egremont estate was increasingly coordinated at Petworth. Tripp's employment, and later the construction of the estate office there from 1803 to 1804 described in chapter five, indicates a change of estate policy initiated by the third Earl. Before this, there had been no resident agent at Petworth, and the management of the estate was coordinated in London, the primary residence of the politician Charles Wyndham, second Earl of Egremont.⁵⁵⁴ The relocation from London to Petworth (as the third Earl's main residence) is an important, though not uncommon, decentralisation of estate management that demonstrates the increased significance of Petworth to the landowner during this time, which resulted in considerable 'improvements' to the estate landscape.

It is clear that Tripp and Tyler held significant positions in society, due both to their employment by Egremont, and to the legal and political tasks, both formal and informal, associated with this position. Tripp and Tyler both referred to themselves during their respective employment as steward to the Earl of Egremont. The two, however, would more appropriately be called legal agents. Both Tripp and Tyler had legal training, and held the position of solicitor to the Earl. The agents' correspondence reveals close tracking of the parliamentary progress of Yorkshire enclosure bills, and the reading of Parliamentary Bills.⁵⁵⁵

In comparison to these activities, the supervision of practical farming appears to have been

⁵⁵⁴ The second Earl of Egremont (1710-1763) was appointed Secretary of State for the Southern Department in 1761 and played a significant role in international politics during this period. H. M. Scott, 'Wyndham, Charles, second earl of Egremont (1710–1763)', *Oxford DNB*, Sept 2004; online edition, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30139>].

⁵⁵⁵ Spencer Thomas has suggested that James Upton Tripp was agent to Robert, Lord Carrington in 1803. I would suggest that Tripp was acting in an advisory position with regard to the Borough of Midhurst, with which Egremont also had an interest. S. Thomas, 'Houses and parliament: local politics, tenure and 'townscapes': the case of the Sussex boroughs in the 'long eighteenth century'', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 148 (2010), 157-76, at p.161.

relatively insignificant. This may have been due to the employment of an experienced bailiff in Sussex, the legal specialisation of the two agents, and an over-emphasis by contemporary commentators on the need for agricultural experience.⁵⁵⁶

As has been detailed in length in chapter five, the agents were intimately involved with many if not all aspects of the management of Egremont's extensive programme of improvement.

Egremont's policy of land acquisition and rationalisation in Sussex and Yorkshire was one matter that utilised the legal training of the Petworth agents. These intricate procedures, as well as the legal and political machinations necessary for enclosure and inheritance, were navigated by the land agent, and seem to help justify the employment of a succession of solicitors in this position. Part of this role involved being aware of land available for purchase, its relative value, and ways to secure an advantageous price from the purchaser.⁵⁵⁷

Exchanges of land involved similar transfers of abstracts of title and other papers, negotiations that could continue for months or even years.⁵⁵⁸ Egremont also made significant purchases and enclosures in Yorkshire. These estates, though managed by the London firm

⁵⁵⁶ John Habbin acted as bailiff on the Petworth estate between 1765 and 1801. Habbin performed many of the roles that commentators such as John Beckett and G.E. Mingay have commonly identified with land agents. The bailiff collected rent and kept husbandry accounts, paid labourers and household bills for coal, food and medicine; supervised work on the home farm, park and gardens, and purchased seed and livestock. Habbin was succeeded by John Sherwin and later by his son Thomas, who undertook similar activities to Habbin, as well as assisting in livestock improvement, from 1791 to 1850. The bailiffs were local tenants or landowners, described in the West Sussex Land Tax survey of 1785. John Habbin owned property in Chichester, while John Sherwin was a substantial tenant farmer in Petworth, occupying land owned by Lord Egremont (£46 rent), and others. His son, Thomas Sherwin, can be found in the 1837 tithe survey apportionments, with over 20 acres of meadowland primarily in Byworth, near Petworth. See **WSRO, PHA 10816, 1894, 3087, 7724-8, 8096, 10642, 4424**; A. Readman, L. Falconer, R. Ritchie and P. Wilkinson, *West Sussex Land Tax 1785* (Lewes, 2000); J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*; G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward'; E. Laurence, *The Duty*; W. Marshall, *On the Landed Property of England*.

⁵⁵⁷ E.M. Jancy, 'An eighteenth century land steward and his work' *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society* 56 (1957), 34-48.

⁵⁵⁸ **WSRO, PHA 12009**: 1799-1807, Letter books of James Upton Tripp, then William Tyler, on the 3rd Earl of Egremont's business. Particularly letter (1783) from William Tyler to Mr Scott, York, regarding the exchange of Property.

Kent, Claridge and Pearce, became increasingly prominent in Tyler's correspondence, suggesting both the increasing interest of the landowner, and the agent's expanding legal responsibilities.

Little evidence has been found in the Petworth archives to substantiate the agents' role in managing new tenants in Sussex. In contrast, the negotiation of leases, and the settling of disputes caused by violations of the same were central tasks performed by the agents. Greater than their role in the management of tenants was the land agents' influence on the organisation of estate repairs. Although it is likely that bailiffs and surveyors supervised the practical work, Tripp and Tyler made decisions regarding the necessity of repairs, and the financial responsibility for these, according to lease conditions and the circumstances of each case.

The agents had significant power over the financial operations of this complicated estate enterprise. They were involved in the collection of rents twice a year and an annual audit, as well as the production of accounts. Those accounts produced by Tyler demonstrate a mastery of detail and accounting technique, whereas those of Tripp were both chaotic and obscure.⁵⁵⁹ A similar contrast in detail and clarity can be seen in financial correspondence,

⁵⁵⁹ **WSRO, PHA 511**: Rental of Sussex estates by John Stephens, 1789-1800; **PHA 8620**: 1807-1809 Letter-book of William Tyler, solicitor, containing copies of letters written on the affairs of George, 3rd Earl of Egremont. Particularly letter dated 6.8.1807.

the recording of requests for money by Egremont's family, the payment of bills, tithes and taxes, and the establishment of loans and mortgages.

The apparent absence of practical estate management by the agents was not due to insufficient agricultural knowledge. Correspondence stating that the bailiff would settle the 'terms of culture' in a lease agreement suggests that the agents delegated even important agricultural tasks.⁵⁶⁰ John Lawrence in 1801 argued that lawyers could hold some knowledge of agriculture, 'since there are many in the profession [...] who rank among our most scientific and able cultivators'.⁵⁶¹ One particularly prestigious area of improvement in which the agents were involved was the development of animal and plant breeds. Egremont's membership of the Royal Society, his correspondence with Sir Joseph Banks and Arthur Young, and his interest in agricultural experimentation enabled the transfer of innovations or crops from London to the estate farms (see chapter five). In addition, the Earl and his agents promoted the local Southdown breed of sheep, made loans of livestock for selective breeding, and demonstrated an interest in the improvement of his tenants' livestock more generally.

The agents were also involved in the dispersal of agricultural equipment, as demonstrated by correspondence regarding ploughs and threshing machines for the Egremont estate

⁵⁶⁰ **WSRO, PHA 1099**: 1834-1838, Letter book from Dec 1834-March 1838, concerned with the Sussex estate.

⁵⁶¹ J. Lawrence, *The Modern* (1801), p.45. Similarly, John Morton (1858) argued that there were 'some gentlemen connected with the law who have been careful to study the best means of practically managing the properties of their clients. But, as a general rule, law agents make bad land agents'. J.L. Morton, *The Resources of Estates; being a Treatise on the Agricultural Improvement and General Management of Landed Property* (London, 1858), p.94.

examined in chapter five. Together with the patronage of improvements to livestock and agricultural equipment, the Petworth agents influenced the legal, social and political, as well as technical aspects of land drainage and enclosure. Tripp and Tyler were influential in the negotiation and preparation of enclosure bills, or of private agreements to enclose between landowners. The resolution of legal disputes are the most prominent in the agents' private legal correspondence for their joint firm, and also figure prominently in estate documents.

It is clear then from this evidence that, despite the Marshallian ideal (1804) and the image evoked by G.E. Mingay of an agent riding around the estate and advising tenants on agricultural techniques, the Petworth agents had largely office-based, rather than field-based managerial careers.⁵⁶² Furthermore, Tripp and Tyler did not meet many of William Marshall's requirements for land agents. While Tyler possessed some technical knowledge of drainage and surveying, the agents relied on surveyors and bailiffs to make valuations, and both agents spent most of their working days either in an office, travelling or in London, rather than in the field. Similarly, complaints regarding the manner of both agents suggest they were often not as conciliatory as Marshall would have liked. The prime disparity between the Petworth agents and Marshall's ideal, however, was their legal profession.

It is likely that the disparate salaries of Tyler and Tripp reflected Tyler's superior managerial ability, and probably the relative amounts of responsibility borne by each agent. However,

⁵⁶² G.E. Mingay, 'The eighteenth-century land steward'; W. Marshall *On the Landed Property*.

despite the increased responsibilities placed on Tyler, the agent was far from autonomous. His almost daily communication with Egremont demonstrates the landowner's interest in and control over his estate, which suggests that the development of the land agency profession was not purely the result of landowners' continued absence or disinterest in the estate, as has been argued.⁵⁶³ Tripp and Tyler were far from independent, and acted primarily as legal agents. In contrast, as the next section will argue, Kent, Claridge and Pearce, employed by Egremont to manage the Yorkshire estates, specialised in estate rationalisation and demonstrated a professional and systematic approach to agricultural improvement on a neglected estate property.⁵⁶⁴

8.3 Nathaniel Kent and the Yorkshire estates

Kent, Claridge and Pearce was a London firm established by the 1790s to provide professional guidance in the management and rationalisation of estates. Led by Nathaniel Kent (1737-1810), the firm managed several properties, including the Royal estates at Richmond and Windsor, and surveyed and valued many more. Kent also published texts on agriculture. In *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property*, first published in 1775, Kent asserted that 'A Competent Knowledge of Agriculture is the most useful science a gentleman can

⁵⁶³ D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords and People*.

⁵⁶⁴ As Barbara English has demonstrated, in the nineteenth century the majority of the estates of more than 100 acres in East Yorkshire were managed by land agency firms, either from London or from a provincial office. B. English, 'Patterns of estate management in east Yorkshire c.1840- c.1880' *Agricultural History Review* 32 (1984), 29-48.

obtain'. In this influential text, he emphasised the value of rational estate layout, good drainage, enclosure and the selection of crops informed by 'Nature'.⁵⁶⁵

As a somewhat hyperbolic obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* proclaimed after his death in 1810, 'It is universally allowed that no professional man ever rendered more substantial services to the agriculture of his country than the late Mr Kent'.⁵⁶⁶ Kent was most celebrated, though, as a professional land agent. William Marshall referred to Kent's 'long and extensive practice in different parts of the kingdom as an estate agent of the highest class'.⁵⁶⁷ Kent was employed by many notable agriculturalists of the age to provide professional guidance in the management, valuation and rationalisation of their estates. He claimed that 'there are many thousand acres of waste land in different parts of the kingdom that ... owe their improvement to me'.⁵⁶⁸

By the 1790s, Kent had acquired two partners to assist him in his profession; his nephew William Pearce, and John Claridge, and had established an office at Craig's Court. It is likely that the firm rented number 5 Craig's Court, where Messrs. William Pearce, Charles Kent and G Frederick Thynne were listed as occupiers in 1833.⁵⁶⁹ Craig's Court, off Charing Cross was ideally located for London business – just a few yards from Drummonds Bank

⁵⁶⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. LXXXI, pt.1 (1811), p.183.

⁵⁶⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LXXXI pt. 1 (1811), p.182.

⁵⁶⁷ W. Marshall (1745-1818), *Review and Abstract of the county reports to the Board of Agriculture*, vol. 3, Eastern department (York 1811) reprint (New York, 1968), p. 296.

⁵⁶⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. LXXXI pt.I (1811), p.183.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Harrington house, Craig's court' *Survey of London: vol. 16: St Martin-in-the-Fields I: Charing Cross* (1935), pp.232-237.

where many of their clients, including Egremont, held accounts, and was a two minute walk from the lawyers of Craven Street, and Scotland Yard.⁵⁷⁰ The courtyard was the site of the Sun Fire Insurance office from 1726 until 1867, and the first official residence of the Society of Arts until 1774.

It is probable that the Earl of Egremont selected the firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce to rationalise his Yorkshire estate due to the success of Kent's book, to the elevation of his status through Kent's employment by the monarch, and both Kent and Egremont's early involvement with the Board of Agriculture as well as membership of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Kent's firm was renowned for its proficiency in rationalising estate layout and leases to provide an increase in overall value, whilst still attempting to provide for small-scale farmers; their independent position enabling them to view their role as one with responsibility to tenants as well as employers. It is likely that Egremont agreed with Kent's idea for the provision of land for tenants to keep a cow - as a result of the firm's rationalisation in Yorkshire, a high proportion of cottager tenants had secured small closes.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁷⁰ Sir Hilary Blood, 'The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce: A Learned Society looks at its Role', Inaugural address (1963) *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 112 (1963-1964), 11-20.

⁵⁷¹ **London, BL.** N. Kent, *The Great Advantage of a Cow to the Family of a Labouring Man*, broadsheet, 26 Dec. 1797; **WSRO, PHA 3075** Kent, Claridge and Pearce's survey vol 1 p.5 notes that taking six acres from a farm had 'made two very comfortable places for two industrious labourers, by enabling each of them to keep a cow'. P. Horn, 'An eighteenth-century land agent'.

Kent's *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property* advocated good relations between landowner and tenant, including durable leases and favourable terms for repairs, and attempted to demonstrate the value of small-scale farms, contrary to William Marshall who had emphasised large-scale production for economic agricultural improvement.⁵⁷² In contrast to the Petworth agents, Kent retained professional independence, never becoming associated with one particular employee or estate.⁵⁷³

Egremont's Yorkshire estates were extensively reorganised by the firm from 1796, resulting in both increased rental value, and the provision of small closes for some cottager tenants.⁵⁷⁴

Kent's partner, John Claridge, completed a survey between 1796 and 1797 that revealed an under-rented and poorly organised 24,000-acre estate. Nevertheless, Claridge's diligent management and suggestions for improvement resulted in a doubling of rental value between 1796 and 1811, although this was due in part to a period of inflation.⁵⁷⁵ Claridge charged the firm's customary fee of three-and-a-half per cent of an estate's net yield, plus additional costs of surveying and valuations.⁵⁷⁶ His account also lists improvement costs, such as contributions to the Beverley and Barmston Drainage (see chapter six). Claridge continued to

⁵⁷² P. Horn, 'An eighteenth-century land agent', pp.1-16.

