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The Social Production of Gentility and
Capital in Early Modern England: The
Newtons of Lincolnshire.

Russell Newton

A thesis presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



Department of History

University of Durham

England

September 2016

ABSTRACT

The Social Production of Gentility and Capital in Early Modern England: The Newtons of Lincolnshire. Russell Newton

This thesis has two principal aims; first, to examine and illuminate the social production of gentility and capital which was experienced by the Newton family between the early part of the seventeenth century and c.1743. Secondly, to ask larger questions about the social production of identity and capital in this period. The approach to these aims has been to blend the conceptual paradigms offered by complexity, post-structuralism and social constructionism in a new way, applying that new interpretive scheme principally to the letter-books of the family between c.1660 and c.1743. Previous gentry and social mobility studies have been governed by philosophical and linguistic tenets which have been radically challenged in the last few decades by post-structuralism, social constructionism and complexity. This thesis begins with the proposition that English society was a complex social network in a wider complex adaptive system. At the micro-level all social individuals had certain inseparable imperatives which follow from the pre-conditions for socialised human beings to form a complex adaptive system, and were expressed as five imperatives. These imperatives, expressed in everyday iterated exchanges in a social network, articulated inert resources into capital in the form of real estate, currency and credit - physically, discursively and reflexively. Gentry identity was likewise a recursive social production, which articulated a neutral social individual into a gentleman, esquire, or baronet. The same repeated social processes produced a tenant, almsmen and women, rector, burgess and spouse. The gaps, dynamic chains of substitutions, and variation (which characterised the complex material space and the social network) made these productions broadly stable, but also contingent, contested and uncertain. Capital and identities were flows rather than things; they were *economies*, characterised as a flux of valencies in a state of unstable equilibrium. The economic and status mobility demonstrated by the Newton family in the period was made possible *because* capital and identity were these economies.

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Abbreviations

Add. Mss	Additional manuscript at the British Library
BL	British Library
BOE	Bank of England
CAM	Committee for the Advancement of Money
CCEd	Clergy of the Church of England database
CCR	Calendar of Close Rolls
CSPD	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic series
CTP	Calendar of Treasury Papers
DNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
ECHR	Economic History Review
GBQS	Grantham borough quarter sessions at LRO
GHB	Grantham hall book (minutes of the Grantham corporation at LRO)
GRO	Gloucester record office
Harl.	Harleian Society Publications
HB	Hoare's Bank
HC	The Herald's College, or College of Arms
HCCD	High Court of Chivalry database
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
JBS	Journal of British Studies
JHC	Journal of the House of Commons
JHL	Journal of the House of Lords
IPM	Inquisition post-mortem
LCC	Archdeaconry of Lincoln Consistory Court
LRO	Lincoln record office
LMA	London and Metropolitan Archives
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
RO	Record office
TNA	The National Archives
VCH	Victoria County History

Statement of copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the outcome of more than six years of work which was only made possible by the assistance and encouragement of several people. The Monson archive which makes up about half of the total Newton archive was made available for digitisation with the kind permission of the trustees of the tenth Lord Monson and the Lincolnshire record office. Without that permission this study simply could not have been undertaken.

It is a pleasure to note the kind help of archivists and curators, and in particular Dr. Christine Hiskey at Holkham Hall, Pamela Hunter at Hoare's Bank, Lynsey Darby at the College of Arms, Christopher Corben at the Dorset County Museum, and the staff at the Gloucester and Lincolnshire record offices. Thanks are likewise due to Professor Richard Cust, Birmingham University for access to the offline database of chivalry cases. I am indebted and grateful to Thomas, Earl of Leicester, for access to the manuscripts at Holkham Hall in Norfolk, and for permission to reproduce the portraits of Abigail Newton, as well as Cary and Edward Coke. Great thanks are also due to Mrs. Susan Clarke of Culverthorpe Hall in Lincolnshire, for permission to reproduce the portraits of Sir Jack Newton and Sir Michael Newton.

I am also very pleased to notice Dr. John Manterfield, who was kind enough to make some of his excerpts, from the Grantham corporation minute book relating to the making of freemen, available to me for chapter seven. He also kindly made the printer's draft of the Lincoln Record Society volume 106, of which he is the editor, available to me in advance of its launch on 30 September this year.

More personal thanks must be made to my undergraduate mentors Professor Eric Clarke, Heather Professor of Music at Oxford University and Professor Malcolm Troup, both formerly of the Music Department, The City University, London; and to Professor Chris Norris of the English Department of the University of Cardiff, who encouraged my interest in Jacques Derrida. This thesis would not have been possible without the continuing and painstaking support of Professor Andy Wood, who has smoothed the way for me during my grief at the loss of my first wife Sally in 2011, and driven me away from critical theory and towards historical writing; and, I hope, a more clear Anglo-Saxon empirical style.

To Tiggy, Helen, Charlotte and Elizabeth

Note on conventions

1. Note on transcription conventions

() - author insertions to explain or make sense of the quotation;

[] - word is hard to discern with certainty;

all italic emphases are the author's unless otherwise stated;

ff is rendered F; & is rendered 'and'; the Y thorn is normalised;

spellings are otherwise not normalised to modern English.

2. Note on dates

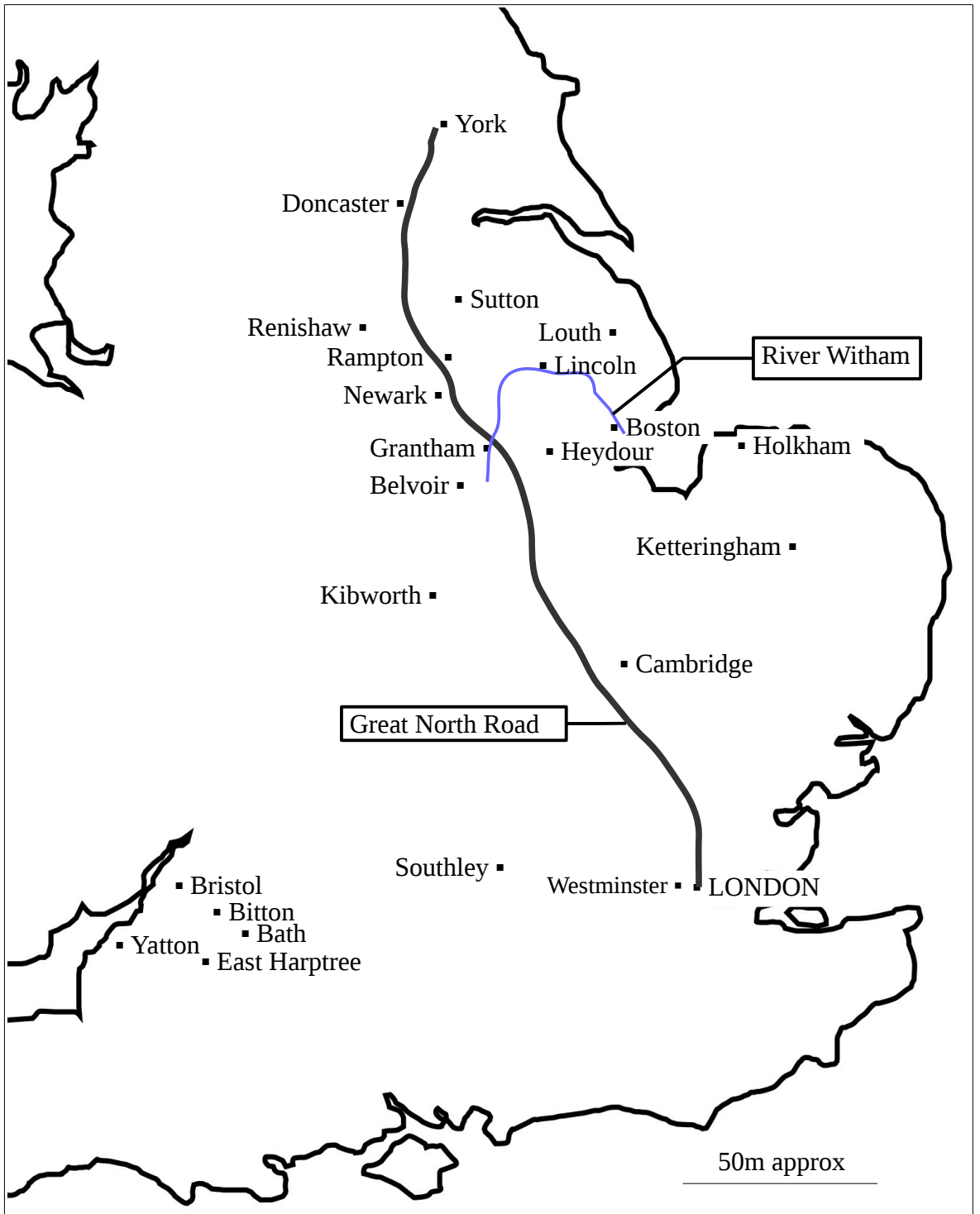
Dates are per the contemporary calendar, but the year is stated to begin on 1 January.

3. Note on names

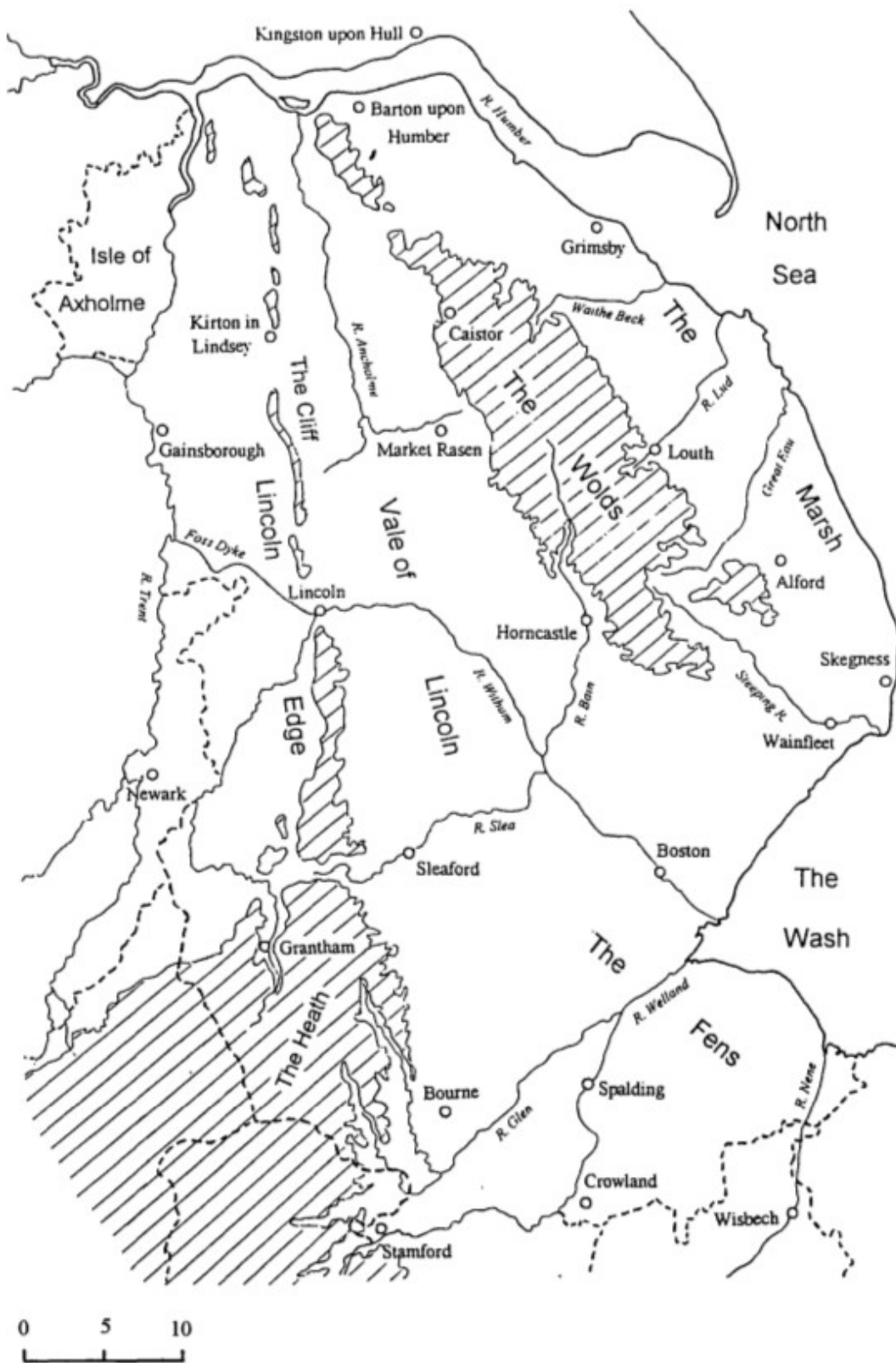
John Newton is called Sir John Newton after his succession to the baronetcy in 1662. For clarity his eponymous son and heir John Newton is called Jack Newton, or Sir Jack Newton following his succession in 1699.