⁵⁷³ Kent, Claridge and Pearce designed their own leases for the Yorkshire estates, which ranged from 1 to 21 years (**WSRO, PHA D22/12**, 1796). Nathaniel Kent's attitude to honest estate management can be seen in the following: 'in estimating the value of estates, between landlord and tenant, I have always considered myself as the common friend of both; and endeavoured to act the part of an honest evidence between them: and where I have entertained doubt, I have never failed to let the scale preponderate in favour of the latter'. N. Kent, *Hints* 1799, p.246.

⁵⁷⁴ Wyndham *A family history*, p.308; P. Horn, 'The contribution of the propagandist'.

⁵⁷⁵ S. Wade Martins, *Farmers*.

⁵⁷⁶ Nathaniel Kent describes the conditions for annual management of the estate at '3 ½ per cent which includes all travelling expenses – the expense of a deputy in each district and every expense whatever except entertainment of the tenants at the audits when they pay their rents... [we will] make two regular annual visits to all the estates – [and] return the rents regularly into your bankers hands in London'. Letter from Kent, Claridge and Pearce, (Craig's Court, Charing Cross), 24 Oct 1796. **WSRO, PHA D22/12**.

manage the estates after Kent's death in 1810, and was succeeded by his son Henry in 1835, on whose death (1848), another firm of surveyor-land agents, Cluttons took over the management of the estates, which they retained until the end of the century.

8.4 Professional career of John Claridge

John Claridge was described by William Marshall as a 'partner, if not a pupil of the late Mr Kent. He was of course well versed in the business of Estate Agency'.⁵⁷⁷ As a witness to a Select Committee relating to the Corn Laws in 1814, Claridge stated that he had begun surveying around 1772.⁵⁷⁸ If (as we are told in the Petworth correspondence) Claridge was about 80 in 1839, he must have been around twelve years old when he started surveying.⁵⁷⁹ In the late 1770s, we know that Claridge resided in Fulham, probably at Kent's family home, Coleshill Cottage.

Like Kent, Claridge is listed as a member of the Society of Arts in 1791, although by this time he appears to have been living at the firm's business address in Craig's Court.⁵⁸⁰ According to his evidence to the Select Committee, Claridge had been a member of the Society from 1779, when he was only nineteen years old. The Society of Arts had a keen interest in

⁵⁷⁷ W. Marshall, *Review and Abstracts of the County Reports of the Board of Agriculture, vol 5 Southern and Peninsular Departments* (1817), pp.241-242.

⁵⁷⁸ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee on petitions relating to the Corn Laws of this Kingdom* 2nd edn (London, 1814) John Claridge, Witness 11 June 1814 pp.39-54.

⁵⁷⁹ **WSRO, PHA 630.**

⁵⁸⁰ *Transactions of the Society instituted at London for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; with the Premiums offered in the year 1791* Vol. IX pp.329-372. *A List of Contributing Members, 1791*, London.

agriculture, and also supported map making in the form of county surveys until 1809.⁵⁸¹

While Kent submitted a paper to the Society on the improvements to the King's farm at Windsor, it does not seem that Claridge was an active member of the Society.⁵⁸² However, the subscription to the Society of 'not less than' two guineas was obviously considered worthwhile, perhaps for respectability, and meeting potential employers.

A survey of extant material relating to Claridge in the National Register of Archives and in the *Dictionary of Land Surveyors* reveals that Claridge was active in the sale, valuation and rationalisation of land in the counties of Yorkshire, Shropshire, Norfolk and Buckinghamshire, among others in the 1780s, and by 1794, part of the business had been signed over to him.⁵⁸³ Claridge also acted as an enclosure commissioner in Middlesex, and elsewhere. To the Select Committee, he described himself as a land agent and surveyor, with experience in the southern counties and Yorkshire. Claridge does not appear to have been a lawyer. He was, though, asked for his legal opinion by correspondents – in a letter he described himself as a 'bad lawyer' for only being able to point to secondary information on the subject.⁵⁸⁴ On the estates that Claridge managed, he preferred to employ local attorneys for legal work.

⁵⁸¹ J.B. Harley, 'The society and the surveys of English counties, 1759-1809' in D.G.C. Allan and J.L. Abbot (eds.), *The virtuoso tribe of arts and sciences. Studies in the eighteenth-century work & membership of the London Society of Arts* (London, 1992), pp141-157.

⁵⁸² D.G.C. Allan and J.L. Abbot (eds.) *The virtuoso tribe*, Appendix I, Officers and committee chairmen of the Society, 1755-1800, pp.359-364.

⁵⁸³ F. Steer et al. *Dictionary of Land Surveyors*.

⁵⁸⁴ Woking, **Surrey History Centre, 3677/3/163** Letter from John Claridge to Ann Tiler, 3 Oct 1825.

Claridge was often away from home, and set up temporary residences near the site of his latest employment. He claimed that '[m]y life has been so restless, that I have not lived four months together in any one place.'⁵⁸⁵ Although this is a slight exaggeration, Claridge certainly seems to have been well travelled. In 1792, then, we find him in Upton on Severn in Worcestershire.⁵⁸⁶ During September 1792, Claridge toured Dorset to gather material for his agricultural survey, and combined this with a survey and valuation for Walpole's Puddletown estate.⁵⁸⁷ In 1796, Claridge's survey for Egremont was combined with a survey of the Harewood estate, and in 1814 Claridge and his family spent around six months in Yorkshire.

Like both Kent and his nephew William Pearce, Claridge was an early author of one of the surveys commissioned by the Board of Agriculture. The views and observations expressed in Claridge's Dorset survey are understandably similar to Kent's *Hints to Gentlemen* regarding leases and farm size; and as Marshall suggested, 'Mr C., it would seem, is a small farm man'.⁵⁸⁸ His observations of Dorset are justified by 'twenty years experience in the cultivation and management of landed property in that county, as well as in most parts of England'. As Marshall pointed out, this was one of the first reports to be printed, and its

⁵⁸⁵ *Report from the Select Committee relating to the Corn Laws* pp.39-54.

⁵⁸⁶ *Transactions of the Society instituted at London for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; with the Premiums offered in the year 1792*. Vol. X pp.391-436. A List of Contributing Members (London, 1792).

⁵⁸⁷ J. Claridge, *General view of the agriculture in the county of Dorset, with observations on the means of its improvement*. Drawn up for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture for internal improvement. (London, 1793).

⁵⁸⁸ W Marshall, *The review and abstract of the county reports to the board of agriculture; from the several agricultural departments of England*. Vol 5 Southern and Peninsular departments (York, 1818).

disorganised structure can be excused due to the pressure to finish in 'a few months, weeks, or days' exerted by his commissioners.⁵⁸⁹

Pamela Horn has suggested that Nathaniel Kent was preoccupied with obtaining, and retaining gentlemanly status in society. The same appears to be true for John Claridge. The westerly movement of Claridge residences from the bustling business of the Strand to the upmarket club land of Pall Mall may reflect gentlemanly aspirations, but may also be a prudent move to be closer to his employer's aristocratic homes. The *Survey of London* also places Claridge as a resident of Upper Brook Street in Mayfair, where he rented a house and the building behind it, then a stable, which he converted into a house between 1803 and 1807.⁵⁹⁰ At the same time, Claridge was also involved in the development of his Yorkshire residence, a farm at Jervaulx Abbey near Bedale, on the Yorkshire estate of another employer, Lord Ailesbury. Claridge's Wensleydale residence seems to have been a family home in addition to that on Pall Mall, and this was the where he eventually settled in the 1830s.

In addition to property development, Claridge employed a governess for his daughters from 1814; Ann Tiler, whose father was a house steward for the third duke of Portland, and Ann was herself later employed by the fifth Earl of Essex. Ann's correspondence lists bills for fine

⁵⁸⁹ W Marshall, *The review and abstract* Vol 5.

⁵⁹⁰ 'Upper Brook Street: North Side', *Survey of London*: vol. 40: The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, Part 2 (The Buildings) (1980), pp.200-210. GBM 3/100, 105: GO, survey plans, Upper Brook St., plans of Mr Claridge's houses, 24 March 1803 and 11 Feb 1808.

clothes and jewellery from shops that supplied royalty, as well as books for teaching Italian, that go some way to suggesting the aspirations that Claridge held for his daughters, whose mother had died in 1802. A brief insight into the surveyor's lifestyle can be seen from a letter in 1825, when Claridge apologised to his children's former governess for the delay in writing from Jervaulx Abbey, which would, he claimed, be 'accounted for by my having the Marquis of Ailesbury here, with the Marchioness and Lady Elizabeth her daughter, and about seventeen extra inmates in my establishment here'.⁵⁹¹

Unsurprisingly, Claridge faced considerable debts in his later years. This is in stark contrast to the £24,000 estate left by Nathaniel Kent on his death thirty years earlier. In 1832, Claridge owed the Earl of Egremont an incredible £35,700. A trail of correspondence about these debts over ten years links two Petworth agents, two landowners, and both Claridge and his son. From this complex trail, of which only the later letters remain, it appears that Claridge's son, Henry uncovered the debts and reported them to Egremont, who, with characteristic generosity, allowed Henry to continue his father's agency in return for a bond for a fraction of the debt. When the debt was chased by Egremont's successor Colonel Wyndham, Henry acknowledged his duty to continue to pay this heavy debt, which he would endeavour to do, despite reduced circumstances, and a growing family.

⁵⁹¹ Woking, **Surrey History Centre, 3677/3/163** Letter from John Claridge to Ann Tiler, 3 Oct 1825.

Henry also repaid a total £4,000 of debts to Lord Ailesbury and others. These large figures were the result of professional, as well as personal debts. Henry claimed that 'Lord Harewood owed my father a large professional bill for valuations' which covered a debt to him. It is possible that a significant part of these debts may have been run up by Claridge's partner from 1808, John Iveson. Claridge and Iveson were based at no. 47, and later no. 40 Pall Mall between 1808 and 1822. Iveson was described as a 'land agent to a very considerable extent' when a witness in 1821 to the Select Committee on the Depressed state of Agriculture.⁵⁹² Interestingly, Iveson argued to the Select Committee that he was 'an enemy to leases' – a very different position to both Claridge and Nathaniel Kent.

Iveson may also have been a lawyer, and formerly part of the family law firm at Hedon in Yorkshire that managed the Burton Constable estate. While he does not appear frequently in the Petworth archive (the exception being as author of a map of Yorkshire in 1812), Iveson was agent for Lord Ailesbury's Savernake estate in Wiltshire until 1833, when he was dismissed for mismanagement.⁵⁹³ As F.M.L. Thompson described in his paper on the Ailesbury debts, Iveson was 'not merely uncontrollable...but a rascal', who had lived 'like a lord at the Marquess' expense', had exaggerated the income of the estate and neglected

⁵⁹² B. English, 'Patterns of estate management', pp.34, 37 and 47. Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons. *Report from the Select Committee to whom the several petitions complaining of the depressed state of the agriculture of the United Kingdom were referred* (London, 1821).

⁵⁹³ **WSRO, PHA 5189** Claridge and Iveson map of Wressle, Yorkshire (1812).

estate buildings.⁵⁹⁴ Iveson was never prosecuted, nor was his brother William who according to Barbara English also cheated the Constables, although William Iveson was jailed for debt.

Henry and John Claridge remained joint-agents to Lord Ailesbury on his Yorkshire estate until the death of the father around 1840. Despite the rebuilding that took place on this estate, Thompson believed that the estate was neglected, and did not experience rationalisation until the appointment of another steward in 1839.⁵⁹⁵ Perhaps Claridge's management of the Egremont estate, too, needs to be reconsidered in the light of the incredible debt that he owed his employer (although the origin of the debt is not clear).

While not dismissing this vast debt, John Claridge appears to have been a competent and efficient surveyor and land agent in Yorkshire. His letters provide detailed and knowledgeable accounts of the estate, which he visited twice a year. These letters have a greater clarity than those of the Petworth agents, due in part to the geographical distance between landowner and property and the consequently less frequent correspondence.⁵⁹⁶ Claridge and Tyler's correspondence was that of equals, but with the former frequently complementing the latter on his abilities.⁵⁹⁷ Tyler also visited the estates and wrote to Yorkshire tenants as Egremont's

⁵⁹⁴ F.M.L. Thompson, 'English Landownership: The Ailesbury Trust 1832-56', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 11, 1 (1958), 121-132 at p.125.

⁵⁹⁵ F.M.L. Thompson, 'English landownership', p.130.

⁵⁹⁶ Both John Claridge and William Pearce were surveyors and had published reports for the Board of Agriculture.

⁵⁹⁷ Claridge wrote to Lord Egremont in 1799: 'Mr Tyler's attendance here appears to me to be so highly necessary, and his activity and exertions for your lordships interest so material in this business that I have requested him to give up the wish he has of leaving this place, till the [tithes] commission breaks up, and I have told him I write to you by this post to inform your lordship of my urging his stay'. Letter from John Claridge to the Earl of Egremont (Tadcaster, Yorkshire), 27 October 1799. **WSRO, PHA D22/12.**

solicitor, warning tenants of the potential of legal action if lease covenants were ignored, and also managed the complex legal processes involved in land purchases and enclosure in Yorkshire.

It is unclear which agent took the more senior role as they belonged to different management hierarchies, although Tyler did assess, and frequently criticised, Claridge's accounts. As Pamela Horn has suggested, permanent stewards sometimes resented the intervention of professionals.⁵⁹⁸ While Tyler and Claridge's relations appear to have been relatively amicable, Tyler's most trenchant criticisms were made of Nathaniel Kent, perhaps due to professional jealousy. Tyler grumbled to Egremont about the cost of a valuation by Kent, while the eminent surveyor was forced to defend his position regarding a particular valuation made of the Cumberland estates, an extract of which is shown below.

'I have never been in Cumberland – though I have [surveyed] estates in more than half the counties in England to upwards of £100-000 per annum with the general satisfaction of every person who has employed me – I am sorry that the nature of your enquiry calls for this declaration from me, which I should rather you had learnt from another [...] you must from the perusal of my publication on agriculture where I have aimed at making every gentleman a judge of his own property, collect whether I am competent to ascertain the value of the estate in question [...] I admire your idea about the advantages of being acquainted with a countryside the sort of knowledge is

⁵⁹⁸ P. Horn, 'The contribution of the propagandist' (1982), p.11.

certainly good upon a small scale – but local knowledge alone will not come up to the test of our profession – great experience and a natural turn to combine and compare different objects must always lead to the best decision'.⁵⁹⁹

Kent had clearly been provoked by either Tyler or Egremont into a defence of his profession, and his ability to value an estate he had never visited.⁶⁰⁰ However, despite this outburst over the Cumberland estates, it appears that the London firm's improvements in Yorkshire were generally considered successful. As well as the management of the Yorkshire estates, Kent was involved in the transfer of some of the king's merinos from Windsor to Egremont's home estate in 1797 (which was completed by Sir Joseph Banks), and the surveying and valuation of the tithes of Petworth park and farms in hand during 1799.⁶⁰¹

8.5 Conclusions

A comparison of the Sussex and Yorkshire agents' incomes is revealing. The estate management fees for Yorkshire were considerably higher than the Sussex agents' wages until 1802, when Tyler's salary was made more competitive, and from 1813 the Petworth

⁵⁹⁹ **WSRO, PHA 12186**: Letter from Nathaniel Kent to Egremont, Fulham 18 Nov 1783.

⁶⁰⁰ William Marshall claimed that 'a man who ventures to step forward as a universal valuer, should either have an extraordinary talent for his line of profession, or should, after a suitable initiation, have had great experience in rural concerns, in various parts of the kingdom'. W. Marshall, *On the Landed Property*, p.9. Marshall's research technique involved farming for months in a county before making assessments such as these. P. Horn, 'An eighteenth-century land agent'.

⁶⁰¹ 'Mr Kent desires me to signify to your lordship that his Majesty has given his consent to the drawing of any of his cows by any person you may send and the two Spanish ewes and the ram will be delivered by Mr Robinson of his majesty's little park Windsor to any person your lordship may send for them'. Letter from John Claridge to the Earl of Egremont, 24 Jan 1797. **WSRO, PHA D22/12**. Note that 'Mr Robinson' was the nom-de-plume of George III when writing on agrarian matters. See also H.B. Carter (ed.), *The Sheep and Wool Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1781-1820* (London, 1979), p.293, letters 661 and 667. The Petworth survey (1799) is noted in a bill for five days surveying and valuing for £10.10s. with £6.5s travelling costs; **WSRO, PHA 8061**.

agent was paid a commission at the same rate as the London firm. However, net yields were affected by the payment of property tax from 1804, and by a more substantial decrease in income between 1821 and 1836 caused by rent arrears and abatements, attributable to economic scarcity. Nevertheless, despite temporary reductions, both the Yorkshire and Sussex agents' salaries rose significantly, suggesting that the position of estate manager became an increasingly valued and profitable profession in the period.

Kent, Claridge and Pearce provide a useful contrast to the Petworth agents due to their different professional status. This business was simultaneously engaged by several clients to manage and improve multiple estates, and demonstrated a systematic and commercial approach to estate management and an active involvement in agricultural improvement. For both G.E. Mingay and Barbara English, a move away from resident agents to firms such as this one was a sign of the professionalisation of estate management.⁶⁰² Kent, Claridge and Pearce held an independent position that further enabled them to view their role as one with responsibility to tenants as well as employers.⁶⁰³ In contrast, the Petworth agents remained reliant on their sole employer, with little autonomy or liberty over estate management and improvements. If we consider a 'professional' as an independent practitioner holding specialised knowledge, it must be recognised that the Petworth agents fell far short of this.

⁶⁰² G.E. Mingay, *The Gentry. The Rise and Fall of the Ruling Class* (London, 1976); B. English 'Patterns of Estate Management'. It is interesting to note that the Land Surveyors Club, established in 1834, ruled 'that no resident land agent who is not likewise publicly engaged for other owners of estates [...] should be deemed eligible to become a member of this club'. This suggests that resident agents were considered 'unprofessional', or at least had different interests, which were closer to those of the landed gentry, rather than fellow professionals. Despite this, the Club welcomed land agents from great estates for the next thirty years. F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*, p.94; F.M.L. Thompson. *English Landed Society*.

⁶⁰³ B. English, 'Patterns of estate management', pp.29-48.

The career of John Claridge, a professional in a modern estate agency firm, was also mixed. He was an apprentice surveyor to Nathaniel Kent, a member of the Society of Arts from his youth, and an early author in the Board of Agriculture's county surveys. He was made a partner in the firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce, and later established a land agency with John Iveson. He travelled widely in his 66 year career, although his expertise was in the south of England and in Yorkshire. Claridge's two most significant employers were the third Earl of Egremont, and the first Marquess of Ailesbury. Claridge was selected to rationalise, and later manage the Egremont estates in Yorkshire due to his partnership with Nathaniel Kent – whose publications and famous clients were the likely draw for the aristocracy, although his own connections with the Board of Agriculture and the Society of Arts made him a respected land agent in his own right. Claridge had greater independence than his Petworth counterparts, and he sat loosely in any hierarchy of estate management. By the end of his career, though, Claridge owed significant debts, whether personal or professional, chiefly to Egremont – a fact that should influence our interpretations of his apparent success in the rationalisation of the Yorkshire estate. Like Kent, Claridge strived for a gentlemanly, and not just professional status in society; aspirations that were reflected in his homes, his children, and ultimately in his debts.

Even if not directly involved in the husbandry elements of estate improvement, the tasks of the Petworth agents in financial and legal management made such processes possible. The rationalisation of estate management, including accounting techniques and the

standardisation of leases, as well as financial management, enabled estate rationalisation. Similarly, political activities promoting enclosure, drainage and navigation; the agents' representation of Egremont on local committees and courts; and the preparation of Parliamentary bills enabled large-scale improvement to take place. Agricultural improvement was not, as William Marshall claimed, entirely undertaken by 'practical' men at Petworth, but was fostered by legal agents who supervised and administered the finance for this work, and navigated the complex legal and political procedures necessary in order for such improvement to take place.⁶⁰⁴ It is clear that the land agents made a significant contribution to 'improvement' as understood in a wider term than simply agricultural improvement. Barbara English has suggested that the amount of estate management policy that was defined by the agent and how much by the landowner depended on the characters of the men involved.⁶⁰⁵ At Petworth, it seems the landowner's increasing interest in the estates in fact led to an increased role for the land agent. However, Egremont, as a renowned agricultural improver, and more realistically, an interested enthusiast, was far from typical.

Despite the criticisms of agricultural commentators, the employment of lawyer-stewards did not decline until the 1870s, by which time the increasing complexity of agricultural processes and economic management during financial scarcity led to their being replaced by practical men with agricultural training, such as those from the Royal Agricultural College established in 1845. As J.A. Chartres has argued, 'even in 1800 the full professional 'estate agent' was

⁶⁰⁴ W. Marshall, *On the landed property* (1804).

⁶⁰⁵ B. English, 'Patterns of estate management'.

still in the minority'.⁶⁰⁶ It is likely that the professional land agent of the late nineteenth century fitted Marshall's (1804) description better than those of his own time.

John Beckett has argued that professionalisation was symbolised by the emergence of land agents rather than stewards in the early nineteenth century.⁶⁰⁷ Similarly, David Spring has suggested that the replacement of the term 'steward' with 'agent' could be seen as 'a sign of the land agent's growing self-consciousness, of his attempt to make an occupation into a profession'.⁶⁰⁸ However, both James Upton Tripp and William Tyler continued to use the term 'steward', although, as it has been argued, the term legal agent more appropriately describes their work. Tripp, Tyler and their successor Murray were solicitors, making it hard to argue that the agents established a 'profession' in estate management. Their status was very different to that of the independent firm of Kent, Claridge and Pearce, as well as other non-resident professionals such as solicitor-agents James Loch and the Oxley Parker family, whose successful management of over 20 properties in Essex demonstrates the increasing role of land agency firms in estate management during the nineteenth century.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ J. Chartres 'Agricultural markets and trade' (1989), p.452. At the end of the nineteenth century, T.H.S. Escott suggests that '[t]he custom, which was once common, of placing estates in the management of county solicitors, is gradually falling into desuetude, though still very far from being obsolete.' T.H.S. Escott, *England*, vol. 1 (1879, London), p. 70.

⁶⁰⁷ J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*.

⁶⁰⁸ D. Spring, *The English Landed Estate* (1963), p.97.

⁶⁰⁹ James Loch was agent to the Sutherland estates in the late eighteenth century, although also advised and managed other estate properties and enterprises including the Bridgewater Trust. Christopher Comyns Parker and his son John Oxley Parker managed over 20 different estates during 70 years of land agency in Essex. J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, p.147; J. Oxley Parker, *The Oxley Parker Papers. From the Letters and Diaries of an Essex Family of Land Agents in the Nineteenth Century* (Colchester, 1964).

Nevertheless, the increased competency, responsibility and salary of Tyler suggests that the early stages of professionalisation may have been taking place, with the role of land steward becoming a respectable and profitable employment for county solicitors and others. The retention of this position by solicitors, however, means that land agents had not become a distinctive professional body by the early nineteenth century. This process arguably took place after 1850 at Petworth, although the structure of estate management may well still have differed from the ideal.⁶¹⁰

⁶¹⁰ W. Marshall, *On the landed property of England*.

CHAPTER NINE: PATRONAGE AND PROFESSIONALISATION

This chapter considers debates regarding professional status and the nature of patronage in the developing field of geology during the early nineteenth century. In particular, it examines the employment of the mineral surveyor William Smith by the third Earl of Egremont on his Yorkshire estates from 1803. This study is used to unravel professional networks between Lord Egremont's home estate at Petworth and his land in Yorkshire as well as connections with the Board of Agriculture and the Royal Society in London. The chapter will first introduce William Smith, then discuss networks of patronage associated with the Board of Agriculture and Royal Society. It will briefly discuss coal mining in the West Riding, and will examine in detail a particular coal trial at Spofforth between 1803 and 1805. I will end by considering Smith's professional status and reputation, and offer a commentary about the role and potential influence of acknowledged 'experts' in the improvement of absentee estates in Britain during this period.

9.1 William Smith and the Egremont estate

William 'strata' Smith (1769-1839) was a self-taught land surveyor, mineralogist and drainage engineer from Oxfordshire, whose research produced the first true geological map

of Britain in 1815.⁶¹¹ Smith was one of a growing number of surveyors who were employed on enclosure and inland navigation projects from the late eighteenth century. Surveyors became increasingly professionalised during this period, a process that coincided with the professional and managerial revolution in law and medicine, and was characterised by increased autonomy and exclusive knowledge that made professionals indispensable to their employers.⁶¹²

9.2 Networks of patronage: the Board of Agriculture and the Royal Society

Chapters six and eight have shown that the Yorkshire estates were extensively reorganised by the London surveyor firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce from 1796. It was in this context of increased expenditure in Yorkshire that William Smith was commissioned in 1803 to examine the potential for the extraction of coal at Spofforth.⁶¹³ While it is unclear how Smith received this commission, it is likely that the geologist was recommended to Egremont by one of his fellow members of the Board of Agriculture, Thomas Coke (1752-1842) of Holkham, or, more likely, Francis Russell, fifth Duke of Bedford (1765-1802). Interestingly, it was through Smith's hydrological, rather than mineralogical expertise that he became known

⁶¹¹ S. Winchester, *The Map that changed the world* (London, 2002).

⁶¹² F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*, p. 29; P. Brassley, 'The professionalisation of English agriculture', p. 249; D. Duman, 'Pathway to professionalism: the English bar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'; The current author, S. Johnston, *Landscapes of improvement: the role of land agents in the management of agricultural landscapes at Petworth, West Sussex, 1770-1835*, Unpublished MA thesis (University of Nottingham, 2004); and S. Webster, 'Estate improvement and the professionalisation of land agents on the Egremont estates in Sussex and Yorkshire, 1770-1835', *Rural History* 18 (2007), 1-24.

⁶¹³ Oxford, OUMNH, **William Smith Archive, Box 1, Folder 2**, Egremont to Smith, N.D. [1803]; **Wm Smith, Bx.6, F.3**, Draft letters, Smith to Egremont and Claridge, 3 Feb.1803. **WSRO, PHA D22/18**, Smith to Egremont, 3 Feb.1803; **PHA D22/15**: Claridge to Egremont, 12 Feb.1803.

to such 'improving' aristocrats. Thomas Coke had inspected Smith's Somerset drainage in 1800, commissioned work from him on his Norfolk estate, and had introduced him in 1801 to the Duke of Bedford who was undertaking extensive drainage and irrigation at his home estate at Woburn (Bedfordshire).

Earlier still, in 1796, William Smith had been elected a member of the Royal Bath and West of England Society, of which both Bedford and Egremont were members.⁶¹⁴ The sudden death of the Duke of Bedford in 1802 may have been another reason for this commission by Egremont as he tried to assist Smith after losing his primary supporter. The Earl may also have read Smith's 'Prospectus' for his intended book on rock strata, which was widely circulated from 1801.⁶¹⁵ A further connection to Egremont may have been gained through Smith's engineering work in Sussex on the river Ouse, where he would certainly have come into contact with the agriculturalists John Ellman and Lord Sheffield (1741-1821), who was president of Board of Agriculture from 1803 to 1806.⁶¹⁶

More likely still, William Smith may have been recommended to Egremont by Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820). Egremont had been in correspondence with Banks since the 1790s

⁶¹⁴ S. Winchester, *The map*, p.126.

⁶¹⁵ The title of the intended book was *Accurate Delineations and Descriptions of the Natural Order of the Various Strata that are found in Different Parts of England and Wales; with Practical Observations Thereon*. S. Winchester, *The map*, pp.160-161. J. Phillips, *Memoirs of William Smith* (London, 1844), p.36.