4. Note on source references

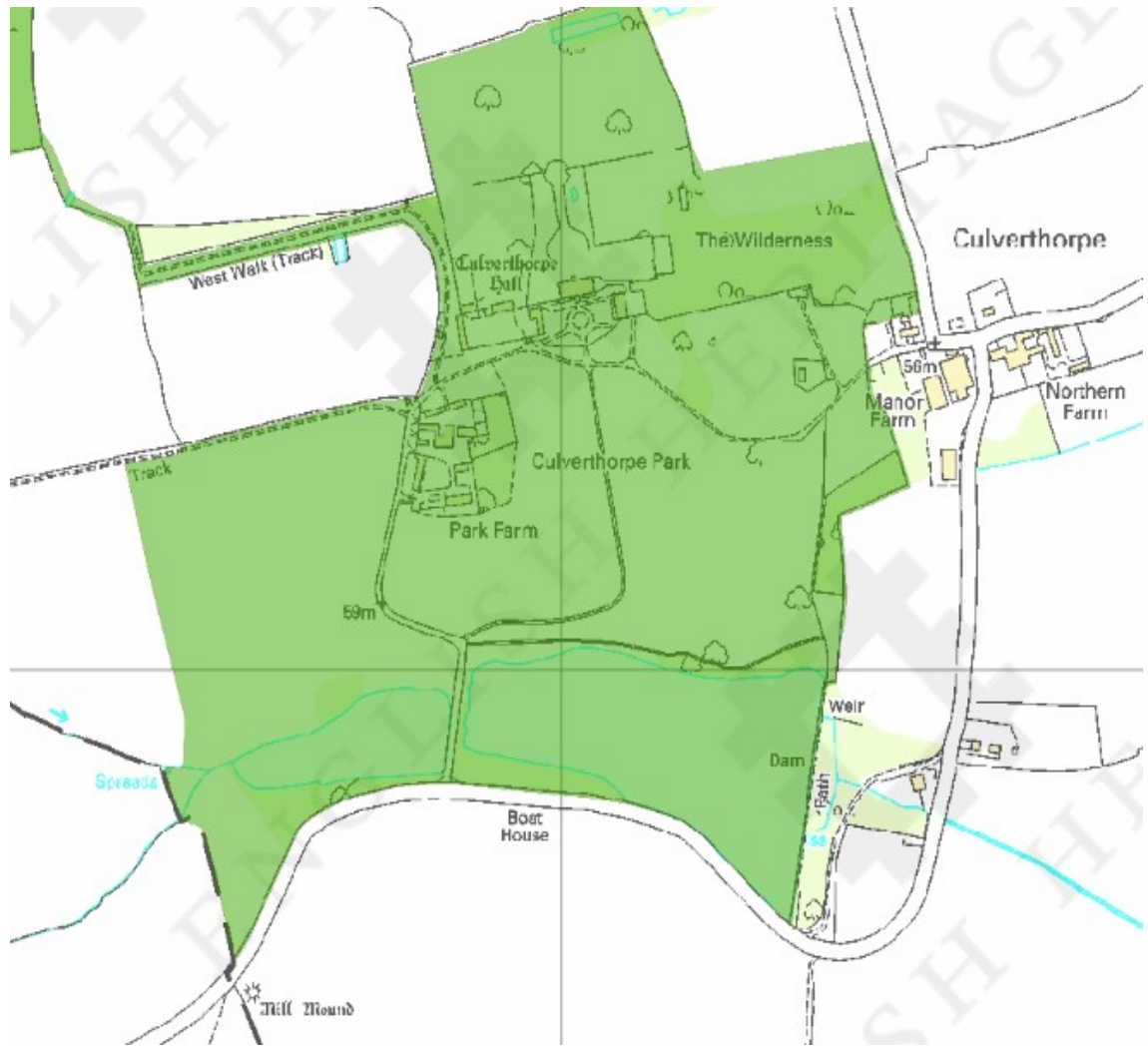
The Newton papers at Gloucester record office are held in folders and files with accession number D1844, but the folios within them were loose and not individually numbered. Folios have been referenced in the order in which they appeared in the folders and files at the time, the last number being the folio number, so that D1844-C5-45 is loose folio 45 in folder C5. The Monson manuscript folios are numbered, and references follow the Lincoln record office numbering. References to customer ledgers at Hoare's Bank are to ledger then folio, so that ledger 5 folio 27 is rendered HB, Ledger 5/27. Chapter 7 extensively uses a database and transcripts of cases in the chivalry court prepared by Professor Richard Cust and Dr Andrew Hopper. The database, though once online, is now offline, and references to it are by the case numbers attributed by Cust and Hopper, for example HCCD, Case 79, November 1637, Bucknell v Leyfield. A companion volume is available which follows the same numbering, see R. P. Cust and A. J. Hopper (eds.), *Cases in the High Court of Chivalry, 1634-1640* (Harleian Society, New Series, 18, 2006).



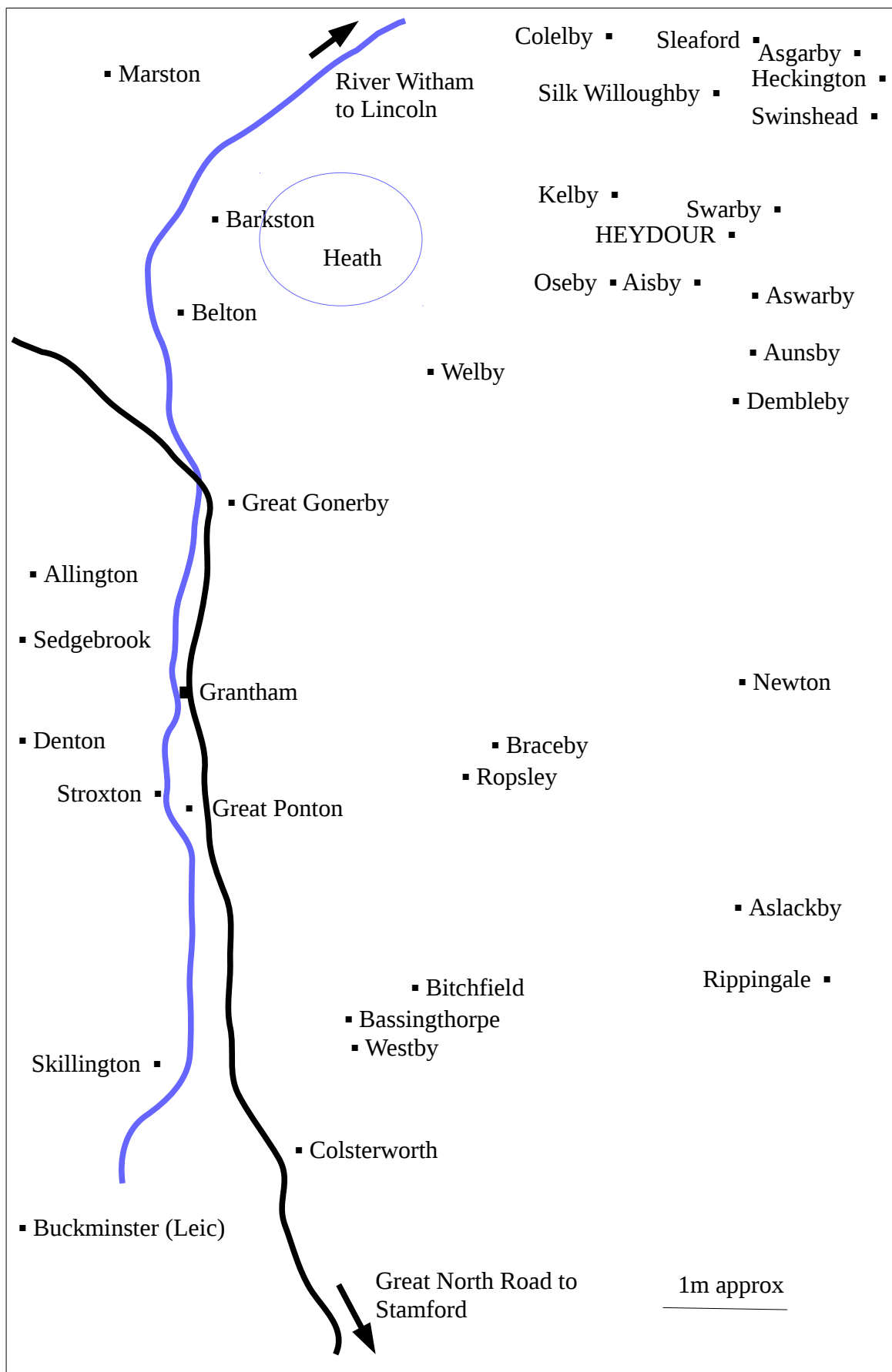
Map 1: Places mentioned in the text, including the Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire estates (1662)