⁶¹⁶ A.W. Skempton (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Civil Engineers in Great Britain and Ireland Vol. 1, 1500-1830*, (London, 2002), p. 639; R.C. Boud, 'The early development of British geological maps', *Imago Mundi*, 27, (1975), 73-96 at 86; S. Farant, 'John Ellman of Glynde in Sussex', *Agricultural History Review* 26 (1978), 77-88; J. Cannon, 'Holroyd, John Baker, first earl of Sheffield (1741-1821)', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004).

regarding wool, the king's merinos, and his own admission into the Royal Society in 1797. Banks had a keen interest in lead and coal mining on his own Overton estate in Derbyshire and was a proponent of coal mining in Britain and the colonies. Furthermore, Banks had assisted Lord Palmerston (1739-1802) in trials for coal in 1784 in return for a scientific account of the rock strata.⁶¹⁷ Banks was also a public supporter of William Smith. Banks had visited the Duke of Bedford's Woburn drainage improvements in 1798, and met the surveyor John Farey who was acting as agent for the Duke. After working together at Woburn, and making two geological tours together, Farey promoted William Smith's discoveries to Joseph Banks in February 1802, demonstrating that Smith was the first to document the sequential order of British rocks, and had discovered the means to identify individual strata within that sequence using fossils.⁶¹⁸ In June 1802, Smith exhibited the progress of his geological map at Bedford's annual Woburn sheep-shearing fair, where Banks promoted the surveyor's work.⁶¹⁹ Smith continued to exhibit his maps at Woburn for a number of years in order to gain subscriptions for his geological publications, and commissions from those great 'improving' landowners and others in the agricultural world for whom the Woburn, and later Holkham sheep-shearing fairs were essential social gatherings.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ J. Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p.200-201; S.R. Band, 'Overton: the Derbyshire estate of Sir Joseph Banks', in R.E.R. Banks et al. (eds.), *Sir Joseph Banks: A Global Perspective* (London, 1994), pp.213-216.

⁶¹⁸ H.S. Torrens, 'Smith, William (1769-1839)', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004); H.S. Torrens, 'Patronage and problems: Banks and the earth sciences', in *Sir Joseph Banks: A Global Perspective*, pp.49-75; H.S. Torrens, 'Farey, John (1766-1826)', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004).

⁶¹⁹ Anon, 'Agriculture' [report on the Woburn sheep-shearing], *Agricultural Magazine* 6 (1802), at 466.

⁶²⁰ N. Goddard, 'Royal Shows and agricultural progress, 1839-1989', *History Today*, 39 (1989), 44-51; J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*, pp.164-165.

Despite this uncertainty whether the connection with Smith was made through the Board of Agriculture or the Royal Society, it is clear that the overlapping agricultural and scientific circles of Bath, Woburn and London provided the third Earl with access to information regarding the mineral surveyor, and a probable recommendation of his work.

9.3 Coal mining in Yorkshire

What, then, were the Earl's motives in employing Smith at Spofforth? The search for coal by Yorkshire landowners had been recorded as early as the 1630s in the East Riding, but, despite a number of searches later in the eighteenth century, no mines were opened.⁶²¹ In contrast, the West Riding *General View of Agriculture* reported in 1799 that there were 'numerous mines of coal, lime, ironstone and lead, and some copper, in this district'.⁶²² Two distinct coal areas can be identified from this period; the West Yorkshire coalfield from Nostell near Wakefield along the River Calder to Mirfield near Huddersfield; and the South Yorkshire district with its rich Barnsley seams.⁶²³ In effect, this gave the impression of an abundance of collieries between Sheffield and Leeds; a landscape that William Cobbett described as 'coal and iron, and iron and coal'.⁶²⁴

⁶²¹ B. English, *The Great Landowners of East Yorkshire, 1530-1910*, 2nd edn (Goole, 2000), p. 197; D. Neave, 'The search for coal in the East Riding in the eighteenth century', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 45 (1973), 194-197.

⁶²² R. Brown, *General view of the agriculture of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Surveyed by Messrs Rennie, Brown & Shirreff, 1793* (London, 1799), p.5.

⁶²³ J.T. Ward, 'West Riding landowners and mining in the nineteenth century', in J. Benson and R.G. Neville (eds.) *Studies in the Yorkshire coal industry* (Manchester, 1976), p.46.

⁶²⁴ W. Cobbett, 'Northern Tour, Sheffield 31 January 1830', in *Rural Rides* (London, 1912, 1973), p.217.

During the nineteenth century, the Yorkshire and North Midland coalfield became the largest in Britain, with development dispersed between Leeds and Nottingham. Coal was also profitable: by the end of the eighteenth century, industry in Yorkshire and Lancashire was estimated to use about 1.5 million tons of coal annually.⁶²⁵

Egremont's coal mining concerns in west Cumberland provided a substantial rental income; Broughton colliery alone provided the estate with £7,000 including an annual rent of £200 and the associated royalties between 1756 and 1777. Annual rents increased to over £1,000 in 1793, and to nearly £2,000 in 1809.⁶²⁶ However, this seemed paltry in comparison to contemporary leading 'colliery entrepreneurs', including the Lowther and Curwen families of Cumberland, whose success may have further motivated Egremont to pursue other mineral interests.⁶²⁷

The two wealthiest West Riding estates, the properties of the Duke of Norfolk (1746-1815) and the Earl Fitzwilliam (1748-1833), both lay above the South Yorkshire coal seams near Sheffield, Rotherham and Wakefield. These influential landowners would have been well known to Egremont; Norfolk's home estate of Arundel was less than twelve miles from Egremont's at Petworth, and both men played significant roles in local government in the southern county. Norfolk was also a member of the Royal Society, while the Earl Fitzwilliam

⁶²⁵ J.T Ward, 'West Riding landowners and mining', p.45

⁶²⁶ O. Wood, *West Cumberland Coal*, p.104; Whitehaven RO, **Leconfield 65/6-7**, Broughton colliery.

⁶²⁷ J.V. Beckett, *Coal and tobacco: the Lowthers and the economic development of west Cumberland, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1981); D. Neave, 'The search for coal', p.194.

was a member of the Board of Agriculture, and a correspondent with Egremont regarding proximate estates in the East Riding, and (as a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), potential absentee taxes in 1798.⁶²⁸ The examples of successful aristocratic entrepreneurs such as Fitzwilliam, Norfolk and the Duke of Devonshire (1748-1811) in the West Riding would have undoubtedly been a spur to Egremont in investigating potential mineral reserves on his Yorkshire estates.⁶²⁹

Several of these aristocrats had estates proximate to Egremont's land in Yorkshire, including the Dukes of Norfolk and Devonshire and Earls Fitzwilliam and Carlisle in the East Riding. Egremont's Spofforth estate in the West Riding was close to land owned by the Duke of Devonshire at Wetherby, to the Harwood estate of the Lascelles family (with limited mining interests near to the Duke of Devonshire's Grassington lead mines near Skipton in the North Riding), and to the 15,000 acre Bramham estate near Wetherby, owned by the Lane-Fox family. Since 1797, the Bramham estate had drawn mineral rents from Allerton-Bywater colliery at Castleford near Leeds. This was close to Methley colliery, part of the estate of the

⁶²⁸ J.T. Ward, 'The earls Fitzwilliam and the Wentworth Woodhouse estate in the nineteenth century', *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic & Social Research*, 12 (1960), 19-27; G. Mee, *Aristocratic enterprise: the Fitzwilliam industrial undertakings, 1795-1857* (Glasgow, 1975); J.T. Ward, 'West Riding landowners and mining'; The Royal Society, *List of Fellows of the Royal Society, 1660-2006* (London, 2006); The Board of Agriculture, *List of the Members of the Board of Agriculture* (1793); D. Wilkinson, 'Wentworth Fitzwilliam, William, second Earl Fitzwilliam (1748-1833)', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004); G. Goodwin, 'Howard, Charles, eleventh duke of Norfolk (1746-1815)', rev. by S.J. Skedd, *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004); Whitehaven RO, **Leconfield Y7/6**, Yorkshire Wressle estate, letters regarding Loftsome bridge, 1803; **WSRO, PHA 55**, Letters from Wentworth Fitzwilliam, 1798 and 1819 regarding an absentee tax and the Peterloo massacre.

⁶²⁹ D. Spring, 'The English landed estate in the age of coal and iron: 1830-1880', *The Economic History Review*, 2:1 (1951), 3-24.

Earls of Mexborough. The Meynell-Ingrams of Temple Newsam near Leeds also had long connections with entrepreneurial ventures in the region.⁶³⁰

The Lane-Fox family had further lead-mining interests at Rimmington near Clitheroe in Lancashire. The Bramham home estate, only a few miles from Spofforth, would, however, have been of most interest to Egremont. According to Samuel Lewis' *Topographical dictionary*, Bramham Moor abounded with freestone, limestone and coal, and a survey of Bramham Park was itself carried out in 1823 by surveyors looking for minerals.⁶³¹ While this survey was undertaken after the Spofforth trials under examination in this paper, it does suggest that Egremont and his advisors were not alone in considering that this district may have held potential mineral reserves.

9.4 Spofforth coal surveys, 1798-1805

Egremont's estate at Spofforth, near to the coalmines of Leeds and Bradford (although not so proximate as to be in competition with them), was therefore considered a likely place for coal. It was also accessible. As Robert Brown reported in his *General View* in 1799, Spofforth was 'lately inclosed, and consequently is in an improving state'.⁶³² However, it is surprising that Egremont employed Smith to examine this estate after a pessimistic survey

⁶³⁰ J.T. Ward, 'West Riding landowners', pp.51, 54, 58; R. Brown, *General view*.

⁶³¹ J.T. Ward, 'West Riding landowners', p.58; J.T. Ward, 'The saving of a Yorkshire estate: George Lane-Fox and Bramham Park', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 42:1:65 (1967), 63-71; S. Lewis, 'Braithwell - Brampton-Abbots', *A topographical dictionary of England*, seventh edition (London, 1848), pp. 339-43.

⁶³² R. Brown, *General view*, Appendix, p.79.

carried out by one William Walker, a mineral surveyor who leased Egremont's Cleator-Moor colliery in Cumberland, in September 1798.⁶³³ Walker reported that the prospect of finding coal was 'very unfavourable', and could not justify a trial in more than one place. He argued that if a trial was carried out, 'the seam of coal if any will be so small and lay [*sic*] at such a depth as not to be an object of attention or render the working [of] it profitable'.⁶³⁴

Perhaps because of this, Egremont stressed in his first letter to Smith in February 1803 that 'I should wish that as little might be said in that country about the purpose of your journey' as could be reconciled with the need to gain information about coal in the area. This was presumably to prevent censure if it failed.⁶³⁵ The surveyor John Farey wrote in 1807 of the many futile attempts to find coal outside of known coalfields in the southern and eastern counties of England. One of the many unsuccessful speculations included a coal trial at Bexhill in East Sussex between 1805 and 1811 that cost well over £30,000. As Hugh Torrens has argued, many of these speculations remained unchronicled due to such expensive and embarrassing failures.⁶³⁶

⁶³³ William Walker was the lessee of Cleator Moor colliery between 1788 and 1805. The output of this colliery in 1801 was 4,887 tons. After 1805, William Walker & Co. continued to lease coal at Greysouthern and the business remained profitable for eighty years. O. Wood, *West Cumberland Coal, 1600-1982/3*, (Carlisle, 1988), p.72, 76; Whitehaven RO, **Leconfield** catalogue, index of correspondents.

⁶³⁴ **WSRO, PHA D22/18**. *Mr William Walker's report on the prospect of getting coals in Spofforth park, or the neighbourhood*, 28 September 1798. It is possible that Walker was a descendent of Peter Walker (d.1733), who maintained an engine for mining on the Lowther estate in Cumberland. J.V. Beckett, *Coal and tobacco. The Lowthers and the economic development of West Cumberland, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.69.

⁶³⁵ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.2**, Egremont to Smith, N.D. [1803]; **Wm Smith, Bx.6, F.3**, Draft letters, Smith to Egremont and Claridge, 3 Feb.1803. **WSRO, PHA, D22/18**, Smith to Egremont, 3 Feb. 1803; **PHA D22/15**: Claridge to Egremont, 12 Feb. 1803.

⁶³⁶ H.S. Torrens, 'Coal hunting at Bexhill 1805-1811: how the new science of stratigraphy was ignored', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 136 (1998), 177-191; H.S. Torrens, 'Geological communication in the Bath area in the last half of the eighteenth century', in L.J. Jordanova and R.S. Porter (eds.) *Images of the Earth. Essays in the history of the environmental sciences*, 2nd edition (London, 1997),

Smith was furnished with introductory letters and maps for his visit by the Yorkshire agent John Claridge. By April, Smith had written an initial report on the 'great success' of the trials at Spofforth. His research had begun with a map of Yorkshire and a slow journey northwards 'in order to trace the connecting line between this coal and that which is now [being worked] in other parts of the country'. According to Smith, Spofforth was located 'within the general range of coal strata', and the surveyor had found encouraging 'symptoms of coal' in the area, including 'surface soil and stones', 'ancient pottery', and the overlying geology characteristic of coal areas, examined initially by the sinking of wells. As trials had so far produced a thin seam of coal and some iron ore near the surface, Smith recommended the use of a steam engine to remove water from deeper wells; thereby promising both economy in the trials, and prospective wealth due to the high price of coal in the area.⁶³⁷

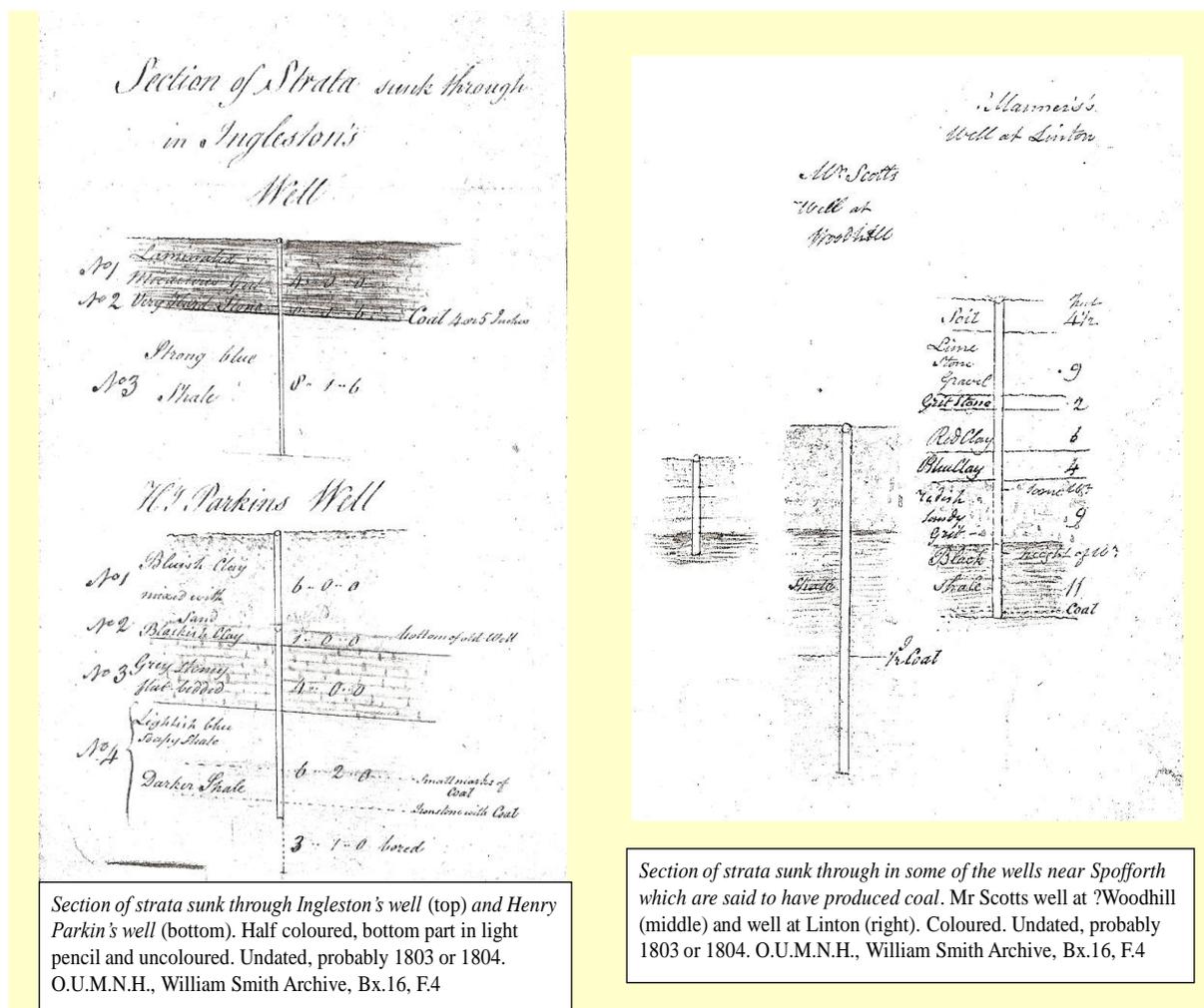
A month later, Smith produced a comprehensive report on the 'discovery of coals at Spofforth', although the mineral layers remained in an irregular and unprofitable position; which only spurred Smith on to further research. The report was accompanied by a diagram of the strata, which illustrates the surveyor's competence (see below). The diagram is more distinct than sketches found in the Smith archives, and attempts to represent the location of boring sites, the surface topography, and the underlying geology. The difficulty of showing three dimensions on such sketches can be seen by the later block models by John Farey

p.234; J. Farey, 'Coal', in A. Rees (ed.) *The cyclopedia or universal dictionary of arts, sciences and literature*, vol. viii (London, 1807).

⁶³⁷ **WSRO, PHA D22/18**. *A report on the probability of finding coal at Spofforth in Yorkshire by William Smith*, April 1803.

(1811), and by the prohibitively expensive use of shading on William Smith's (1815) geological map.⁶³⁸ Vertical sections of at least three trial sites at Spofforth were also found in the Smith papers that used colour and shading to distinguish variable geology. This method of representing the vertical sequence of rocks using longitudinal sections was common to most British geologists by the 1820s.⁶³⁹

FIGURE 7: TWO SECTIONS OF STRATA , SPOFFORTH BY WILLIAM SMITH (1803-4)



⁶³⁸ Oxford, OUMNH, Wm Smith, Bx.16, F.4. R. Laudan, *From mineralogy to geology. The foundations of a science, 1650-1830* (London, 1987), p.163.

⁶³⁹ R. Laudan, *From mineralogy to geology*, pp.163- 164.

of mines and manufacturing districts in England and Scotland, and had visited Egremont's Cumberland mines in Bolton parish.⁶⁴¹ Hatchett is shown in a fictional portrait of men of science from 1807, engraved in 1862.⁶⁴² The chemist had advised Joseph Banks on the geology of his Overton estate and on the financially unpromising nature of some local lead mines in 1796, and it is likely that Banks may have recommended Hatchett to Egremont when seeking advice for his Yorkshire boring.⁶⁴³ Egremont visited Hatchett's laboratory at his home in Hammersmith, indicating the importance the landowner placed on this experiment. Hatchett's letter recommended 'that [Smith] may be permitted to pursue the investigation': a validation which would lead to a further two years of costly speculation.⁶⁴⁴

9.5 The management of the Yorkshire coal trials, 1803-1805

The coal trials at Spofforth were managed initially by Thomas Wheelhouse, a resident of Linton and a Spofforth tenant.⁶⁴⁵ Wheelhouse corresponded directly with Smith, who relied on the foreman to update the agent John Claridge on both mining and drainage matters

⁶⁴¹ C. Hatchett, *The Hatchett diary. A tour through counties of England and Scotland in 1796 visiting their mines and manufactories* ed. by A. Ristrick (Truro, 1967), pp.103-104.

⁶⁴² Engraving (1862) after 'Men of Science living in 1807-8' by George Zobel and William Walker (National Portrait Gallery); L. Jordanova, 'Science and nationhood: cultures of imagined communities', in G. Cubitt (ed.) *Imagining nations* (Manchester, 1998), pp.192-211.

⁶⁴³ H.S. Torrens, 'Patronage and problems', p.54.

⁶⁴⁴ **WSRO, PHA D22/18**. Hatchett to Egremont, 23 May 1803.

⁶⁴⁵ Thomas Wheelhouse was listed in the 1803 Yorkshire accounts as a Spofforth tenant. A survey of the estate from 1767 indicates that a tenant of this name (his father) held thirty-two acres and a barn at Linton and other family members, likely to be his mother and brother, were also considerable tenants on this estate. **PHA 4105-4259** (1797-1947), Account between the Earl of Egremont, Col. George Wyndham and Lord Leconfield successively, per their respective agents and the Yorkshire Tenants; **PHA 1457, 1458**, Field books belonging to a plan of Linton, Yorkshire, made in 1756 and revised by Thomas Brown[e] and James Crow in 1767. **PHA 3076**, Survey, valuation and new arrangement of the estates belonging to the Earl of Egremont situate in Topcliffe, Seamar [sic], Spofforth, Linton, Tadcaster and other adjoining parishes in the North and West Ridings of the County of York. By Kent, Claridge and Pearce, 1797.

during his biannual visits to the Yorkshire estates. However, in July 1803, Wheelhouse declared that he was 'pleased with Mr Hill', who he thought would become 'a Yorkshire man' while the former visited Egremont, probably in London.⁶⁴⁶ Jonathan Hill was from Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire, where Smith had been employed from 1787 as an apprentice and assistant surveyor to Edward Webb (whom Hill described as 'my old friend'). It is likely that Smith recommended the foreman to manage these trials, as he did Hill's son William in Lancashire (for the sum of twenty pounds a year), at Bath from 1809 and for the Somerset Coal Canal Company from 1813 where William Hill worked until his retirement, to be succeeded by his son.⁶⁴⁷

Jonathan Hill appears to have taken over as manager at Spofforth from July 1803, although he was still assisted by Wheelhouse in November 1804. Both Wheelhouse and Hill seem to have been competent managers, with some knowledge of engineering, mining and rock formations, and provided Smith with competent assessments of the boring during his frequent absences. However, it is likely that the managers had received no formal training for this occupation above that which was received on the job.⁶⁴⁸ It is clear from their

⁶⁴⁶ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.6, F.3**, Draft letters, Smith to Wheelhouse and to Claridge, 14 March and 7 April 1803; **Bx.1, F. 2**, Wheelhouse to Smith, 19 June and 18 July 1803; **Wm Smith, Bx.1 F.4**, J. Hill to Smith, 11 Nov. 1804.

⁶⁴⁷ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.3**, J. Hill to Smith, 14 Feb.1804; **Wm Smith Bx.6, F.4-5**, Draft letters, Smith to Claridge, 6 April and 26 July 1804, Smith to J. Hill, 17 May 1804; **Wm Smith Bx.8, F.3**, W. Hill to Smith, 26 Oct. 1811. J.M. Eyles, 'William Smith, Richard Trevithick and Samuel Homfray: their correspondence on steam engines, 1804-1806', *Transactions of the Newcomen Society for the study of the history of engineering and technology* XLIII (1974), 137-161; S. Winchester, *The map*, pp. 58-60.

⁶⁴⁸ R. Laudan, *From mineralogy to geology*, p.56; S. Pollard, *The genesis of modern management. A study of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain* (London, 1965).

correspondence that both Wheelhouse and Hill were practical, rather than literate men.⁶⁴⁹

Hill reported that he was undertaking 'all the blacksmiths work' at the site in 1804, probably maintaining the steam engine and adapting materials for boring.⁶⁵⁰ As W.J. Reader argued, machine designers themselves often came from the ranks of blacksmiths and millwrights, which provided them with the skills and tools for mechanical engineering.⁶⁵¹

With Charles Hatchett's support for the experiment, Claridge asked for more money for the search for profitable coal, and in August 1803 Smith reported that a pit was over twenty yards deep, with a 'flattering' prospect of coal. By October, the pit was a further ten yards deep and had a steam engine which was removing water, while labourers mined surface deposits mixed with clay.⁶⁵² While Claridge stressed the 'frugality' of the enterprise, he had intentionally failed to act out Egremont's instructions to 'pay-off' William Smith in order, Claridge claimed, to 'retain his services'; and the agent argued that he was 'now more sanguine of the success of the undertaking, than ever'.

This hopeful attitude of the agent may well have been due to the increasing cost of the undertaking, and, more particularly, to the reputation of both the agent and his employer in the district. Claridge reported that 'the whole country are interested in the success' of the

⁶⁴⁹ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.2**, Wheelhouse to Smith, 18 July 1803; **Wm Smith Bx.1, F.3**, J. Hill to Smith, 16 May 1804, 'I beg you will excuse any blunders in the letter'.

⁶⁵⁰ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.4**, J. Hill to Smith, 11 November 1804.

⁶⁵¹ W.J. Reader, "At the head of all the new professions': the engineer in Victorian society', in N. McKendrick and R.B. Outhwaite (eds.), *Business life and public policy. Essays in honour of D.C. Coleman* (Cambridge, 1986), p.176.

⁶⁵² **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 26 July 1803 and 27 October 1803; **PHA D22/18**, Smith to Egremont, 28 Aug. 1803.

experiment. To add to the curiosity of local inhabitants, the boring was frequently hindered by the necessary removal of water. On one such occasion in October, Claridge reported that:

'no sooner did the pit fill with water, but a report instantly prevailed, that this undertaking would be given up – which I hope your lordship will not attend to, or any idle tales which may be stated to you, prejudicial to the business in which (if we succeed) is of the utmost importance to you.'⁶⁵³

The successful excavation of coal at Spofforth would also have been of material interest to Claridge, as the agent's annual fee was a calculation of three and a half percent of the net income of the estate, although the continued spending on this experiment would also have reduced the agent's immediate income. Dr John Tripp, rector at Spofforth, also keenly observed the activities. Tripp was the elder brother of the former Petworth agent, James Upton Tripp (d. 1801), and had attended Westminster School with Egremont. He also briefly acted as agent for the Yorkshire estates before the employment of the firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce in 1796. When extensive water threatened the mining project in the summer of 1803 while Smith was absent from the works, the Reverend Dr Tripp called a halt to the proceedings, which were only recommenced after consulting with the surveyor.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵³ **WSRO, PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 27 Oct. 1803.

⁶⁵⁴ Dr John Tripp's grandfather was also Egremont's grandfather, Sir William Wyndham's tutor at Eton, and patronage of this family continued for four generations. H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.312. Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.2**, Wheelhouse to Smith, 18 July 1803. A similar case of involvement by Church of England clergy can be seen in the Pennington coal trial in the East Riding during the eighteenth century when Joseph Pennington selected the rector of Ousby (Cumberland), a keen naturalist, to superintend his coal trial, which was similarly unsuccessful. D. Neave, 'The search for coal', p.194.

Egremont's retention of rights to mineral exploitation affected both present and future prospects for his tenants. The mining trials were intrusive to other forms of land use as they caused surface damage, and vied for space for waste disposal.⁶⁵⁵ Anthony Proctor complained to Jonathan Hill in May 1804 that he wanted to plant his land. Other tenants, such as Henry Parkin were involved in negotiations with Claridge and Smith.⁶⁵⁶ However, Hill protested that he would obey only Smith's, not Parkin's instructions when the latter told him 'to bore in the old pit', as it was 'of no use to bore anywhere else'. Hill later complained that Claridge had consulted Parkin 'and gave him orders how to go on' without consulting either himself, or William Smith.⁶⁵⁷ These strained relations can be seen as a response to the failure to prove any coal fit for working at Spofforth, and the uncertainty of those responsible for the everyday working of the site in the absence of land agent, surveyor and landowner. However, despite the seemingly desperate situation, Smith's optimism was infectious. He wrote to Hill in January 1804 that 'there is nothing in the account you have yet sent me that gives me the least occasion to despair of finding coal at Spofforth'.⁶⁵⁸

In his optimism, Smith corresponded with the engineer Richard Trevithick (1771-1833) regarding his newly invented high pressure steam engine that was more compact and lighter than the large beam engines on Newcomen or Boulton and Watt's plans. Smith inquired

⁶⁵⁵ W.P. Hartley, 'Five landed estates in Yorkshire and the development of coal mining during the nineteenth century', *The Local Historian*, 23:4 (1993), 188-198.