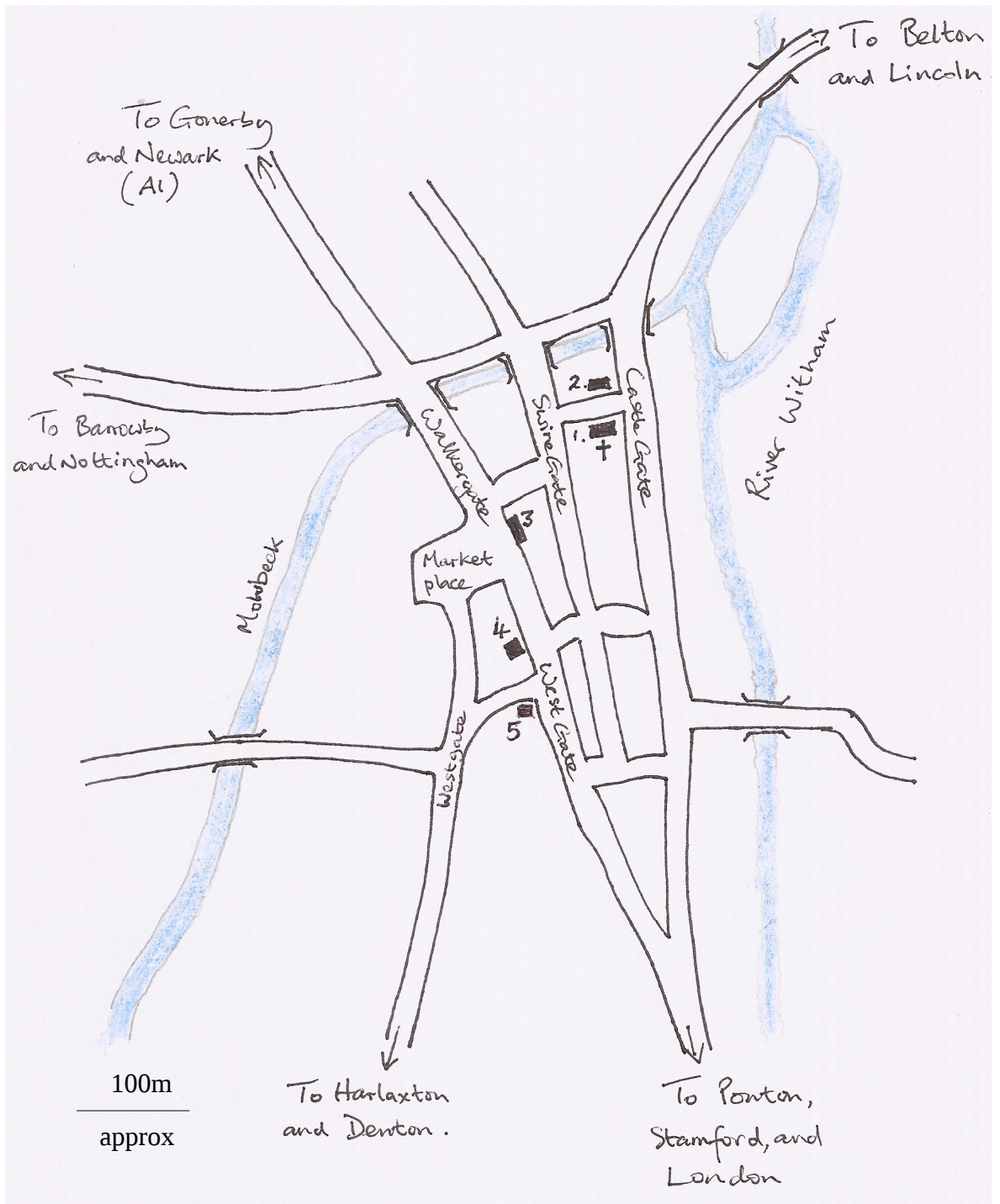
Map 2: The Lincolnshire topography



Map 3: The Culverthorpe estate near Heydour

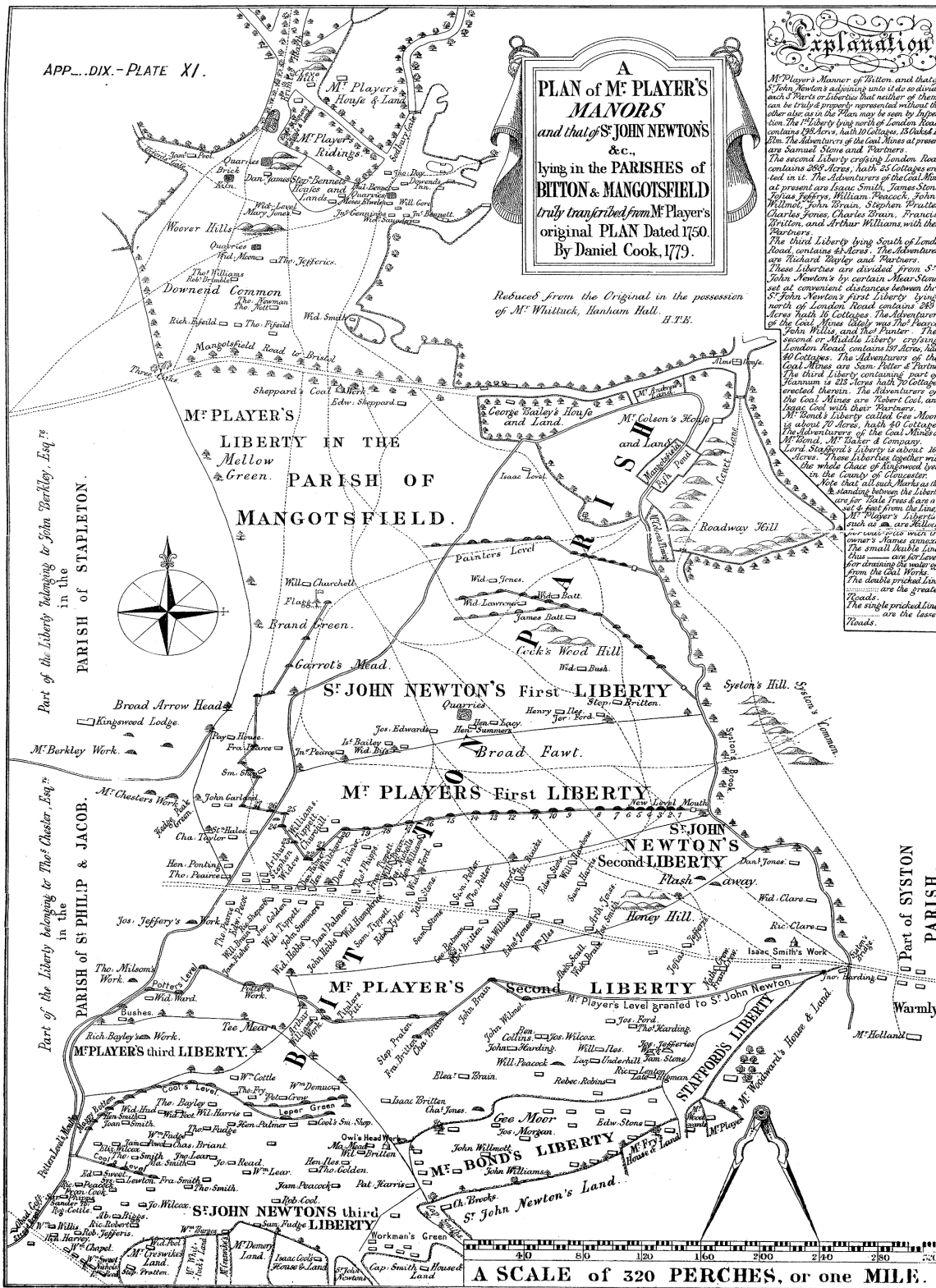


Map 4: Grantham area, showing parishes mentioned in the text



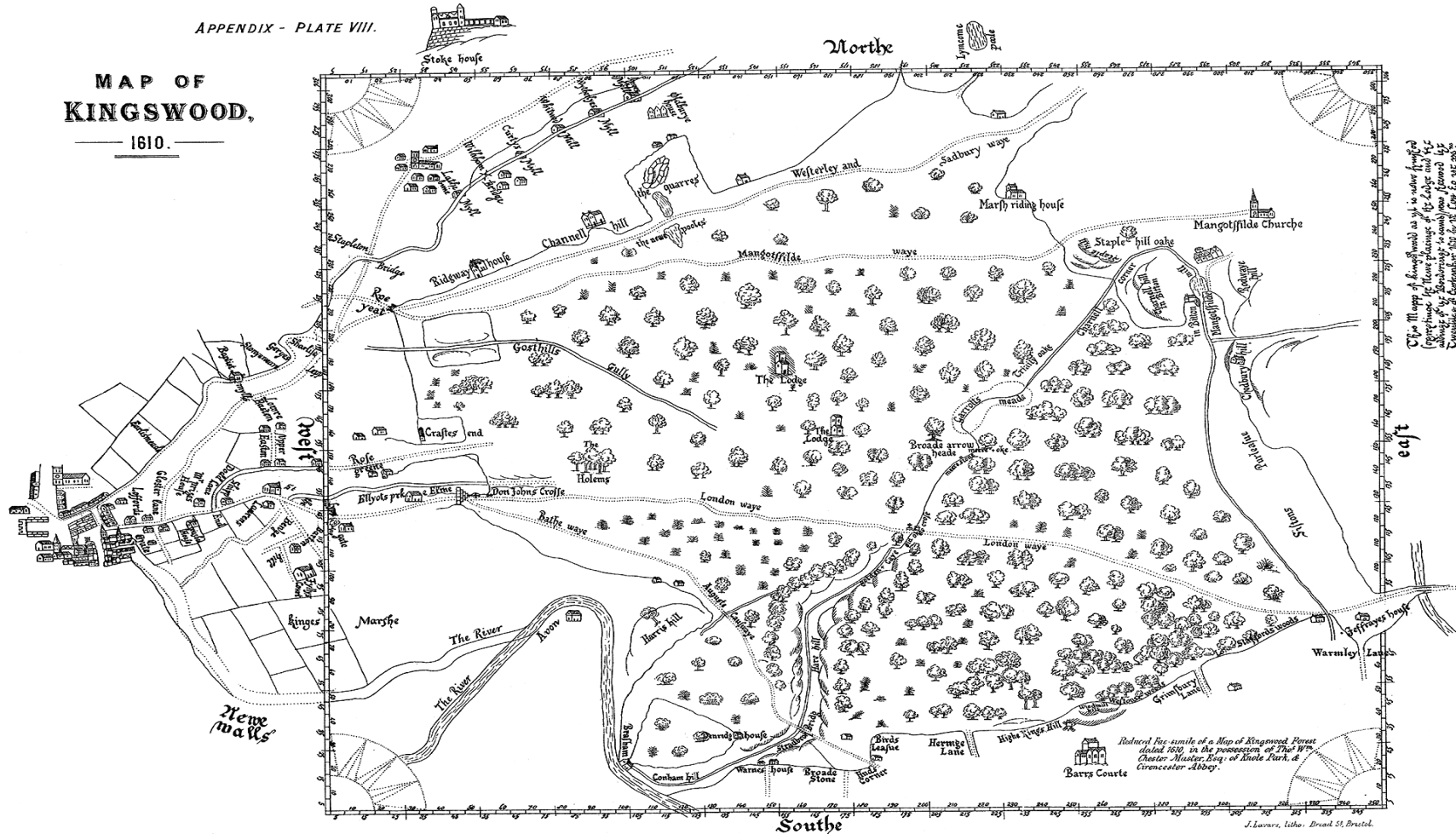
1. St. Wulfram's church
2. King's school
3. Angel Inn
4. George Inn
5. Guildhall

Map 5: Grantham town, seventeenth-century



Map 6: Kingswood forest and 'liberties' 1750,
 - printed in H. T. Ellacombe's History of Bitton

MAP OF
KINGSWOOD,
1610.



The Maps of Kingswood as yet is where printed
 (reprinted by the permission of the Lodge and the
 author of the Survey of the Forests of the
 County of Gloucester, 1771, by the Rev. Geo. S.
 the names are inserted in italics, where
 they are not mentioned in the original.

Reduced five times of a Map of Kingswood Forest
 dated 1610, in the possession of Tho^o W^o
 Chester Master, Bp. of Exeter Park, at
 Cirencester Abbey.

J. Lavers, Litho. Broad St. Bristol.

Map 7: Kingswood forest and the parishes of Bitton and Mangotsfield, 1610,
 - printed in H. T. Ellacombe's, *History of Bitton*



Map 8: King's Square (later Soho Square), Westminster.
 - Printed in Sheppard, Survey of London, Vol. 33 and 34, pp. 27-36,
 Jack Newton's house is circled.



Plate 1: Jack Newton, at Culverthorpe Hall. Unknown artist, c.1674. Brian Hallam (photographer) 2016.



Plate 2: Sir Jack Newton, at Culverthorpe Hall.
Hyacinthe Rigaud, c.1700. Brian Hallam (photographer) 2016.



Plate 3: Mistress Abigail Newton, wife of Jack Newton, at Holkham Hall.
By unknown artist, undated. Andy Langley (photographer) 2016.



Plate 4: Cary Coke, daughter of Jack Newton, at Holkham Hall.
Undated, by Sir Godfrey Kneller. Andy Langley (photographer) 2016.



Plate 5: Edward Coke, husband of Cary, at Holkham Hall. Undated, by Sir Godfrey Kneller. Andy Langley (photographer) 2016.



Plate 6: Sir Michael Newton, son of Sir Jack Newton, at Culverthorpe Hall. Attributed to Hans Hysing, c1720. Brian Hallam (photographer) 2016.



Plate 7: Margaret, Countess of Coningsby, wife of Sir Michael Newton. By Allan Ramsey (top), 1750, (photograph, Artnet.com, 2016), and George Stubbs (bottom), c. 1760, (photograph, Google art project, 2015).



The London house at 37, Soho Square



Culverthorpe Hall

Plate 8: The London and Lincolnshire houses



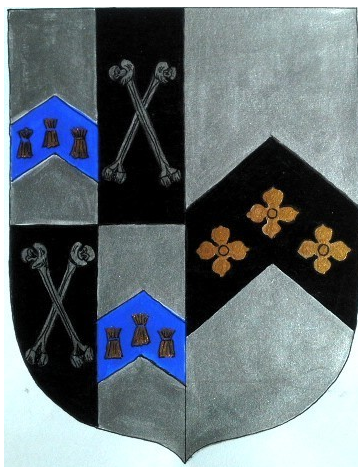
Newton and Nyxe



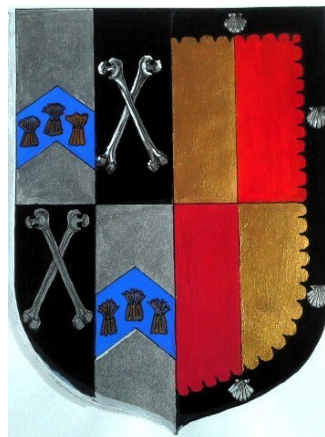
Newton and Kelham



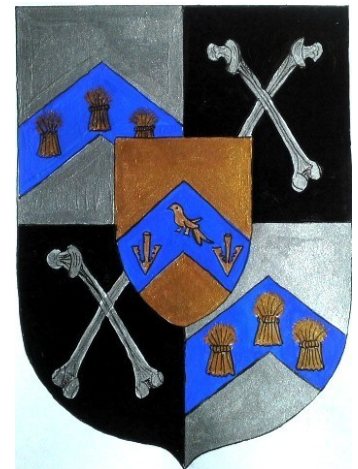
Newton and Parker



Newton and Eyre



Newton and Heveningham



Newton and Warton



Newton and Coningsby



Newton of Whitby, 1662



Newton of Yatton, c1450

Plate 9: coats of arms c.1450-1743



Plate 10: Almshouses at Barkston, Lincolnshire

Introduction

Part I

The family

This thesis has two principal aims; first, to examine and illuminate the social production of gentility and capital which was experienced by the Newton family between c.1600 and c.1743. The second aim is use this case study as a basis to ask larger questions about the social production of identity and capital in this period. The approach to these aims has been to bring together the conceptual paradigms offered by complexity, post-structuralism and social constructionism in a new way, and to apply that new interpretive framework to a variety of sources, but principally the letter-books of an English gentry family in this period. The focus, in particular, is on the corpus of gentry estate records between male heads of the family and their estate stewards, as well as the full range of social actors caught up in the social networks which concerned their land holding, lending, and political interests in the town of Grantham.

Sir John Newton, and his family, is easily recognisable as a member of the gentry. He was a baronet, bore a coat of arms confirmed by the heralds, and was proposed for the order of the Knights of the Royal Oak. He was a gentleman of the privy chamber, a manorial lord of a dozen manors in two counties, a magistrate, a colonel in a regiment of foot, deputy-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire, and burgess for the town of Grantham. He bought, bred and raced horses, hunted, collected fine china, had a family chapel in two parish churches,

and owned two substantial country houses in two counties where portraits hung. His wife was the daughter of a Royalist knight, and one of the ancient Derbyshire family of Eyre, his sons were educated at university and the inns of court, a younger one had a place in public office and a military commission, the elder inherited his father's title. His grandson Sir Michael Newton was educated in Frankfurt and Paris and on a grand tour of Europe, was a Knight of the Bath, the second highest order of chivalry after Knight of the Garter, and in his turn was fourth baronet, and married a countess. His own son – during his short life – was a viscount. Sir John Newton's great grandfather John Newton died in December 1562 and in his will, which he signed as his own, he was identified as a husbandman. Sir John Newton's grandfather William died in 1594 and in his will he was identified as a yeoman. Sir John's father Thomas Newton died in 1640 and in his will, which he wrote himself, he was identified as a gentleman. Sir John himself was identified by a Parliamentary surveyor in 1650 as gentleman, as esquire by the corporation of Grantham on his election as their representative in 1660 and in 1662 a Baronet. Although Sir John Newton's great grandfather held no known local or national office Sir John himself held numerous local and national offices.