⁶⁵⁶ Henry Parkin was listed in the 1803 Yorkshire accounts for Spofforth. In 1797, a John Parkin was tenant of Parsons Hagg Farm at the same rent Henry was paying in 1803. **WSRO, PHA 4105-4259** (1797-1947), Account between respective agents and the Yorkshire Tenants; **PHA 3076**, Survey, valuation and new arrangement by Kent, Claridge and Pearce, 1797.

⁶⁵⁷ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.3**, J. Hill to Smith, 17 May 1804; **Wm Smith Bx.1, F.4**: two letters J. Hill to Smith, 18 July and 11 Nov. 1804.

⁶⁵⁸ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.6, F.4-5**, Draft, Smith to J. Hill, 23 Jan.1804.

about the price of such engines, 'having now the direction of some experiments for coal in Lancashire and Yorkshire where steam engines will be required for the purposes of pumping water and winding coal'. Smith suggested that he would have opportunities for recommending further engines to his future employers.⁶⁵⁹ This correspondence is surprising given the fact that an engine had already been established at Spofforth, and trials had so far provided little evidence to justify another significant investment. At the Lancashire trials, too, no shaft had yet been sunk. These trials were located at Tarbock near Liverpool on the estate of the Earl of Sefton (1772-1838) from 1803, where successful boring led to the installation of a Trevithick engine and a working colliery until the end of the century.⁶⁶⁰

Despite apparent differences over the Spofforth trials, Smith and Claridge visited the estate at the same time, and also arranged to visit Egremont in London together. Claridge and Smith also corresponded regarding the Tarbock coal trials and the wishes of the Earl of Sefton for a year from November 1803. Smith wrote to Claridge in very positive terms about the progress of boring in Lancashire, and inquired from the agent about how to conduct the expenses of the colliery, and requested advice about Lord Sefton's wishes. It is clear, therefore, that Claridge was acting as agent for Lord Sefton for these trials, if not for his whole estate.⁶⁶¹ While it may seem incongruous to observe the Egremont agent acting for

⁶⁵⁹ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.6, F.4-5**, Draft, Smith to R. Trevithick, 25 March 1804. J.M. Eyles, 'William Smith, Richard Trevithick', p.138.

⁶⁶⁰ I.A. Williamson, 'William Smith: his mining report on and the subsequent mining history of the Tarbock Coalfield, near Liverpool', *British Mining* 78 (2005), 54-67.

⁶⁶¹ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.6, F.3, F.4-5**. Correspondence between William Philip Molyneux, 2nd Earl of Sefton (1772-1838) and Smith, and between Smith and W. Hill, regarding Tarbock coal

another landowner, the firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce was simultaneously engaged by several clients to manage and improve multiple estates, and they surveyed and valued many more.

While a report by Smith on the Spofforth trials in June 1804 maintained that a number of thin coal veins near the surface, together with encouraging geology and accompanying fossils, meant that he had 'as good hopes as ever', the search had so far been disappointing. Geological faults concerned the surveyor, while water, impenetrable rocks and noxious gas hindered the practitioners. Without improvements, Smith recorded, boring would cease at 100 yards on the site at which they were working, although he still had 'good hopes of finding coal in other parts of the parish'.⁶⁶²

On Smith's advice, Egremont consulted an acknowledged expert about the future of the coal trial in July 1804; this time Charles Francis Greville (1749-1809), a renowned mineralogist and horticulturalist and friend of Sir Joseph Banks, who was, like Charles Hatchett and Egremont, a Fellow of the Royal Society.⁶⁶³ Unlike Hatchett, Greville recommended the engagement of an alternative engineer (one Mr Dod, currently based in Yorkshire) to assess

trials (1803-1806). Smith and Claridge corresponded regarding Tarbock and the Earl of Sefton from 1803 to 1804.

⁶⁶² **WSRO, PHA D22/18**, Trial for Coal on the Earl of Egremont's estate at Spofforth in Yorkshire 1803 and 1804. Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.4**, J. Hill to Smith, 1 October 1804.

⁶⁶³ Oxford, OUMNH, **Wm Smith, Bx.1, F.3**, Claridge to Smith, 10 May 1804, 'you had wished his lordship to consult Mr Hatchett or some other gentleman'. **WSRO, PHA D22/18**, Greville to Egremont, 10 July 1804 and n.d. [?July 1804].

the viability of the trials.⁶⁶⁴ In a later letter, Greville stated that he was 'sorry to think that there is no chance of a good seam of working coal at Spofforth and that the perseverance in trial has been greater than I should have encouraged after the first trial'. According to Greville, the prospect of the great trial was 'desperate', and mining (even for iron ore) in the faulted area would prove unprofitable. Greville stated that Smith, whom he did not know, was well acquainted 'with the strata of Yorkshire', but that coal did not always occur where it might be expected. While the surviving letter is incomplete, it is likely that Greville recommended that Egremont end the trials.

By mid 1804, even Hill was beginning to doubt the prospect of finding coals. In October, Hill reported to Smith that Claridge, too, seemed 'almost tired of our boring'. The cost of the experiment had exceeded £1,000 with only the boring apparatus to show for it. With such expensive machinery, it was considered prudent to try a further site at nearby Linton, and then to end the experiment. However, while no additional correspondence between Claridge and Smith exists in either the Petworth or Oxford archives from March 1805 when boring remained unsuccessful, the trial was sustained for a further twelve months, albeit at different locations. Claridge defended the continuation of the trial at Spofforth to his employer in terms of economy; the costs of the experiment having 'not exceeded £3 a week all winter', with 'not a shilling of expenditure lavished'. The agent had further directed 'a minute examination of

⁶⁶⁴ This is probably Thomas Dodd, a land surveyor working in the North Riding of Yorkshire at this time. F. Steers et al. (eds.) *Dictionary of Land Surveyors* II, p.146.

the borings with some very intelligent men', and remained hopeful. Despite this, by October, Claridge reported that he had 'stopped all further progress' at Spofforth, where boring remained unsuccessful, and was trying to transport the equipment to the Topcliffe estate in the North Riding.⁶⁶⁵ However, it is likely that the mineral experiment ended later this year, as there is no further remaining correspondence or other documents on this matter in either archive.

The Spofforth experiment may well have benefited William Smith more than it did Egremont. Smith charged two guineas a day plus expenses for mineral surveying, and made at least eight visits to Yorkshire from London.⁶⁶⁶ More importantly, as Smith's nephew John Phillips described, surveying provided the means and opportunity (at the site and travelling to it) to observe geological strata, which enhanced Smith's knowledge, and provided data for the geological map that was to make him famous.⁶⁶⁷ However, Egremont also benefited from the surveyor's ideas about land drainage near the river at Spofforth, and a promised geological map of the estate that may have been of value to wider improvements.⁶⁶⁸ The cost of the Spofforth coal survey, although significant, was less than the expensive drainage works on the Yorkshire estate during this period, and was much more economical than contemporary

⁶⁶⁵ In February 1805, Claridge reported that preparation was taking place to remove the boring apparatus to Topcliffe, although it is uncertain whether this actually took place. **WSRO, PHA, D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 5 February 1805; 25 April 1805; 12 October 1805.

⁶⁶⁶ H.S. Torrens, 'Smith, William (1769-1839)', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004); **WSRO, PHA D22/15, PHA D22/18**.

⁶⁶⁷ Phillips, *Memoirs*, p.55.

⁶⁶⁸ **WSRO, PHA D22/18**, Smith to Egremont, 6 April 1803 and **PHA D22/15**, Claridge to Egremont, 17 April 1803; **PHA D22/18**, Report on the Discovery of Coals, May 1803. Smith published a geological map of Yorkshire in 1821. A.W. Skempton (ed.), *A biographical dictionary of civil engineers*, vol I, p. 639.

coal trials in east Sussex.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, the Spofforth survey established beyond doubt that there was no profitable coal on this estate, a step beyond the 1798 survey which only considered that it was unlikely.

9.6 Professional reputation

Although Smith did not discover profitable coal deposits at Spofforth, his reputation for finding minerals in both likely and unlikely places was secured by successful trials and exploitation at Tarbock near Liverpool and at Hetton in Durham, among others.⁶⁷⁰ Smith's persistence and his willingness to challenge scientific opinion established his reputation as one of the founders of modern geology.

Nevertheless, the mineralogist Charles Greville (who was Vice President of the Royal Society from 1804) stated that he did not know William Smith.⁶⁷¹ This insignificant comment goes some way to revealing the contested status of practical surveyors in this genteel science. While Smith was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society with the support of its president Joseph Banks in 1806, both Smith and John Farey were excluded from the formation of the Geological Society of London in 1807, which Farey referred to in 1822 as the 'Anti-Smithian'. Smith, the bankrupt son of an Oxfordshire blacksmith, was not welcome

⁶⁶⁹ Between 1797 and 1812, Lord Egremont spent £26,000 on draining and fencing in Yorkshire. H.A. Wyndham, *A family history*, p.333; H.S. Torrens, 'Coal hunting at Bexhill 1805-1811'.

⁶⁷⁰ R.C. Boud, 'British geological maps'.

⁶⁷¹ **WSRO, PHA D22/18**, Greville to Egremont, 10 July 1804 and n.d. [?July 1804]; P.J. Weindling, 'Geological controversy and its historiography: the prehistory of the Geological Society of London', in L. Jordanova and R. Porter (eds.), *Images of the Earth. Essays in the history of the environmental sciences*, 2nd edn. (London, British Society for the History of Science, 1997), p.260..

in this exclusive dining club for leisured gentlemen. Even Farey's son, an engineer, was blackballed from the Geological Society, where trustworthiness was characterised, like elsewhere in society, by the disinterested gentleman.⁶⁷² Charles Hatchett, himself merely a son of a coach-maker, fulfilled the role of amateur unpaid expert, in contrast to the professional mineral surveyor William Smith.⁶⁷³ It is clear that Smith's contemporaries considered him to be a 'practical' surveyor, rather than man of science. In what is surely a reference to Smith and John Farey, Joseph Banks reported that:

'We have now some Practical men well versed in Stratifications who undertake to examine the subterraneous geography of Gentlemens estates in order to discover the Fossils likely to be useful for fuel...'.⁶⁷⁴

Smith's skills were valued for their utility to gentleman's pockets, and for the benefits to the community by providing fuel for households and for manufacturing, rather than for advancing scientific knowledge. Motives of wealth and intellectual curiosity, and a paternalist desire for community stability have been put forward to explain the expansion of the Fitzwilliam mineral enterprise in Yorkshire and may have been common reasons for aristocratic mineral exploitation, including Egremont's own mines in Cumberland and his Yorkshire

⁶⁷² H.S. Torrens, 'Patronage and problems'; R. Porter, 'Gentlemen and geology: the emergence of a scientific career, 1660-1920', *The Historical Journal* 21:4 (1978), 809-836; A. Ophir and S. Shapin, 'The place of knowledge: a methodological survey' *Science in Context* 4 (1991), 3-21.

⁶⁷³ D.C. Coleman, 'Gentlemen and Players', *Economic History Review* 26 (1973), 92-116; H.S. Torrens, 'Notes on 'The Amateur' in the development of British geology', *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association* 117 (2006), 1-8.

⁶⁷⁴ Geneva Public Library, MS suppl. 367:33v, Joseph Banks to Faujas de St Fond, 7 February 1811. Quoted in J. Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p.113.

experiment.⁶⁷⁵ The ethos of social improvement and utility of knowledge fitted the original motives of the Geological Society, the recently established Royal Institution (of which Egremont was a Vice President), the Royal Society of Arts and the Banksian ethos of the Royal Society with its emphasis on empirical science.⁶⁷⁶

However, as Paul Weindling has argued, in both the Geological Society and the Royal Institution hopes for the application of science to social improvement encountered much opposition. In contrast, the Royal Society itself made a significant contribution to the development of geological science.⁶⁷⁷ Joseph Banks, Charles Greville and Charles Hatchett among others at the Royal Society all showed a genuine desire to apply science, and had excellent relations with mine owners, mineral surveyors and coal viewers. The contribution of such surveyors, as well as collectors of minerals (such as Hatchett and Greville) to the development of geology has only recently been reassessed by historians.⁶⁷⁸

9.7 Professional status

Smith's ambiguous social status may well be typical of many in the developing professions.

The geologist referred to himself as a surveyor and an engineer, two professions that were

⁶⁷⁵ G. Mee, *Aristocratic enterprise*, pp. xi and 78.

⁶⁷⁶ As Morris Berman points out, Baconian and amateur conceptions of science were not mutually exclusive at this time. M. Berman, "'Hegemony" and the amateur tradition in British science', *Journal of Social History* 8:2 (1975), 30-50, at p.36; R. Yeo, 'An idol of the market place: Baconianism in nineteenth century Britain', *History of Science* 23 (1985), 251-298; M. Berman, *Social change and scientific organisation. The Royal Institution, 1799-1844* (London, Heinemann, 1978).

⁶⁷⁷ P.J. Weindling, 'Geological controversy and its historiography', p.256; R. Porter, *The making of geology: earth science in Britain, 1660-1815* (Cambridge, 1977), p.16.

⁶⁷⁸ P.J. Weindling, 'Geological controversy and its historiography', p.260; H.S. Torrens, 'Patronage and problems'; J. Gascoigne *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, pp.200-201.

becoming established, and distinguished from each other, by the early 1800s.⁶⁷⁹ Despite this, Smith could claim expertise in both professions due to his training as a land surveyor, and extensive engineering experience in drainage, inland navigation and mineral exploitation. Smith acted as an independent consultant to many of these projects, often several at a time, and mediated between client and practitioner in a professional manner that can be compared to the civil engineer John Smeaton (1724-1792) who had established a creditable profession on the model of more traditional ones, such as the law.⁶⁸⁰

William Smith considered that the occupation of mineral surveyor was 'the legitimate offspring of Geology', and as such had a contribution to make to scientific knowledge.⁶⁸¹ However, Smith had to share this profession with uneducated 'practical men' such as William Walker and Jonathan and William Hill in this study, and had to find ways to distinguish himself from them. It was not until the mid nineteenth century, when concerns for safety and productivity increased that professional mining engineers replaced such local experts.⁶⁸²

John Phillips' memoir of Smith dismissed the guidance of so-called 'practical men' in favour of 'positive facts and reasonable arguments advanced by "men of science"'.⁶⁸³ Smith was even credited by the following generation as being such a man of science, as the engraving

⁶⁷⁹ R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers: a history of the engineering profession in Britain*, p.45.

⁶⁸⁰ R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers*; D. Duman, 'The creation and diffusion of a professional ideology'.

⁶⁸¹ P.J. Weindling, 'Geological controversy', p.261.

⁶⁸² R.A. Buchanan, *The Engineers*, p.98-99; W.J. Reader, "At the head of all the new professions': the engineer', p.173.

⁶⁸³ J. Phillips, *Memoirs*, p.67. Engraving (1862) after 'Men of Science living in 1807-8' by George Zobel and William Walker (National Portrait Gallery); L. Jordanova, 'Science and nationhood'.

'Men of Science living in 1807-8' shows. However, as we have seen, Joseph Banks considered Smith to be a 'practical' surveyor. Scholars have argued that Smith was relatively unaware of geological advances on the Continent at this time, and developed both his ideas about strata and his representational practices in isolation to them; although Smith's election to the Bath and West and later the Royal Society may have eroded this isolation.⁶⁸⁴ Nevertheless, as Phillips stated, 'Mr Smith was utterly unacquainted with books treating of the natural history of the earth', and 'he had no other teacher than that acquired by "habit of observation"...'⁶⁸⁵ While Smith's lack of education provided intellectual independence, it hindered effective theorising. Nevertheless, the geologist's great achievement lay in tracing the order of English strata (both vertically and geographically) more completely than any other contemporary. The maps produced both by him and the Geological Society went some way in undermining the geological ignorance of landowners who might imagine themselves mineral magnates.

9.8 Conclusions

Experts such as William Smith were employed through networks of patronage. An established scientific network was clearly that of the Royal Society, which functioned as a 'clearing-house' for natural knowledge and a review body for scientific reports during the

⁶⁸⁴ R. Laudan, *From mineralogy*, p.164; R. Porter, *The making of geology*, p.137; H.S. Torrens, 'Geological communication in the Bath area', p.243.

⁶⁸⁵ J. Phillips, *Memoirs*, p.215; R. Porter, *The making of geology*, pp.137-137.

eighteenth century.⁶⁸⁶ In this study, the Society, and in particular its president Sir Joseph Banks provided a source for recommended expertise (both amateur and professional), as well as offering a means of introduction for those requiring, and those dispensing (if not actually selling) scientific knowledge.

As significant to this study were key personalities involved with the Board of Agriculture, and the social circuit associated with agricultural shows at Woburn and elsewhere. Published texts by professionals, the management schemes of proximate estates, and the passing of recommendations between aristocrats were also important methods of securing employment. For example, the Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806) recommended experts in Derbyshire geology to Joseph Banks in 1794, while Lord Polwarth, husband of Egremont's half-sister, wrote to the Earl to recommend a Newcastle mineral viewer and discuss the appointment of a steward.⁶⁸⁷ Professional recommendations echoed aristocratic correspondence, despite being in competition for patronage. William Smith supported the Hill family as reliable mineral surveyors, and offered to recommend Richard Trevithick's engine to future employers. Aristocratic patronage was not limited to estate management. John Tripp, vicar of Spofforth, was a member of a Petworth family patronised by the Egremonts for generations.

⁶⁸⁶ M.B. Hall, 'Oldenburg and the art of scientific communication' *the British Journal for the History of Science* 2 (1965), 277-90; D.S. Lux and H.J. Cook, 'Closed circles or open networks?: communicating at a distance during the Scientific Revolution'; A. Rusnock, 'Correspondence networks and the Royal Society, 1700-1750'.

⁶⁸⁷ H.S. Torrens, 'Patronage and problems', p.54; **WSRO, PHA 54**, Letter from Hugh Scott, 6th Lord Polwarth to the 3rd Earl of Egremont, Oct.1804.

With the Spofforth experiment, the agent John Claridge corresponded with Egremont directly, instead of through the more usual channels of the Petworth agent. In this particular case, then, networks of patronage and the transfer of knowledge were made between London and Yorkshire, rather than via the home estate at Petworth. Egremont met Claridge and William Smith a number of times in London. He also visited Charles Hatchett at his laboratory to discuss the experiment in person. It is clear even from this brief study, then, that Egremont was a conscientious landowner in Yorkshire, despite being an absentee.

From the late eighteenth century, the Egremont estate was managed from Petworth, where contemporary authors recorded the third Earl's passion for agricultural improvement. However, attempts at improvement can be seen more widely on the estates in Yorkshire and Cumberland, where 'professional' estate managers, mineral and land surveyors were employed to improve estate income, and to a lesser extent, improve conditions for tenants. These men brought with them ideas, technology and expertise, and abstracted capital (often in considerable amounts) from their employer for land drainage, canal schemes, estate rationalisation, mineral speculation and many other activities.

Such experts had a significant role in the transfer of ideas from recognised sites of excellence such as Petworth and London to more dispersed estates. Interest in these 'absentee' estates also brought transfers of estate workers (for example, the Petworth surveyor John Upton and agent William Tyler visited Yorkshire), as well as the transfer of

goods including seeds, stud animals, and in the case of William Smith, geological samples.

The independence of Nathaniel Kent and John Claridge, the professional consultancy of William Smith, William Jessop, and John Smeaton among others on these estates, is suggestive of the influence of these early professionals.

CHAPTER TEN:

CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Improvement and estate landscapes

This thesis has considered the management and improvement of the Egremont estates, owned by the third Earl of Egremont between 1763 and 1837, and then by his son Colonel George Wyndham (later Lord Leconfield) until 1869. The study has revealed some of the varied and changing cultures of 'improvement' on British estate landscapes during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, it has examined the professional networks of those rural professionals who actually implemented these landscape changes, rather than their more renowned employers. This is in contrast to studies that have tended to focus on the advances of an 'improving' estate owner, although historians have also considered the role of yeoman farmers and smaller landowners in agricultural improvement.⁶⁸⁸ The thesis contributes to debates regarding the nature of 'improvement' in this period, and most particularly, to understandings of the developing rural professions and to scholarship regarding professionalisation.⁶⁸⁹

For the Petworth estate, especially, this is an important shift of attention away from the charismatic third Earl towards members of the developing professions, such as the agents,

⁶⁸⁸ See, for example S. Farrant, 'John Ellman of Glynde in Sussex', *Agricultural History Review* 26 (1978), 77-88.

⁶⁸⁹ D. Brown, 'Reassessing the influence of the aristocratic improver: the example of the fifth Duke of Bedford (1765-1802)', *Agricultural History Review* 47, II (1999), 182-195.

agricultural writers, surveyors and engineers, who received the Earl's patronage. The Petworth House Archives, and the multiple other archives used in this study, are a rich source of their correspondence, maps and published reports; this documentation of hitherto neglected schemes of land improvement on the Egremont estates in Sussex, Yorkshire and Australia is based on these sources.

10.2 Landscape and cultural geography

This thesis has interpreted key episodes in the archive utilising a 'landscape' approach. An understanding of 'landscape' as a cultural image which can have simultaneous variant readings, and yet which is historically specific and bound into class relations, is useful for interpreting estate archives because it recognises that there is an explicit politics of representation.⁶⁹⁰ The aristocratic landowner's 'gaze' prompted vast aesthetic and economic changes to these diverse estate landscapes. These changes, such as the drainage in East Yorkshire examined in this study, impacted upon the lives of those least able to determine the course of agricultural 'improvement'. As Alun Howkins has suggested, the pictures by J.M.W. Turner of Petworth Park 'both reflect and conceal changes in English rural society in the years in which it was painted, by representing an ideal and harmonised social order and

⁶⁹⁰ S. Daniels and D. Cosgrove, *The iconography of landscape* (Cambridge, 1988); G. Rose, *Feminism and geography* (Cambridge, 1993); S. Seymour, 'Historical geographies of landscape', in B. Graham and C. Nash, eds. *Modern historical geographies* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 193-215.

celebrating agricultural improvement'.⁶⁹¹ Taking a symbolic or iconographic approach to landscape in interpretations of the Egremont estates has enabled an understanding of the contention entailed by these changes.

However, new cultural geography's engagement with landscape has been criticised as reinforcing the systems of power that it reveals. A 'more-than-representational' approach recognises the value of both representation, and non-representational theory.⁶⁹² Despite acknowledging that the concept of performance is an appropriate one for understanding cultures of improvement, the author, like all historical geographers has been confronted with the absence of performance and practice (or at least their partiality) in the archive.⁶⁹³ Despite this, the study has examined key 'improvement stories' from the archive influenced by theoretical approaches to telling stories and life-histories in historical geography.⁶⁹⁴

Landscape has also provided a geographical framework for interpreting both estate improvement, and the relationships of the people involved. The Egremont estate was dispersed over five English counties including Sussex, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Somerset

⁶⁹¹ A. Howkins, 'J.M.W. Turner at Petworth: agricultural improvement and the politics of landscape', in John Barrell, (ed.), *Painting and the politics of culture. New essays on British art, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1992), pp.231-251.

⁶⁹² H. Lorimer, 'Cultural geography: the busyness of being 'more-than-representational'' *Progress in Human Geography* 29,1 (2005), 83-94, p.84; P. Cloke and O. Jones, 'Dwelling, place, and landscape: an orchard in Somerset', *Environment and Planning A* 33(2001), 649-666, p.662.

⁶⁹³ E. Gagen, H. Lorimer and A. Vasudevan, eds. *Practising the archive: reflections on method and practice in historical geography* (London, 2007), p.5. H. Lorimer, 'Telling small stories: spaces of knowledge and the practice of geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28 (2003), 197-217.

⁶⁹⁴ G. Revill and S. Seymour, 'Telling stories: story telling as a textual strategy' in A. Hughes, C. Morris and S. Seymour (eds.) *Ethnography and rural research* (Cheltenham, 2000), pp.136-157. S. Daniels and C. Nash, 'Lifepaths: geography and biography' *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, 3 (2004), 449-458; C. Hall, 'Imperial careering at home: Harriet Martineau on Empire' in D. Lambert and A. Lester, (eds.) *Colonial Lives*, pp335-359.

and Devon, as well as Ireland and, from the mid nineteenth century, Australia. Previously, agricultural historians have tended to limit their analysis to 'home' estates, and have not examined the role of agricultural improvers (and the experts employed by them) on their 'absentee' estates, either in Britain or the colonies. This thesis has attempted to in part redress this balance. It has utilised the concept of an 'estate landscape' to draw together the dispersed Egremont estates in order to better understand the management structures of these estates, and how they relate to the home estate at Petworth.

10.3 Geography and absentee estates

Selected archival 'stories' or episodes of improvement have been the focus of particular chapters in the thesis and have been a means to unravel the complex connections between: the different estate units; the relationships between the various people that influenced these landscapes, and, crucially; the difficulties inherent in managing such a dispersed patrimony. It is clear, then, that 'geography matters' when considering estate improvement schemes.

Improvement schemes on the Egremont 'absentee' estates in Yorkshire and Australia examined in the thesis can be compared to those more publicised changes at Petworth. Due to the distance involved and the consequently greater level of autonomy, the role of improvement professionals at external sites may well have been more significant than that experienced on home estates. However, our understanding of improvements on absentee

estates may be skewed by the greater quantity and detail in correspondence and the absence of verbal communication that would have been significant between professionals and their resident employers on home estates such as Petworth.

The difficulties of managing absentee estates may be understood in terms of G. Blainey's phrase, the 'tyranny of distance'.⁶⁹⁵ Particularly by its study on Colonel Wyndham's land speculation in Australia, but also by its examination of the work of William Smith in Yorkshire, and of the Beverley and Barmston drainage, the thesis has provided case studies in the difficulties facing Egremont and his heir as absentee landowners, albeit in Egremont's case, an atypical and highly engaged one.

This study is necessarily limited geographically, and focuses on key episodes in estate improvement in Sussex and Yorkshire, with the additional comparison with Australia. A more exhaustive look at the Cumberland estates, together with the Irish 'improvements' and in particular the role of the Cumbrian and Irish land agents would make a fascinating extension to this thesis, as would further research on the Orchard Wyndham estates in Somerset and Devon.

⁶⁹⁵ G. Blainey, *The tyranny of distance. How distance shaped Australia's history* (Melbourne, 1968).

10.4 Archives and stories of estate improvement

The Petworth House Archive is a vast yet comparatively underused source, remarkable for both its extent and survival. As such, the first aim of the thesis was the documentation for the first time of a number of highly significant and large-scale projects of land improvement on the Egremont estates, most of which have been comparatively neglected in the historical literature to date. Some, such as William Smith's work in mineral prospecting, have to the best of my knowledge never been investigated before. Others, such as the Beverley and Barmston drainage scheme have been touched upon by other scholars, but not using the material in the Petworth archives, or from the point of view of the Egremont estates as a whole.

The study has used multiple archives to trace stories of improvement that do not rely on a single elite archival source. Episodes of 'failure' in estate improvement have also been particularly revealing in this study. As Hugh Torrens has argued, a great many mineral speculations remained unchronicled due to their expensive and embarrassing lack of success.⁶⁹⁶ William Smith's prospecting at Spofforth was one of many such unsuccessful coal speculations in the early nineteenth century. The survival of this record of failure, then, is in itself a valuable corrective in more than one existing aspect of the historiography: in the

⁶⁹⁶ H.S. Torrens, 'Coal hunting at Bexhill 1805-1811: how the new science of stratigraphy was ignored', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 136 (1998), 177-191; H.S. Torrens, 'Geological communication in the Bath area in the last half of the eighteenth century', in L.J. Jordanova and R.S. Porter (eds.) *Images of the Earth. Essays in the history of the environmental sciences*, 2nd edition (London, 1997), p.234; J. Farey, 'Coal', in A. Rees (ed.) *The cyclopaedia or universal dictionary of arts, sciences and literature*, vol. viii (London, 1807).

record of early mineral surveying; in interpretations of the influence of social networks such as the Royal Society on the professionalisation of geology; and of the role of aristocratic landowners in the development of mining. The competence of Smith's geological diagrams, drawn fifteen years before these practices became common to most British geologists, are evidence of his significant contribution to this science.