His great grandfather had personal wealth of over £90 in 1562, mostly in stock, animals and household goods, and he had seven shillings in his purse. His real estate extended to three farms in Westby and Woolsthorpe hamlet in Lincolnshire.

'To John Newtonne my eldest sonne my ferme that I dwell in .. to Richard Newtonne my sonne my ferme at Wilstrop .. to William Newtonne my sonne my ferme in Westbie'. (17 December 1562)

'The trewe invytorye of all the goodes moveable and unmoveable of Jhon Newton late of Westbie in the countie of Lincoln husbandman ... Summe total 4 score and 9[£] 4^s 4^d. (5 January 1563).¹

One hundred years later Sir John Newton enjoyed an income of more than £3,000 a year and had capital of probably well over £60,000. Following the Restoration income was assessed for the proposed new order of Knights of the Royal Oak. Of the 687 names listed by county only nineteen other names in the whole of England and Wales are valued at £3,000 per year and a further eighteen names valued at more than this. If we take this sample of royalists to be an indicative sample of all the wealthy of England and Wales, both royalist and other, it placed John Newton in the top five per cent of all men, with only about two to three per cent of men wealthier.² His granddaughter Cary Newton had capital of over £40,000 and £57,000 on the death of her husband.³

The Lincolnshire context

A Restoration account of the Lincolnshire gentry in the hand of the secretary of State Joseph Williamson gives us a picture of forty-six gentry men from forty gentry families including eight nobles, consisting of three earls and five barons.⁴ Their seats were clustered around Lincoln, Boston and Grantham. They were all landed

-
- 1 C. W. Foster, 'Sir Isaac Newton's family' in *Reports and Papers of the Architectural Societies of the county of Lincoln, County of York, Archdeaconries of Northampton and Oakham, county of Leicester*, 39 (1928), 30-32.
 - 2 The list included existing nobility, but probably excluded wealthy urban merchants and so on without significant income from land.
 - 3 LRO, 1 June 1696, MON7-12-285. See also a statement showing £57,000 on the death of her husband in 1707, Holkham Hall, F/G2/2 ff 348-9.
 - 4 Sir Joseph Williamson, 'Lincolnshire families temp. Charles II (from the notebook, in the State Paper Office)', in J. G. Nichols (ed.), *The Herald and Genealogist*, vol. 2 (London, 1865), pp.116-126.

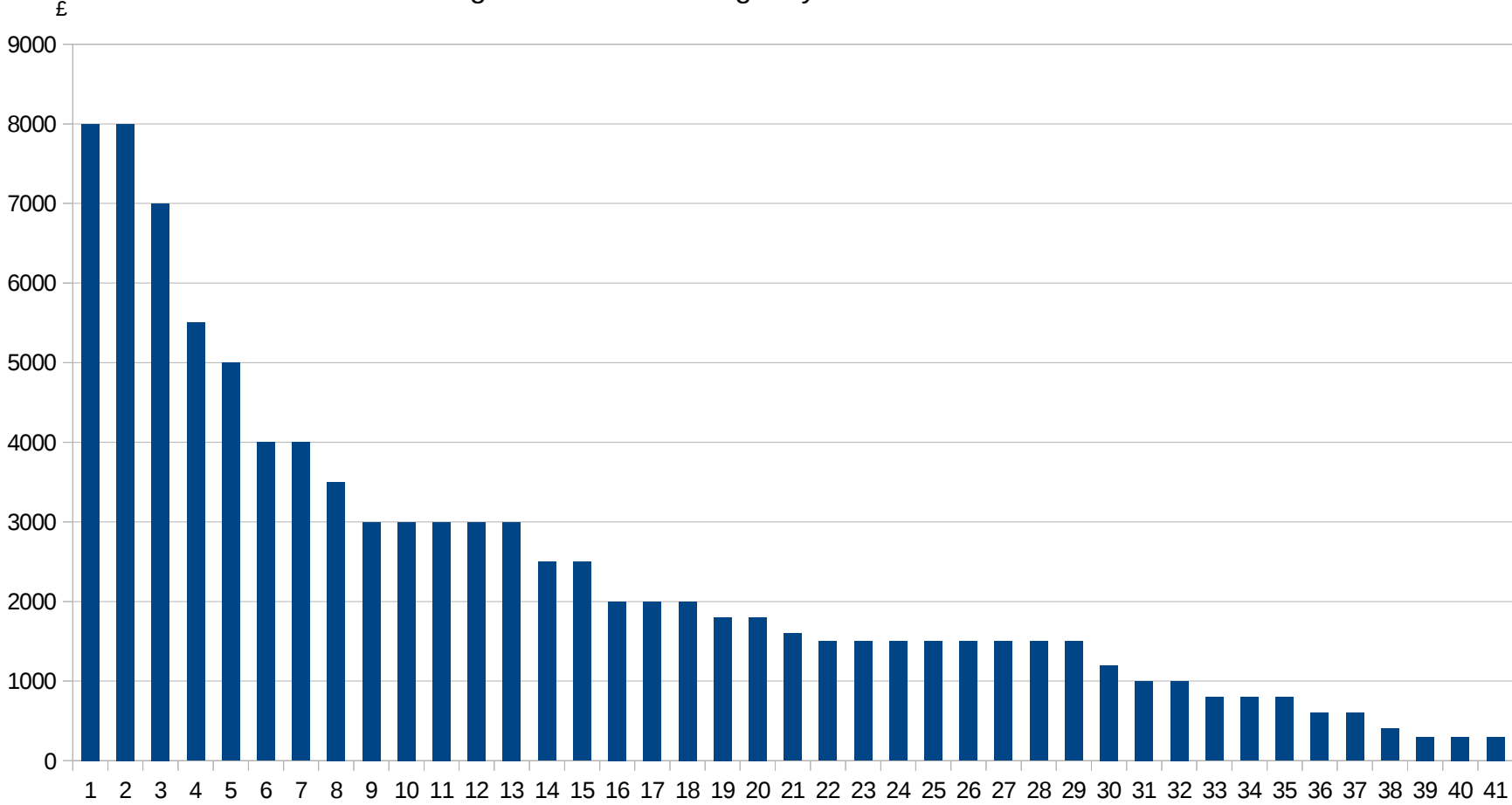
families, and each was valued by Williamson in income per annum. The list provides a context which helps us to begin to outline the names, income and offices of the families whom contemporaries understood to be the Lincolnshire gentry.⁵ The greatest income was £8,000 a year (earl of Rutland and Sir John Brownlow). Of the forty-one men whose income was quantified, the median annual income was £1,600, the mode £1500, and the average £2,350. These incomes were multiples of the richest 200 years earlier, the wealthiest noblemen in fifteenth-century Lincolnshire was Ralph Lord Cromwell with £1,007 a year.⁶ Most of their landed income came from Lincolnshire, where their seats were, but several had significant income from Yorkshire (Lord Bellasize, Lord Castleton, Buck, Fane, the only other county named). Many were descendants of successful lawyers (Anderson, Brownlow, Christopher, Earle, Heron, Irby, Markham, Oldfield, Thorold, Walpole), and some descended from medieval Lincolnshire merchants (Armine, Brown, Ellys, Meres, Monson, Newton). Several of these families are entrants into the county from older families elsewhere (Scrope, Fiennes alias Clinton, Bertie, Manners, Stanhope, Fane). Only a few (Armine, Bolle, Hussey, Markham, Meres, Scrope, Tyrwitt, Willoughby) are to be found both in the fifteenth century and Restoration England. These families feature in lists drawn up for deputy-lieutenancies.⁷

5 See Appendix 2 and Figure 1.

6 Jonathan S. Mackman, *The Lincolnshire gentry and the Wars of the Roses*, unpublished D. Phil thesis (York, 1999), 278.

7 All of the deputy-lieutenants named in 1662 and 1666 are on the Williamson list, except two esquires Palmer and Pelham, LRO, MON3-28-51, MON3-28-53.

Figure 1: Lincolnshire gentry income c.1660.



County studies of the gentry at a local level have tended to make their focus the relationship between the the 'localities' and the 'centre' – between gentry figures acting as local governors on the one hand and the Monarch and early state functions acting as a national governor on the other hand, and in particular in the period leading to the English civil war and during the Commonwealth period.⁸ Some failed to find a gentry community, whilst others found that it was the social experience of the gentry in education and local office which gave them a national political culture.⁹ More recently historians of the fifteenth century have questioned the benefit of using the term 'county community'.¹⁰ There is no study of the

8 Thomas G Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640: A county's government during the "personal rule"* (London, 1961); Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-1660* (Leicester, 1966), 36, 38, 325, 327. See also Alan Everitt, *The local community and the Great Rebellion* (London, 1969) and Alan Everitt, *Change in the provinces* (Leicester, 1969); J. S. Morrill, *Cheshire, 1630-1660: county government and society during the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1974), 330, J. S. Morrill, *The revolt of the provinces* (London, 1976); Jacqueline Eales and Andrew Hopper (eds.), *The County Community in Seventeenth Century England and Wales* (Hertford, 2012). For this thesis applied to other counties see David Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbot, 1973); B. G. Blackwood, *The Lancashire gentry and the Great Rebellion* (Chetham Society, 3rd series, Vol. 15, 1978); P. Clarke, *English provincial society from the Reformation to the Revolution: religion, politics and society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977); Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600-1660* (London, 1975); Howell A. Lloyd, *The gentry of south-west Wales, 1540-1640* (Cardiff, 1968); P. Jenkins, *The making of a ruling class: The Glamorgan gentry, 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983). For examples of the clutch of post-graduate efforts at this time see James Rosenheim, *An examination of oligarchy: The gentry of Restoration Norfolk, 1660-1720* (Princeton, 1981); Jill Taylor, *Nathaniel Bacon: An Elizabethan squire, his family and household and their impact upon the local community* (UEA, 1990); Nesta Evans, *The community of South Elmham, Suffolk, 1550-1640* (UEA, 1978); F. J. Stephens, *The Barnes of Ashgate: A study of a family of the lesser gentry in north-east Derbyshire* (Nottingham, 1980); Christopher Durston, *Berkshire and its county gentry 1625-1649* (Reading, 1977).

9 J. T. Cliffe, *The Yorkshire gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War* (London, 1969); Clive Holmes, 'The county community in Stuart historiography', *Journal of British Studies*, 19:2 (1980), 73. For this view see also A. Hughes, 'Warwickshire on the eve of the civil war: a county community?', *Midland History*, 7 (1982), pp. 42-72; A. Hughes, *Politics, society and government in Warwickshire 1620-1660* (Cambridge, 1987).

10 Christine Carpenter, 'Gentry and community in medieval England', *Journal of British Studies*, 33:4 (Oct. 1994), pp. 340-380. On medievalists' enthusiasm for the term 'community' generally, see M. Rubin, 'Small groups: Identity and solidarity in the late Middle Ages', in J. Kermode (ed.), *Enterprise and individuals in fifteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1991), pp. 132-35; N. H. Denholm-Young, *The county gentry in the fourteenth century* (Oxford, 1969); M.J. Bennett, *Community, class and careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire in the age of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'* (Cambridge, 1983); Nigel Saul, *Scenes from provincial life: knightly families in Sussex, 1280-1400* (Oxford, 1986). For a survey of the 'county community' in both periods, see R. Virgoe, 'Aspects of the county community in the fifteenth century', in M. A. Hicks (ed.), *Profit, piety and the professions in late medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 1-4.

Lincolnshire gentry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, nor has there been a 'county community' study, but Clive Holmes found that the Lincolnshire gentry 'were part of a national class' who shared marriage alliances, education, a common administrative experience and 'shared religious and political concerns and ideals'. A sense of the local was strong but lacked institutional focus, and was subordinated to 'the national ideology of a centralized polity and a common law'.¹¹ There is no evidence that the Lincolnshire gentry community (if there was one) was strong, nor that it had any bearing on the economic and status mobility of the Newton family.

The sources

Their life story and experience is told through two large deposits of letters and legal documents in Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire, augmented by deposits elsewhere. The collections do not form discrete temporal blocks, they form a continuous collection of letters and documents which have become separated by historical accident. A biographical account of this family has never been written, and although reference has been made, in scholarly studies, to occasional letters in the Lincolnshire collection no study of the papers as a whole has been made.¹² It follows from this observation that neither has any attempt has been made previously to knit the two collections together. This may be partly because the two deposits have remained in private hands for centuries and have only been available publicly

11 Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth-century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1980), 262-3. For an account of the Lincolnshire gentry before the sixteenth century see Jonathan S. Mackman, *The Lincolnshire gentry and the War of the Roses* (unpublished D. Phil. thesis, York, 1999).

12 See for example occasional references in Holmes, *Seventeenth-century Lincolnshire*.

for a few decades. The Newton archive is noteworthy as a large coherent collection of family letters in the early modern period, and because of the range and depth of their correspondents and subjects. Family studies can suffer from raw materials as in the case of Colin Richmond's study of John Hopton, a fifteenth-century Suffolk gentleman, which suffered from a paucity of source material, and left him to speculate at length.¹³ The records of the Newton family, as collection of English family letters rather than official letters, are one of the most extensive. There are 1588 letters at Lincoln and Gloucester which have been digitised, together with a further 400 or so legal and administrative documents. Additional use has been made of some of the correspondence which has been preserved privately at Holkham Hall in Norfolk by the present earl of Leicester, bank accounts at Hoare's bank on Fleet Street in London, and related family material in other record offices and at the National Archive.

The character of the letters

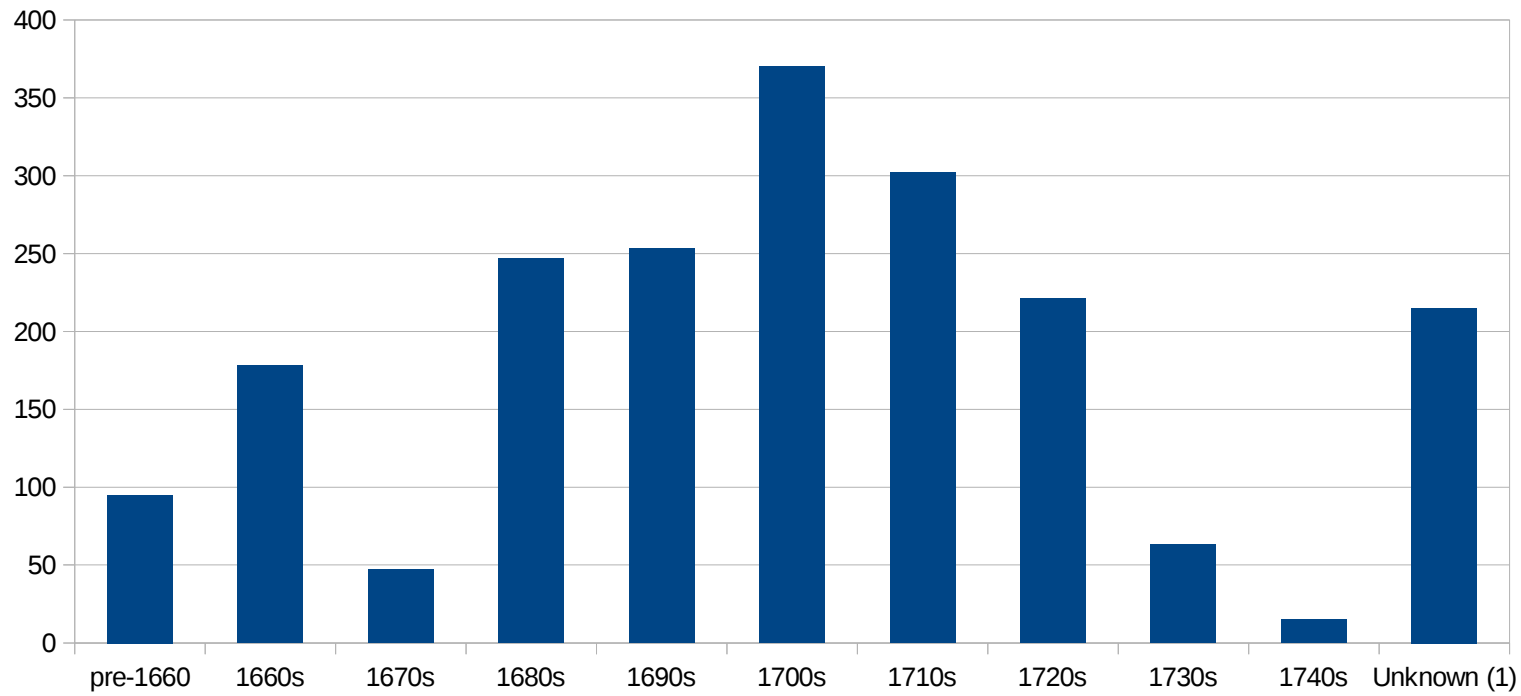
The bulk of the material relates to the period October 1659 - 6 April 1743, a period bounded by the impending Restoration and the death of Sir Michael Newton. The temporal spread of the archive is illustrated in Figure 2. The 2,005 records include 1,588 letters, the balance being legal and administrative documents. All of the 214 undated documents are letters. Lord Monson, a Lincolnshire antiquary, acquired some of the papers of the Newton family of Culverthorpe around the middle of the nineteenth century. This large collection was deposited with the Lincolnshire

13 Colin Richmond, *John Hopton: a fifteenth-century Suffolk gentleman* (Cambridge, 1981).

Archives Committee in 1951. The Monson papers remain under the stewardship of the Monson Trustees. The family's Gloucestershire papers passed down through Sir John Newton's daughters' descendants until they were deposited by J. L. Puxley in the Gloucestershire archives on 24 October 1961. This collection of letters is almost as large as the Lincolnshire collection.

Taken as a whole the two deposits and the related public records in the chancery and ecclesiastical courts cover a very wide range of written sources including letters, petitions, marriage contracts, indentures, memoranda, personal notes, personal accounts, estate accounts, rentals, testimonials, begging letters, invitations, conveyances, abstracts of title, valuations, surveys, manorial court rolls, mortgages, quitclaims, bargain and sales, assignments, exemplification of recovery, concords, receipts for money and rent, appointment letters, leases, terriers, fines, letters patent, depositions to court, interrogatories, Inquisitions Post Mortem, Court of Wards records, sentences, original and court copies of wills, tax assessments, notices, commissions, certificates, orders, copies of proclamations, and accounts with lawyers. There are drawings and sketches and plans of monuments, plans of buildings and architectural drawings. In addition there are a small number of poems, elegies, and an academic notebook.

Figure 2: letters and documents; number by decade, 1532-1743



Note 1 - undated, or no year indicated

The Monson letter-books were digitised in full, as was the vast majority of the Gloucestershire archive, with some limited omissions, which are noted in chapter 2. The digitised images were renumbered to No. 1 - No. 2972, and placed in file directories numbered in intervals of twenty-five for ease of retrieval. The letters and other documents were calendared, indexed and abstracted first by being entered into a database, with the following fields: the image number, the repository, archive reference, date, addressor, addressor location, and relationship to the family, the addressee, their location and relationship, comments, an abstract, and five keywords for indexing. The Monson archive had already been calendared, which aided that part of the task. Analysis and review of the indexing keywords revealed the priority of preoccupations.

The keywords which were selected were based on the letter content, and the concerns expressed in the letter-books have largely set the agenda for this study. The most common subjects are set out in Figure 3. Full transcripts of all letters cited in this study were made. History is inevitably partly a process of selection, and letters concerning legal disputes, news, travel, children, mediation were not drawn on. Careful attention was given to strings of related letters, and less attention to apparently isolated letters, unless isolated by nature, for example begging letters.

Figure 3: number of letters by most popular subject matter	
Estate	526
Money	313
Dispute	273
Petition	191
News	185
Tenants	137
Marriage	114
Travel	103
Health	93
Children	85
House	83
Servants	76
Debts (including credit and arrears)	78
Elections	65
Mediation	61

The estate correspondence (526) and letters from tenants (137) arose from the lending of real estate to tenants by a landlord, mediated by stewards. The Newton family we will see were largely non-resident which occasioned much of the correspondence. The next largest concern was with money (313) and debts (78) wills (33) and trusteeships (20). A great deal of the steward correspondence also deals with the collection, payment and moving of physical money and the management of debts. Both of these concerns with lending land and lending money is explored in part one of this thesis.

A great number of the letters was concerned with nomination, which is to say the making of names. The election of burgesses for Grantham and knights of the shire for Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire elicited sixty-five letters, whilst making

spouses was the concern of 114. The largest concern for petitioners (191 letters) was for influence in an appointment or for the appointment. Petitions were made for the nomination of employees, servants, rectors, almsmen, justices of the peace, and militia offices. These letters together with titles taken from the collection of legal documents are the basis of part two of this thesis.

There was an ongoing concern with domestic matters such as children (84), the household (83), health (93), death (38), food (16), gifts (18), travel (103), visiting (12), and making arrangements to meet (57) which were pre-occupations for all correspondents. Family correspondence from the women is significant, and in addition to the family women and kin, there are tenants, friends, petitioners, landladies, tradeswomen, and a female steward, Mrs Mary Dafter. Mediation (66) was outweighed by disputes (273), which came mostly from outside the family, but from within it as well. The source of these external disputes was always real estate rights or money contracts. An account of these themes is beyond the scope of this thesis.

There is a developed literature on the culture and practice of early modern letter-writing. The importance of the materiality of letter writing has been proposed.¹

1 James Daybell, *The material letter: Manuscript letters and the culture and practices of letter-writing in early modern England, 1580-1635* (Basingstoke, 2012); James Daybell and Peter Hinds (eds.), *Material readings of early modern culture, 1580-1730: Texts and social practices* (Basingstoke, 2010); James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, *Cultures of correspondence in early modern Britain* (Philadelphia, PA., 2016); Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford, 2009); Susan Whyman, 'A Passion for the Post', *History Today* (December, 2009), pp. 33-39; Susan Whyman, 'The Correspondence of Esther Masham and John Locke: A study in epistolary silences', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 66:3-4 (2004), pp. 275-305, <http://www.e-enlightenment.com/letterbook/colloq2010/whyman,susan.html>; " 'Paper Visits': The post-Restoration letter as seen through the Verney archive", in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary selves: Letters and letter writers 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 15-36; Sara Jayne Steen, 'Reading beyond the words: material letters and the process of interpretation', *Quidditas*, 22 (2001), pp. 55-69; Jonathan Gibson, 'Significant space in manuscript letters', *The Seventeenth Century*, 12:1 (2002), pp. 1-9; Alan Stewart and Heather Wolfe, *Letter-writing in Renaissance England* (Washington, DC, 2004); Alan Stewart,

Letter-writing and reading was a complex process involving the movement of symbols, letters being lighter, quicker, cheaper way of transmitting information, across large distances, connecting geographically-diffuse social individuals. The postal system was a cooperative venture requiring very many people, and not only the technology of paper-making, but roads, carriers, wagons, coaches, coaching inns, and the know-how to write and to read. The spread of information and the ability of more people to cooperate over longer distances was a function of this technological system and this network of people. The seventeenth-century saw the birth of the carrier, and the age of the coach. Road travel was still seasonal and risky for health and robbery, but it increased. An analysis of the geographical distribution of letters is set out in Figure 4.

Shakespeare's letters (Oxford, 2009), especially chapter one.

Figure 4: geographical analysis of letter distribution

From location:	No.	No.	To location:	No.	No.
soho square	158		soho square	674	
london	102		london	22	
gray's inn	21		gray's inn	2	
clifford's inn	19		clifford's inn	0	
lincoln's inn	19		lincoln's inn	5	
Fleet St	11		Fleet Street	0	
TOTAL LONDON	330		TOTAL LONDON	703	
culverthorpe	142		culverthorpe	144	
heydour	106		heydour	36	
grantham	103		grantham	10	
barkston	25		barkston	0	
great ponton	20		great ponton	1	
stroxtan	16		stroxtan	1	
aslackby park	9		aslackby park	6	
aunsby	7		aunsby	0	
lincoln	5		lincoln	1	
lincolnshire	5		lincolnshire	3	
rippingale	5		rippingale	0	
sleaford	5		sleaford	1	
silk willoughby	5		silk willoughby	0	
stamford	5		stamford	0	
TOTAL LINC	458		TOTAL LINC	203	
barr's court	66		barr's court	280	
bristol	41		bristol	5	
bath, glouc	10		bath, glouc	0	
gloucestershire	6		gloucestershire	1	
hannam	3		hannam	0	
TOTAL GLOUC	126		TOTAL GLOUC	286	
Misc places, stated (very many)	286		Misc places, stated (very many)	478	
Sutton in Lound, Notts	37		Sutton in Lound, Notts	0	
pontefract	28		pontefract	1	
badsworth, yorks	20		badsworth, yorks	15	
holkham	14		holkham	6	
rampton	10		rampton	1	
renishaw	10		renishaw	4	
TOTAL OTHER	405		TOTAL OTHER	505	
SUBTOTAL	1319		SUBTOTAL	1697	
Unknown	686		Unknown	308	
Total	2005		Total	2005	

In addition to this body of letters, the examination of gentility in chapter one makes use of material from the High Court of Chivalry made available on a database by Richard Cust and Andrew Hopper. The court was established in the mid-1300s by the King to arbitrate and rule in cases of dispute in the conduct of war and the display of coat armour. During the early seventeenth century an increase in the number of duels became a concern to James I and proclamations were issued intended to curb the practice, and the court became an alternative to a duel. By the 1630's the court sat regularly and the 738 traceable cases between 1 March 1634 and 4 December 1640 were recently abstracted and published. Most of the material is kept at the College of Arms in London, the remainder in the Earl Marshal's papers at Arundel Castle.² In the course of these 738 actions before the Earl Marshal there was much testimony as to what constituted a gentleman, and what did not, what made a plebeian and what did not. The material includes the plaintiffs' and defendants' cases, court notes on cases, sentences, and arbitration. Witness statements feature heavily and a good deal of the interrogatories deal with denials, assertions, and proofs of gentility, which makes the material ideal for examining gentility narratives in the early years of Sir John Newton's life.