The failure of Colonel Wyndham's Australian speculation, and the vast correspondence it as a result produced, offered another opportunity to examine 'what went wrong'. This study has highlighted the unsuitability of the Ayliffes as emigrant settlers, and of Frederick Mitchell as agent; as well as the insufficient capital provision for the scheme. Combined with this were poor and delayed communication and an inadequate understanding of pioneer settlement, climate and land quality by both landowner and agent. As suggested, there were also additional reasons for the failure connected with the particular location in Australia and the sheer distances involved between the home estate at Petworth and the speculation.⁶⁹⁷

10.5 The archives and their limitations

Some estate documents proved particularly valuable for interpreting changing estate landscapes. This is true for James Crow's 1779 survey of the Petworth estate, and Kent, Claridge and Pearce's 1797 survey in Yorkshire. These maps, together with their literature regarding tenants, farm size and rent, have been used in this study to examine the limited

⁶⁹⁷ G. Blainey, *The tyranny of distance. How distance shaped Australia's history* (Melbourne, 1968).

extent of landscape change at Petworth, and the impact of the more considerable changes in Yorkshire. The most revealing of estate documents, however, must be the agents' correspondence, at Petworth, in Cumberland, and in the William Smith archive in Oxford. It is this correspondence that has provided the wealth of 'improvement stories' or episodes documented in this study, which have been complemented by the printed reports of John Claridge, William Chapman, John Smeaton, Arthur Young and his son. The study of these particular 'agents', and the relationships between them has added significantly to our understanding of estate management and improvement on the Egremont estates, and is a case study to draw wider conclusions regarding the professionalisation of estate management in the early nineteenth century.

However, it must be acknowledged that there are notable 'silences' in the estate archive. Surviving sources describe only a fraction of what took place, and reflect the attitudes of those (usually) men who constructed them. In the case of the Australian speculation, the surviving Petworth documents reflect Colonel Wyndham's interest in his distant relatives, the Ayliffes, who cannot, therefore, be seen as representative assisted emigrants. Assisted emigration did take place from both England and Ireland to Australia, although the exact number of emigrants is unknown. A figure of 300 was mentioned in 1841 and subsequent references suggest at least double this total.⁶⁹⁸ The fact that these emigrants remain

⁶⁹⁸ S. Thomas, 'Colonel George Wyndham', p.9. **WSRO, PHA 7917, PHA 734, PHA 742, PHA 1062-1066, PHA 1071; WSRO, Goodwood MS 1474, 197/38/1.**

anonymous and even uncoun­ted suggests that this scheme was less systematic than the previous emigrations to Canada.⁶⁹⁹

10.6 Patterns of estate management

The thesis has examined the relationships between Egremont and the various agents (in the widest sense) who acted on his behalf. Each of the estates operated with a different configuration of agents. In relation to the Beverley and Barmston drainage, Egremont's interests were at various times represented by the land agency firm of Kent, Claridge and Pearce; by the engineer for the whole project William Chapman, and by the journalist and commentator Arthur Young. At Spofforth, Egremont again made use of John Claridge, but also the independent mineral engineer William Smith. The home estate at Petworth was overseen by two successive agents working for Egremont (William Tyler and James Upton Tripp), who were also solicitors in their own right. In yet another permutation, on the Yorkshire estates, Kent, Claridge and Pearce (who managed multiple estates) were managed themselves at a distance by the Petworth agents, introducing a further layer between Egremont and his lands. These diverse patterns of estate management and hierarchies of agents on a single large estate have demonstrated the complexity of estate management during the early nineteenth century.

⁶⁹⁹ W. Cameron and M. McDougall Maude, *Assisting emigration to Upper Canada. The Petworth project, 1832-1837* (Montreal, 2000).

Working through the extensive correspondence of the William Smith archive and its counterparts in the Petworth and Leconfield archives has further provided understandings of the hierarchy of estate management in the West Riding, where Egremont, his Yorkshire and Petworth land agents, and William Smith were all frequently, if not entirely absent from this site of the speculation. In the absence of such men, local residents such as Thomas Wheelhouse and the Reverend Dr Tripp were valuable. So too, were those people employed by the agents Kent, Claridge and Pearce, and by William Smith himself to oversee activities in their absence. In the East Riding of Yorkshire, the progress of the Beverley and Barmston drainage was reported to John Claridge by local landowners; while a published report by Arthur Young on the benefits of drainage to the area (following a visit requested by Egremont) may well have been influential on the progress of the drainage bill. The scheme was complicated by the multiple agents acting on Egremont's behalf: the firm Kent, Claridge and Pearce (acting solely as Egremont's agent); the journalist and commentator Arthur Young, as well as the engineer William Chapman, whose loyalties were divided between multiple landowners. The relationships between these various landowners were also complex and in need of careful management.

Four simplified patterns of estate management which were identified by T.H.S. Escott in 1879 offer a way to navigate this complex picture.⁷⁰⁰ On the first type of estate, the chief agent was in sole control of a geographically concentrated estate (such as the Duke of Cleveland's). In

⁷⁰⁰ T.H.S. Escott, *England: Its People, Polity and Pursuits*, vol. 1 (London, 1879), pp.55-70.

example. The third model, however, recognises Egremont's role as overseer and enthusiast, although would perhaps overstate his role in estate management. The fourth model describes the position that Kent, Claridge and Pearce, and later the firm Cluttons who managed the northern estate, held; managing several estates, in addition to Egremont land in Yorkshire.

10.7 Land Agents and Professionalisation

Chapter seven in addition makes a specific contribution to ongoing debates about the formation of the professions in eighteenth and nineteenth-century England. It suggests that the role of the Petworth land agents in agricultural improvement was not a practical one, but was limited to the financial, legal and political aspects of improvement. Despite contemporary commentary that stressed the importance of applied agricultural expertise, legal agents remained more influential than has been supposed, even on estates renowned for agricultural improvement such as Egremont's at Petworth. The belated professionalisation of the Petworth agents and the significant differences in their roles when compared with a land agency firm such as Kent, Claridge and Pearce suggests that estate management was therefore far more diverse than has been previously suggested.

Kent, Claridge and Pearce provide a useful contrast to the Petworth agents due to their different professional status. This business was simultaneously engaged by several clients to manage and improve multiple estates, and demonstrated a systematic and commercial

approach to estate management and an active involvement in agricultural improvement.⁷⁰²

For both G.E. Mingay and Barbara English, a move away from resident agents to firms such as this one was a sign of the professionalisation of estate management.⁷⁰³ Kent, Claridge and Pearce held an independent position that further enabled them to view their role as one with responsibility to tenants as well as employers.⁷⁰⁴ In contrast, the Petworth agents remained reliant on their sole employer, with little autonomy or liberty over estate management and improvements. Despite the criticisms of agricultural commentators, the employment of lawyer-stewards did not decline until the 1870s, by which time the increasing complexity of agricultural processes and economic management during financial scarcity led to their being replaced by practical men with agricultural training, such as those from the Royal Agricultural College established in 1845.⁷⁰⁵

This thesis has attempted to add some clarity to the language of estate management, where terms such as steward and agent are often used interchangeably (by historians, and in the estate archive). John Beckett has argued that professionalisation was symbolised by the emergence of land agents in the place of stewards in the early nineteenth century.⁷⁰⁶

Similarly, David Spring has suggested that the replacement of the term 'steward' with 'agent' could be seen as 'a sign of the land agent's growing self-consciousness, of his attempt to

⁷⁰² S. Webster, 'Estate improvement and the professionalisation of land agents on the Egremont estates in Sussex and Yorkshire, 1770-1835', *Rural History* 18 (2007), 1-24.

⁷⁰³ G.E. Mingay, *The Gentry. The Rise and Fall of the Ruling Class* (London, 1976); B. English 'Patterns of Estate Management'. F.M.L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors*, p.94; F.M.L. Thompson. *English Landed Society*.

⁷⁰⁴ B. English, 'Patterns of estate management', pp.29-48.

⁷⁰⁵ F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society*; R. Sayce, *The history of the Royal Agricultural College*.

⁷⁰⁶ J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy*.

make an occupation into a profession'.⁷⁰⁷ However, both James Upton Tripp and William Tyler continued to use the term 'steward', although, as it has been argued, the term legal agent more appropriately describes their work. Tripp, Tyler and their successor Murray were solicitors, making it hard to argue that the agents established a 'profession' in estate management. Nevertheless, Tyler's increased competence, responsibility and salary suggests that the early stages of professionalisation may have been taking place.

10.8 Agents, networks and the circulation of 'improving' ideas and practice

This thesis has therefore documented a number of important matters for the first time, in particular the detailed work of the middle layer of personnel involved in estate management and improvement. Together with work on the professionalisation of land agents, the thesis has considered Egremont's patronage of surveyors, engineers and agricultural advisors and has attempted to identify any potential development amongst land agents that might be considered 'professionalisation' during their employment on the Egremont estates.

This research has contributed to debates regarding the mobility of rural professionals, the circulation of knowledge and networks of patronage in the developing fields of land agency, surveying, engineering and geology. It has been influenced by research on networks that has emphasised the links and flows between sites of exchange (Actor Network Theory), and

⁷⁰⁷ D. Spring, *The English Landed Estate* (1963), p.97.

by the movement of individuals described in Castell's space of flows.⁷⁰⁸ A network approach to estate management, like the concept of landscape, has helped to avoid a static interpretation of the dispersed Egremont estates. Improvement networks have been put in motion in this thesis by the interpretation of key episodes and the correspondence networks of the individuals involved.

Chapter nine has made a contribution to scholarship on networks of patronage in the developing science of geology during the early nineteenth century. Experts such as William Smith were employed through networks of patronage. One established scientific network was clearly that of the Royal Society, which functioned as a 'clearing-house' for natural science and a review body for scientific reports during the eighteenth century.⁷⁰⁹ Equally as significant to this study are key personalities involved with the Board of Agriculture, and the social circuit associated with agricultural shows at Woburn and elsewhere. The publication of texts by professionals; involvement in the management of proximate estates, and the passing of recommendations between aristocrats were also important methods of securing employment.

The movement of professionals involved in estate improvement around Britain, Ireland and Australia in this study produced distinct networks of knowledge circulation. These men

⁷⁰⁸ M. Castells, *The rise of the network society* (Oxford, 1996).

⁷⁰⁹ M.B. Hall, 'Oldenburg and the art of scientific communication', *British Journal for the History Science* 2 (1965), 277-90; D.S. Lux and H.J. Cook, 'Closed circles or open networks?: communicating at a distance during the Scientific Revolution'; A. Rusnock, 'Correspondence networks and the Royal Society, 1700-1750'.

brought with them ideas, technology and expertise, and had a significant role in the transfer of ideas from recognised sites of excellence such as Petworth and London to more dispersed estates. Interest in these 'absentee' estates also brought transfers of estate workers, such as Thomas Browne and J.M. Brydone's surveying in Ireland, as well as the transfer of goods including seeds and stud animals (to Yorkshire, and also to Australia), and in the case of William Smith, geological samples.

10.9 The third Earl of Egremont as an agricultural improver

Previously, Egremont has received some biographical attention, but this has concentrated to a great extent on his patronage of the arts, and in particular his relationship with J.M.W. Turner. This thesis has examined Egremont's patronage of improvement professionals, and has suggested that Petworth, overseen by Egremont, was a key site in the experimentation and dispersal of agricultural knowledge. As such this conclusion must briefly consider Egremont's role as an agricultural improver. As suggested, the influence of aristocratic improvers such as Egremont and the fifth Duke of Bedford has been subject to historiographic debate. Contemporary writers and historians such as Lord Ernle celebrated such men as setting a fashion for improvement. More recent scholars such as John Beckett

have sought to downplay aristocratic influence, asserting that credit for agricultural innovation should fall on lesser landowners, their stewards and tenant farmers.⁷¹⁰

Egremont himself emerges from the archive as neither a hands-on agricultural improver nor as an uninterested and neglectful absentee. Instead, I suggest, he acted as co-ordinator and as a spotter of talent (an impresario, perhaps) amongst the men engaged to act on his behalf, the middle layer of developing rural professionals including agents, surveyors, and engineers. His social position allowed him also to act as a conduit for ideas, from bodies such as the Royal Society and the Board of Agriculture, and from men such as Sir Joseph Banks and Arthur Young. If the literature to date has concentrated on Egremont as patron of art, he emerges from this thesis as a patron of improvement.

10.10 Further research

The study of the professionalisation of estate management and improvement during the eighteenth and nineteenth century on multiple landed estates would make a fascinating extension to this study, and would complement D.R. Hainsworth's seminal work on stewards in Stuart England.⁷¹¹ This study would include archival research directed by the extensive work of land agency firms Kent, Claridge and Pearce and Cluttons, as well as influential

⁷¹⁰ R.E. Prothero, *English farming past and present*; J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy of England*; D. Brown, 'Reassessing the influence of the aristocratic improver: the example of the fifth Duke of Bedford (1765-1802)'.

⁷¹¹ D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, lords and people. The estate steward and his world in later Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1992).

surveyors and engineers such as William Jessop and John Smeaton. In the study of multiple estates, it would not, however, neglect the more minor figures mentioned only in estate documents. Key to this study would be contributions to the history of science, surveying and engineering: an examination of estate enclosure, drainage, bridge and railway construction, and in particular, the development of mining on landed estates. The influence of aristocratic patrons, and of the developing scientific institutions such as the Royal Institution and the Royal Society of Arts would also be examined. A study of individuals, such as William Tyler, John Claridge and William Smith in this thesis, has uncovered 'stories' of debts, patronage, duty, service, autonomy, and the search for 'status' as gentlemen and as professionals. Further research, I hope, will reveal much more fascinating material.

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