The questions

2 R.P.Cust and A.J.Hopper (eds.), *Cases in the High Court of Chivalry, 1634-1640* (Harleian Society, new series vol. 18, 2006). An account of the records can be found in Sir Anthony Richard Wagner, *The records and collections of the College of Arms* (London, 1952). See also G.D. Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry* (Oxford, 1959). The papers at Arundel are catalogued F.W. Steer (ed.), *A catalogue of the Earl Marshal's papers at Arundel Castle* (Harleian Society, vols. 115-16, 1963-4).

The question arises whether the preoccupations displayed in the letter-books is related to the mobility displayed by them over the generations, and if so how? On the face of it the preoccupation with capital and names is related to their evident upward economic mobility – acquiring progressively more capital, and upward status mobility – acquiring progressively higher status titles and offices. I aim in part to provide a reconstruction and description of the lives of three generations of this gentry family, but unlike Morteton's account of the Townshend family of Norfolk which is descriptive and canters rather dryly through the family biographies, I aim to go further. The Townsend account is, without being compelling, a deep and useful description of many aspects of a family's experience in this period.³

How was more land acquired? How was more money acquired? How were higher status titles acquired? How do we account for the changes? The language of mobility – 'status', 'title' and the metaphors of 'high' and 'low' and movement (mobility) seem to beg a number of questions. What is a gentleman, a husbandman, a yeoman, or indeed a baronet? What is a title, and if it is a name, what is a name? Is there a relationship between titles and capital, does mobility in one promote mobility in the other?

Mary Finch studied five wealthy Northamptonshire office-holding families in the century before the civil war.⁴ Her focus was on the factors or conditions of economic success (upward economic mobility) – asking how did the economic and

3 Focusing on the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries C. E. Moreton *The Townshends and their world: gentry, law and the land in Norfolk, c.1450-1551* (Oxford, 1992) and Linda J. Campbell studied the same family, looking at a period beginning 50 years later, *Sir Roger Townshend and his family: a study of gentry life in early seventeenth century Norfolk* (unpublished Ph.D, UEA, 1990).

4 Mary E. Finch, *Five Northamptonshire families, 1540-1640* (Northamptonshire Record Society, Vol. 19, Oxford, 1956).

legal contingencies of the period enable these families to enrich themselves, and whether land was a means to, or an end of, that wealth. Finch found that landownership was not just a place to park and store wealth. Increases in the estate and its income came from careful selection, consolidating purchases of land, improvement, and careful marriage arrangements bringing further property into an estate. Increases in income outstripped that attributable to rising prices in the period. Added to this was the singular effect of the family's attitude to money and expense; the Treshams suffered from an old-fashioned tradition of great hospitality, the mercantile Isham family benefited from frugality. Personal qualities of folly, recklessness, pride, or industry, frugality, ingenuity, and imagination were the biggest factors in the size of a family's expenditure, and consequently played a large part in their economic success.

The scholarship on social mobility in the early modern period (for my purposes c.1500-c.1750) has been founded on socio-economic models relying on the expectation of social categories and the successful identification of social individuals with those categories.⁵ The difficulties of this approach have been recognised, but a reinterpretation consistent with post-structuralism and complexity has not been explored.⁶ The possibility of a group or club – containing members of a population – automatically generates its opposite or another term, which is to say members of

5 Lawrence Stone, 'Social mobility in England, 1500-1700', *Past and Present*, 33 (April 1966), pp. 16-55. Alan Everitt, 'Social mobility in England, 1500-1700', *Past and Present*, 33, pp. 56-73. R. Grassby, 'Social mobility and business enterprise in seventeenth-century England', in D. H. Pennington and K. Thomas (eds), *Puritans and revolutionaries. Essays in seventeenth-century History presented to Christopher Hill*, (place, 1978), pp. 355-81, Michael Mascuch, 'Social mobility and middling self-identity: the ethos of British autobiographers, 1600-1750', *Social History*, 20, (January 1995), pp. 45-62.

6 Peter Burke, 'The language of orders in early modern Europe', in M.L. Bush (ed.), *Social orders and social classes in Europe since 1500: Studies in social stratification* (London, 1992), pp. 1-13.

a population who are not in that club. This raises the possibility of movement into or out of the club. This is the sense in which I mean social mobility, and it is a subject which has attracted a lot of attention from social historians. It is a commonplace view that England of this period was a society of hierarchically graduated orders. Contemporaries divided the nation variously into orders, estates, degrees, and then increasingly 'sorts'.⁷ It was widely held that England, in contrast to European countries, had a peculiarly open club of governors. This club of governors, the 'ruling elite', although small, was open to all-comers provided they enjoyed sufficient merit, and the rewards of talent and endeavour was to be accepted into this club. It was this open-door usage that kept England more stable than other countries. Lawrence Stone challenged this view and concluded that it was not as open as one might imagine.⁸

Social mobility into the category of the gentry was at the heart of the argument which R. H. Tawney made in 1941, sparking the 'gentry controversy'. It was social mobility into the gentry which precipitated conflict within the gentry, as different kinds of gentry competed with each other for political power. Writing from an economic perspective Tawney proposed that a shift in the balance of landownership from the nobility, church and crown to the gentry caused a shift in wealth and consequent economic power in the same direction, and that this increasing economic power

7 David Cressy, 'Describing the social order of Elizabethan and Stuart England', *Literature and History*, 3 (1976), pp. 29-44. Keith Wrightson, 'Estates, degrees and sorts: changing perceptions of society in Tudor and Stuart England', in Penelope Corfield (ed.), *Language, history and class* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 30-52.

8 Lawrence and Jeanne C. F. Stone, *An open elite? England, 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984). The Stones are not clear exactly how much one *imagined* that this club was open, it is therefore difficult to contradict them.

through property manifested itself in increased political power.⁹ It was this latter power that faced up and challenged the power of the monarch and which caused the disturbances of Charles' 'personal rule', and the war which followed. Tawney argued that this shift in a balance of landownership was compounded by new attitudes to the management and exploitation of land which this new class of gentry held and practised. Rents were revised, waste land enclosed, and land resources used more efficiently. The nobility, retaining conservative, old-fashioned, socially conventional attitudes to land and household, suffered as prices rose and they failed to adapt. Their expenses grew with inflation as they maintained a way of life commensurate with the past whilst their income remained static or declined. The very real redistribution of property was a reality not reflected in the political structure before the war, a state of affairs to which the war was an adjustment.

Hugh Trevor-Roper countered by reversing all of Tawney's conclusions from the same evidence. Power does not necessarily follow property, he argued, but rather property often follows power. Nor did the gentry 'rise as a class, nor at the expense of the aristocracy, nor on the profits of agriculture'. The men who rose did so not through land acquisition and improvement but through public office, through the favours of Court, and through the law. In this Trevor-Roper detected a growing division between, and recognition of, the Court and the Country. It was the backwoodsmen – the country squires, the 'mere gentry', small and middling landowners suffering slowly under economic change – who were the mainspring of

9 R. H. Tawney, 'The rise of the gentry, 1558-1640', *EcHR*, 11 (1941), pp. 1-38.

rebellious discontent and who mustered for the Parliament.¹⁰ This exchange produced a new interpreting paradigm, that of a society divided into those who supported the court and those who were against them – the 'country', the former centred around the city the latter's adherents living in the country. Tawney and his critics set the terms of subsequent debate and research.

The debate rumbled on and, after twenty years of research, the Princeton professor of history Lawrence Stone published a long and detailed account of the '382 noblemen (who) are the principle subject of this book', these being the Peerage, Baronets and Knights Bachelor. Taking Tawney's thesis as his starting point he gave an account of this small group of men. He argued that one of three causes of the civil war was a crisis in the affairs of the hereditary élite, which lost its 'hold' on the nation allowing a 'political and social initiative to fall into the hands of the squirearchy'; the hereditary élite 'surrendered its powers of coercion to an increasingly powerful state', and hence the 'rise of the gentry', an active taking of power argued by Tawney, was an 'optical illusion' – it was the hereditary élite who gave up power, the remaining gentlemen passively filled the gap.¹¹ Mobility into the gentry category has also been attributed not only to land and office holding but to entry into the professions and apprenticeship, and Keen has suggested 'gateways to

10 Tawney, *ibid*; Lawrence Stone, 'The anatomy of the Elizabethan aristocracy', *ECHR*, 18:1/2 (1948), pp. 1-53; H. R. Trevor-Roper, 'The Elizabethan aristocracy: an anatomy anatomised', *ECHR*, 2nd series, 3 (1951), pp. 279-298, and 'The gentry 1540-1640', *ECHR, Supplement 1* (1953), pp. 1-55, and 'The general crisis of the seventeenth century', *Past and Present*, 16 (1967), pp.31-64. The debates continued with J. P. Cooper, 'The counting of manors', *ECHR*, 2nd series 8:3 (1959), pp. 377-386, and J. H. Hexter, 'Storm over the gentry', in *Idem, Reappraisals in history* (London, 1961), pp. 117-162 For a continuation of this theme of a rising gentry becoming a national ruling elite see James M. Rosenheim, *The emergence of a ruling order: English landed society 1650-1750* (Harlow, 1998).

11 Lawrence Stone, *The crisis in the aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965); my emphasis to Stone's words; Stone argued that the other two causes of the civil war were a long term decline in respect for and obedience to the Monarch beginning the later years of Elizabeth I, and the failure of the established church to embrace other protestant groups, including for example Puritans.

gentility' through office and the acquisition of arms.¹²

Part II – The problems

The forgoing gentry studies were made by historians writing in a rather different conceptual context to the one adopted by this thesis. Their thinking was governed by philosophical and linguistic tenets which have been radically challenged in the last few decades. The challenge has come from post-structuralism, social constructionism and complexity. These alternative interpreting paradigms problematise the foundational concepts on which their conceptualisation of capital, gentility and social mobility are built.¹³

The first challenge comes from post-structuralism. It is a challenge to objectivism. This thesis embraces the linguistic turn of cultural history, joining in the challenge made by others to the assumptions of historical objectivity and the possibility of recovering a real objective past which can be described, given sufficient and relevant empirical data. Language in this latter way of thinking is invisible, transparent, and independent of the world. Ideas of transparency and decodability of language were the hidden assumptions of many historians, and the historian's relationship with language remained largely unchallenged until two debates erupted

12 Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort, 1550-1800' in Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (eds.), *The middling sort of people: culture society and politics in England 1550-1800*, (London, 1994). Maurice Keen, *Origins of the English gentleman: Heraldry, chivalry and gentility in medieval England c. 1300-c. 1500* (Stroud, 2002).

13 It could be said that this is a straw man argument, as the challenge from the first has been recognised and embraced by other social historians (see below). However, this approach has not yet permeated the field of gentry studies, which is the focus of this study.

in the 1990s.¹⁴ Lawrence Stone claimed that history faced a three-way 'crisis of confidence'; first, from linguistics 'building up from Saussure to Derrida, and climaxing in deconstruction ...; secondly, from cultural and symbolic anthropology, and a third threat from the New Historicism with its concept that language is the medium in which the real is constructed and apprehended.¹⁵ Stedman Jones had already pointed to 'the problematic character of language itself' which is to say 'that language is a simple medium'.¹⁶ Since Saussure it was the 'materiality of language itself, the impossibility of simply referring it back to some primal anterior reality' which was not answered by this formulation, and 'historians – and social historians in particular – have either been unaware or, when aware, extremely resistant to the implications of this approach for their own practice', especially in considering class relations.¹⁷

14 For statements of objectivity see Edward Hallett Carr, *What is history?* (New York, 1962); Geoffrey Elton, *The practice of history* (1967).

15 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, historicism and the social logic of the text in the middle ages', *Speculum*, 65, (1990), pp. 59-86; Lawrence Stone, 'History and post-modernism', *Past and Present*, 131 (May 1991), pp. 217-218. The ensuing debate can be followed in Joan W. Scott, 'The evidence of 'experience'', *Critical Inquiry*, 17, (Summer, 1991), pp. 773-797; Raphael Samuel, 'Reading the signs', *History Workshop*, 32 (Autumn 1991), pp. 988-1009; Patrick Joyce, 'History and post-modernism, I', *Past and Present*, 133 (Nov 1991), pp. 204-209; Catriona Kelly, 'History and post-modernism, II', *Past and Present*, 133 (Nov 1991), pp. 209-213; Lawrence Stone, 'History and post-modernism III', *Past and Present*, 135, (May 1992), pp. 189-194; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History and post-modernism IV', *Past and Present*, 135, (May 1992), pp. 194-208; Raphael Samuel, 'Reading the Signs: II. Fact-Grubbers and Mind-Readers', *History Workshop*, 33 (Spring, 1992), pp. 220-251.

16 Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of class: studies in English working class history, 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983), 20.

17 For the debate that his approach engendered see David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, 'Social history and its discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language', *Social History*, 17:2 (May 1992), pp. 165-188; Gertrude Himmerlfarb, 'Telling it as you like it: post-modernist history and the flight from fact', *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 October 1992; Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, 'The poverty of protest: Gareth Stedman Jones and politics of language – a reply', *Social History*, 18:1 (January 1993) pp. 1-15; Patrick Joyce, 'The imaginary discontents of social history: a note of response to Mayfield and Thorne, and Lawrence and Taylor', *Social History*, 18:1 (January 1993), pp. 81-85; David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, 'Reply', *Social History*, 18:2 (May 1993), pp. 219-233; Anthony Easthorpe, 'Romancing the Stone: history-writing and rhetoric', *Social History*, 18:2, (May 1993), pp. 235-249; Neville Kirk, 'History, language, ideas and post-modernism: a materialist view', *Social History*, 19:2 (May 1994), pp. 221-240; James Vernon, 'Who's afraid of the linguistic turn?: the politics of social history and its discontents', *Social History*, 19 (Jan. 1994), pp. 81-87; Patrick Joyce, 'The end of social history?', *Social History*, 20:1, (Jan. 1995), pp. 73-91; Geoffrey Eley and Keith Nield, 'Starting over: the present, the post-modern and the moment of social history', *Social History*, 20:3,

Derrida had nothing to say directly about gentility or social mobility, but with a few notable exceptions, his reception in the social history field has been cool, as Stone and others have made clear.¹⁸ For this reason there are no post-structuralist perspectives for the gentry or social mobility in any historical period.

The second challenge has come from social constructionism in the social sciences. Building on post-structuralism it implies process and construction not a prior truth.¹⁹ Human beings rationalise their lived experience by creating models of their social world and these models are reified in language. A social construct is therefore widely accepted as natural, but not universally accepted, and outside of that society it may not be accepted as extra-human. There will be a focus on what may be taken to be obvious, taken-for-granted or common sense. It is a goal of social constructionism to understand how individuals and groups participate to construct these social realities. The concept is reflexive or reciprocal – people make their social world and their social world makes them.²⁰ There is no objective truth which can be uncovered by scientific enquiry, but rather multiple realities which compete with one another for legitimacy. Language does not mirror reality but instead

(Oct. 1995), pp. 355-364; Patrick Joyce, 'The end of social history? A brief reply to Eley and Neild', *Social History*, 21:1, (Jan. 1996), pp. 96-98; Gareth Stedman Jones, 'The Determinist Fix: Some Obstacles to the Further Development of the Linguistic Approach to History in the 1990s', *History Workshop Journal*, 42 (Autumn, 1996), pp.19-35.

18 For a brief encounter with, and equally brief dismissal of, Derrida see Penelope Corfield (ed.), *Language, history and class* (Oxford, 1991), Introduction. For historians embracing deconstructive ideas see Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: the self and the social in nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1994), and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1999).

19 Dave Elder-Vass, *The Reality of Social Construction*, (Cambridge, 2012), 4.

20 Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, 1966). V. Burr, *Social Constructionism* (London, 2003). P. Steedman, 'On the relations between seeing, interpreting and knowing', in F. Steier, (ed.), *Research and Reflexivity*, (London, 2000), pp. 53-62. S. Sismondo, 'Some social constructions' in *Social Studies of Science*, 23 (1993), pp. 515-553.

constitutes it. Gender for example is contingent on social and historical processes.²¹ Social constructionism is taken to be a realist account of the nature of any given category: it is claimed that the category is a real feature of human beings, but it is determined by social, rather than natural or biological properties.²² I will argue that it is constructed by social processes which are also biological, and originate in socialised bodies. Social constructionism does not go far enough, as it limits itself to discourse.

The third challenge comes from the radically new paradigm that is complexity. I propose that social history as an activity of enquiry should be understood as the study of a complex social network in a wider complex adaptive system. I will argue that post-structuralism and social constructionism are both consistent with complexity. Complexity forms the foundation of the interpretive drive of this study. Complex adaptive systems have striking but sometimes unintuitive, and therefore not obvious, properties. The hallmarks of such systems are such as to require a profound change in the way that science (and therefore the social science of history) is understood and practised. The ground has shifted from an understanding of how things work by sub-dividing and reducing the scale of enquiry to understand component parts, towards building 'upwards' from simple rules at the micro level to the larger-scale complex phenomena at the macro level.²³ Complexity is relatively

21 Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Harvard, 1999).

22 E. Diaz-Leon, 'What is social construction?', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 23:4, (December 2015), pp. 1137-1152.

23 John Gribbin, *Deep Simplicity: Bringing order to chaos and complexity* (New York, 2004), xviii.

new to science, and came as scientists experienced a marked epistemological change over the last century. The discoveries of mathematics and science have forced mathematicians, scientists, and engineers to radically rethink their idea of order in nature.²⁴ The related science of chaos theory has not been used with great frequency in literary theory, cultural theory or social history.²⁵

Chaos theory is not complexity theory.²⁶ The two fields of study are closely linked as they both describe non-linear systems, though chaos theory is far more abstract and primarily mathematical and desk-bound. Complex systems have different properties, and are 'open', or 'dissipative', which is to say that they exchange matter, energy and information across the boundary. They are in continuous flux and are far from equilibrium and maintain any structure locally, temporarily and because of the energy flowing into them. These systems are in a continuous flux.²⁷ There is no formal definition of complexity, but complex systems have parameters which include the number of elements in the system, connectivity,

24 Kurt Gödel, 'Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I' (On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems I), *Monatshefte für Mathematik* (1931); for Bertrand Russell's incompleteness of sets see N. Griffin, 'The prehistory of Russell's paradox', in Godehard Link (ed.), *One hundred years of Russell's paradox: mathematics, logic, philosophy* (Berlin, 2004); For Turing's un-decidability theory see Alan Turing, 'On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem: A correction', *Proceedings of the London Mathematical Society*, 43:6 (1937), pp. 544-546; for a statement of the limits of scientific knowledge by a cultural philosopher see Jean-François Lyotard (trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi), *The post-modern condition* (Manchester, 1984).

25 For an instance of a post-structuralist critic seeing chaos theory underpinning deconstructive ideas of indeterminacy see John Glendening, *The Evolutionary Imagination in Late-Victorian Novels: An Entangled Bank*, (Aldershot, 2007). An isolated but brief claim to the usefulness of chaos theory to sixteenth century studies can be found at Richard G. Cole, 'Chaos theory in the future of historical writing', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 40:1, (Spring, 2009), pp. 241-242. For an equation of post-modernism with chaos theory and a dismissal of the latter and by implication the former to medieval economic history see John Hatcher and Mark Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: The History and Theory of England's Economic Development*, (Oxford and New York, 2001). For the application of chaos theory to the analysis of medieval architecture see Sheila Bonde, *Fortress-churches of Languedoc: architecture, religion and conflict in the high middle ages*, (Cambridge, 1994).

26 Per Bak, *How nature works: the science of self-organised criticality* (New York, 1996), 29.

27 M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: the emerging science at the edge of order and chaos* (New York, 1992), 222-230. There is considerable scope for conceptualising early modern England in terms of energy, entropy and information, as information is structure, and structure requires energy.

and adaptivity (self-restoring behaviour). Complexity theory has been adopted as a way of thinking and interpreting in the sciences, but has not been adopted in the field of any period of history.²⁸ The use of complexity in the social sciences more generally has been mooted, and approached developed, but only a few attempts have been made to apply it empirically.²⁹

Towards a micro-history

A complex system can be described by a few highly-iterated but simple rules at a micro-level. A basic unit of society has been proposed by historians and societal theorists, they can be imagined to be expressions at different scales of a population. For Everett 'the basic unit of society was of course the village' during the period of social transformation between 1560 and 1700, for others the family was the 'universal frame of reference' and many early modern contemporaries agreed.³⁰ This thesis proposes that the basic unit of society is at an even smaller scale and is the human body. Analysis and interpretation of this system constitutes the perspective of what may be called complex materialism. The body is an

28 For its application to literary theory see N. Katherine Hayle, *Chaos bound: orderly disorder in contemporary literature and science* (Cornell, 1990).

29 See for example Russ Marion, *The edge of organisation, chaos and complexity theories of formal social systems* (Thousand Oaks, 1999); Hans W. Gottinger, *Coping with complexity: perspectives for economics, management and social sciences* (Dordrecht, 1983); Scott E. Page, *Diversity and complexity* (Princeton, 2011); R. Keith Sawyer, *Social emergence: societies as complex systems* (Cambridge, 2005); David Byrne, *Complexity theory and the social sciences* (London, 1998); Raymond A. Eve, Sara Horsfall, Mary E. Lee (eds.), *Chaos, complexity and sociology* (London, 1997); S. Wasserman and K. Faust, *Social network analysis* (Cambridge, 1994); Joseph A. Tainter, *Complexity, problem solving, and sustainable societies, from getting down to earth: Practical applications of ecological economics* (Island Press, 1996); Mathis Wackernagel, 'Tracking the ecological overshoot of the human economy', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 99:14 (2002). For a practical application of complexity see James B. Glattfelder, *Decoding complexity: uncovering patterns in economic networks* (Ph. D thesis, Heidelberg, 2013).

30 Everitt, 'Social mobility', 56; Vivienne Larminie, *Wealth, kinship and culture: the 17th-century Newdigates of Arbury and their world* (Woodbridge, 1995), 1-2.

activity – a flow – it has near-fractal structures and properties.³¹ Products of these bodies are also near-fractal. To demonstrate the validity of this proposition an analysis of Lincolnshire settlements between 1563 and 1723 was undertaken using population data from religious censuses in the archdeaconries of Lincoln and Stowe (together making up the whole of the county of Lincoln). The contemporary data recorded variously the number of inhabitants or households. The data was processed using the box-counting technique and the log of the box-count and the frequency was plotted. The data indicates that early modern English settlements between 1563 and 1723 were fractal, with a dimension between 0.21 and 0.23, given by the negative gradient of the line of best fit. The linear regression of the data was between 0.81 and 0.96, indicating a strong correlation between the straight line obtained and the data.³²

This thesis is further built on the proposition that all social individuals have five inseparable and necessary imperatives – to live; to move; to handle; to copy and reproduce; and to cooperate. They follow from the pre-conditions for elements (socialised human beings) to form a complex adaptive system.

The early modern social network

Complex systems also have qualities of interpretive interest at the macro level.

31 Gribbin, *Deep simplicity*, 107-8. Metabolic rates, arterial branching, heartbeats have a fractal dimension. According to the logic of complexity the body is not the smallest unit, as the body can be described at smaller scales.

32 Appendix 3. For further exposition of the box-counting technique, fractal dimensions, fractals and natural fractal phenomena see Benoît Mandelbrot, *The fractal geometry of nature* (New York, 1975); Scott Camazine, Jean-Louis Deneubourg, Nigel R. Franks, James Sneyd, Guy Theraulaz, Eric Bonabeau, *Self-organization in biological systems* (Princeton, 2003).

Connectivity can help in understanding how social mobility operated, and capital, names and identities were produced. Complex systems require connectivity. As connectivity increases a system becomes less about the elements in isolation and more about the relations between the elements. Complex systems are for this reason typically modelled as networks.³³ The activity of interacting social individuals constituted a social network embedded in a complex material space, a wider physical system – the surface of the earth.³⁴

The correspondents in the letter-books were recorded and analysed. A database of names was created, and a notes on, or a short biography of, was prepared of every person who could be identified. Further evidence of connections was drawn from the process of calendaring, indexing and abstracting of the letter-books. Names were cross-referenced with other names to establish connections between them. What is demonstrated in the letter-books is a highly inter-related network of people centred around Grantham, but with social bonds which extended well beyond there. The network was dominated by kinship, and there was great inter-personal solidarity, but relationships with stewards, tenants and attorneys – generated by the lending of land and currency – were strong and frequent. Understanding the relationships between family and correspondents has required an extensive reconstruction of this large social network. There are 443 individual correspondents, who are analysed in Figure 5.

33 Gribbin, *Deep simplicity*, 174-185. Network analyses are rare in early modern studies, for some examples which treat networks in a loose sense see Antoinette Wattebot, *The Justices of the Peace in Elizabethan Essex: a network analysis of their administrative activities and social relationships* (unpublished M.A. UEA, 1992); See also Susan Whyman, *Sociability and power in late-Stuart England: the cultural worlds of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999).

34 Gribbin, *Deep simplicity*, 120.

The social network illuminated in the Newton archive covers gentry neighbours, freeholder neighbours, clergy neighbours, bishops, militia-men, lord-lieutenants, a Grantham electorate of freemen, estate and house stewards, tenants, miners, servants, gardeners, cooks, maids, labourers, clergymen, attorneys, local witnesses, bankers, money agents, carriers, drovers, tradesmen, returns agents, election agents, messengers, petitioners for favour or money, kindred, family, suitors, opponents of a marriage, and the family of potential marriage partners. Inevitably, the greatest number of letters 'in' and 'out' concern Sir John Newton and Sir Jack Newton. An analysis of the most prolific correspondents is set out in Figure 6.

Figure 5: number of correspondents by relationship.			
Relationship		No. letters from:	No. letters to:
Kin	85	182	49
Family	<u>43</u>	<u>637</u>	<u>1,594</u>
Kin plus family	89	819	1,643
Tenant	38	49	6
Servant	26	41	3
Neighbour	23	48	2
Steward	21	402	85
Clergy	20	49	5
Attorney	19	176	27
Unrelated petitioner	18	31	-
Officeholder	13	93	24
Friend	13	32	1
Soldier	8	12	5
MP	7		
Tutor	5		
Tradesman	4		
Money agent	3		
Court official	3		
Landlady	2		
Miner	2		
Banker	2		
Doctor	1		
Unknown	88		
Total	443		

Figure 6: twenty largest correspondents by name.

Individual	Relationship⁽¹⁾	To	From	Total
Jack Newton	son	872	190	1,062
John Newton	-	470	45	515
Mary Newton	wife	11	95	106
Thomas Slater	steward	5	90	95
Michael Newton	grandson	47	33	80
Gervase Newton	son	8	66	74
John Richardson	steward	42	31	73
Thomas Headon	steward	27	23	50
William Jackson	steward	-	45	45
Francis Stringer	son-in-law	6	37	43
John Fleck	steward	-	42	42
William Archer	grandson	38	-	38
Richard Pett	steward	-	30	30
John Dickson	steward	1	28	29
Robert Fisher	kin/agent	2	18	20
John Blow	kin/attorney	-	18	18
John Padman	steward	1	17	18
Thomas Dafter	steward	1	15	16
Timothy Kiplin	steward	1	15	16
George Beaver	steward	-	16	16

Note 1. Relationship to Sir John Newton (1626-1699)

Part III – Reformulations

These three challenges together represent a deep critique of the way that gentility, capital and social mobility have been characterised, and seem to beg for a reformulation. Mobility into and within this key social group by land acquisition has been cited as the cause of social, political and constitutional change, but it fails to deal with how property was acquired; what it meant to own real estate; how it could be accumulated; what money was; what gentility was; and how the non-gentle could become gentle, and then perhaps noble. In other words the micro-mechanics of social mobility have been underplayed.

I will argue that identity, and in particular gentry identity, was a recursive social production, which articulated a neutral social individual into a gentleman, esquire, baronet, tenant, rector, or almsman or woman. I will argue that capital likewise was an iterative social production of a complex social network. The social network articulated neutral resources into real estate, currency and credit – all forms of capital. The social network was characterised by gaps, chains of substitutions, and naturally produced variation which made these productions both broadly stable but also contingent, contested and uncertain – in other words economies. The wealth and status mobility that the Newton family demonstrated between c.1530 and c.1743 was made possible because identity and capital were these economies.

The approach taken here is not primarily to pursue questions of historical change, but to apply this fresh interpretive perspective to a corpus of

correspondence between 1659 and c. 1743 as a case study to illuminate the complex system that was the Newton's gentility, their landed estate, moneyed interests and their political seat in Grantham. Further, the case study is used as the basis for describing the social production of gentility and capital more generally.

In chapter one I will explore the social production of gentility. I will argue that gentility was socially constructed. Gentility was evidently impossible to pin down, leading theorists into 'a morass of internal inconsistency'.³⁵ However, the idea of identity, and the nature and existence of gentlemen, were not treated as confused possibilities. Gentility was a habitually used, exchanged, social truth even if it did not have an ontological and material truth. This social truth was perpetually troubled by the fact that there is no origin in a complex network. There was no ideal gentleman; each gentleman was a copy of another gentleman. Elements of the network cooperated, copied and reproduced narratives of gentility. As every (re)production between social individuals was preceded by an earlier one then we can see that every offer was already a response, and every response was already an offer. By the same logic every original was already a copy, and every copy was already an original.³⁶ For Derrida each original is already a copy, a substitute for something already substituted.³⁷ From this we can see that all gentlemen were fabricated – made by someone. I will explore the making of the Newtons' gentility

35 Wrightson, 'Estates, degrees, and sorts', 43.

36 Original is from the Latin *originalis* 'beginning, source or birth'.

37 Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences', in *Writing and difference*, (trans. Alan Bass) (London and New York, 1978), 278, 280.

(by discursive, physical and reflexive means) by examining the evolution of their names and titles from the mid sixteenth-century to the early eighteenth-century, together with an analysis of their use of coat armour. This part of the study is extensively augmented by material from the High Court of Chivalry. The social network generated diverse narratives of gentility, which can be thought to compete; they contradicted each other, expressed almost infinite variation, and lacked any legitimating origin; they were an economy.³⁸ This was because the social network, as a complex system, also had variation derived from the interplay of elements and the flow of energy.³⁹ The early modern complex adaptive system was full of novelty, and profuse experimentation.⁴⁰ Variation was not only possible, it was inevitable, every production was a copy, a re-production, a substitution with variation. Variation is what Derrida called 'play'. Derrida detected in all expressions of the Western intellectual tradition a determination of stability and truth in knowledge which begins and ends with an origin, and serves as the guarantor of meaning. This origin is an organising principle which attempts to fix, stabilise and control meaning. The stabilising tendency of the origin is at odds with a complex adaptive system which is perpetually generating novelty, and was essentially a rhetorical imposition which 'arrests and grounds the play of substitutions (copies)'. (my parentheses).⁴¹

38 For a statement similar to this about the word 'class' in Marxist literature see Stedman Jones, *Languages of class*, 2.

39 See for example Simon A. Levin, 'Complex adaptive systems: exploring the known, the unknown and the unknowable', *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society*, 40:1 (2002), pp. 3-19, 4.

40 John H Holland, *Hidden order: how adaptation builds complexity* (Wokingham, 1995), 27-31.

41 Derrida, 'Structure, sign and play', 278-9.

In chapter two and three I consider the lending and accumulation of land. Land was lent to tenants by an absent landlord relying on a network built principally on stewards, who were a critical interface in that social network; helping to produce real estate as capital. However, other people were enmeshed in it – the tenants themselves, gentry neighbours, clergy, servants, almsmen and women, freeholder neighbours, and kinsmen all contributed in its articulation as capital.

But what did it mean to hold land? The etymology suggests it was related to power and physically occupying it. To possess is from the Latin for power and the verb 'to be', and was from the sixteenth century used in the context of real estate.⁴² More generally it meant to have command of, authority over; to have and to hold, to occupy, to reside in. Occupy is a word taken from the Latin to seize or grasp, and 'having' derives from an old English word derived from grasping. All meanings therefore resolve to a metaphor of grasping with the hand, or being in hand, as well as present and in physical command.⁴³ Viewed from the simplifying materialistic perspective of complex materialism there was an evident gap between the 'owner' (say Sir John Newton) and the neutral resource (his Lincolnshire land, for example), which implies that no physical command or power, exercised by Sir John Newton himself, existed. This seemingly trite observation has far-reaching consequences. The complex material space of early modern England was full of gaps. These gaps existed between all parts of the system: between the bodies of social individuals, the resources which surrounded them, the marks they made and

42 Latin, from *posse* 'to be able,' from *potis* 'able, powerful' + *esse* 'to be'.

43 Latin *occupare* 'take over, seize, take into possession' from *ob* 'over' + intensive form of *capere* 'to grasp, seize'.

the narratives they exchanged.⁴⁴ Gaps were mutual and universal, and were deconstructive as well as complex. Derrida's writing proceeds from an understanding that the history of Western thinking (including that which underpins legal thought and therefore property) has been under a spell. The spell is cast by the assertion of 'presence'. Presence is the identity of the signified and the signifier, the thing and the sign. The signified is an origin, the source. Derrida pointed to an absence of presence rather than immediacy, to mediation (a gap) between the sign and the signifier. Possession relied on a rhetorical legal and social conceit: that of being present ('esse'), whilst actually being physically absent, separated by a geographical and temporal gap. The metaphorical, deconstructive breach was also a geographical, topological breach. It was this breach which, in part, allowed real estate and hence wealth to be 'held' in any quantity, and at any distance.

Gaps in the complex space existed not only between the absent owner and their land, but also between the owner (Sir Jack Newton in London, for example) and their narrative person (in Lincolnshire). In the social network a social individual's identity (their narrative person) existed as narratives about them, remembered and exchanged in and by the network. The body or person as a metaphor could, on rare occasions, be found expressed in daily life, as when Thomas Shaw wrote to Jack Newton to say that he was 'forced to appear before you in writing', sublimating his own body to metaphor.⁴⁵ In this way an owner could in some

44 See glossary for these terms.

45 GRO, D1844-C11-57, 10 December 1712.

sense exist in a remote location, and possess their land, whilst remaining distant from it.

The micro-dynamics of land acquisition are examined in chapter three. But what did it mean to accumulate something that could not be held or occupied by force as possession implies? Title to real estate was a name, an offer of a fictitious bond between the body and the property. Land was not acquired by the successive physical occupation of fields, but by acquiring names. Names were made in wills and testaments, nuncupative wills, settlement deeds, and marriage ceremonies, all had property implications, linking the social individual with resources. These nominations were the product of a social network, not merely a single person. On the face of it one person nominated an heir, or their spouse. In practice a wide social network of family, kin, servants, and neighbours were involved in this discursive production of names.

If property could be acquired by being named an heir, or spouse, how then was the name made when land was purchased with gold? There were a number of conveyancing methods available to buyers and sellers, one in frequent use by the Newtons was feoffment with livery of seisin, a common law method of transferring land. A ceremony before witnesses was performed with contractual words and the physical passing from the seller to the buyer of a clod of earth or a twig, or another token such as a key.⁴⁶ It was the ceremony that legally passed ownership, not the written feoffment which followed, and the clod did not represent the land, it

⁴⁶ For Thomas Newton delivering a piece of silver to each tenant see LRO, MON3-31-1. For an example of the script see LRO, Thor 1/2/P15A/1-2, 31 July 1722.

was the land. Several of the transactions by which the Newtons acquired land involved a final concord or 'fine', which was executed or 'levied' usually in the court of common pleas, and was a collusive legal fiction. Common recoveries were also performed, which were complicated but strictly scripted pieces of legal theatre featuring fictitious persons with made-up names played by court clerks, designed to break an entail. These performances can only be described as magical, or supernatural, as well as theatrical. They were magical rather than material because titles did not inhere in people, and real estate was not held or occupied; the magic attempted to bridge the breaches between them.

Real estate was also produced physically in the parish by the presence of the steward, the tenants, and the tall capital mansion house. Offers of physical power in the form of defensive and securing barriers – walls, fences, ditches, and chests, furniture and boxes – were also part of that physical production. Physical or coercive power with respect to the body – in the form of arrest and custody in gaol or debtors' prison, corporal or even capital punishment, together with violence – formed another part. Documents of title were not only discursive productions but were also defended physically in desks, black boxes, chests, trunks, in houses and churches.

One final social process contributed to the production of real estate. A necessary feature of all dynamic non-linear systems is iterated exchange with some degree of feedback.⁴⁷ Feedback in the early modern social network was provided by the imperative to copy and reproduce, and exhibited by everyone. Gestures,

⁴⁷ Gribbin, *Deep simplicity*, xx, 62, 224-5.

mannerisms, rituals, symbols, and stories produced by one social individual were repeated by others. Everyone copied everyone else. This reflexive behaviour was a systemic and cohering default. Land was produced, in part, by the wide-spread respect for the narrative of ownership and the self-denial of its use. Land was produced reflexively by parishioners when they respected Sir John Newton's fields and boundaries, when they asked to be tenants, when they tacitly or positively accepted circulating narratives of real estate.

The social network was characterised by chains of substitutions, made necessary by the existence of gaps. We will see that the social network was predicated on substitutions: of signs for things, of people for people, of nominations for nominations: a description which characterised Derrida's vision of language.⁴⁸ The early modern society of the Newton family was full of personal substitutes or representatives. They employed servants, attorneys, and stewards, all of whom stood in for them as deputies, agents and surrogates. Burgesses stood in the place, or represented, the freemen of Grantham. Seals and signatures on paper and vellum stood for the will and authority of officeholders: whether the king, the crown, a judge, an alderman, a corporation, a lord-lieutenant, a herald, or Sir John Newton, baronet. Symbols on paper stood for words, which stood for the author's meaning. Words stood for objects. Tokens stood for love contracts.⁴⁹ Twigs and turf stood for land, cats and frogs stood for witches' familiars. Coats of arms stood

48 Jacques Derrida, 'Signature event context', *Glyph*, 1 (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 172-97; Derrida, 'Limited Inc abc', *Glyph*, 2. (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 162-254.

49 David Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: Ritual, religion and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), chp. 10.

for gentility; heraldic devices on a servant's livery for their master's person. These physical and temporal chains in the complex space were also deconstructive chains: instead of bonds binding people to things, there were incessant deferrals. Instead of a metaphysical bond between property and a person, there was a chain of substitutions and a social network.

Economic mobility required the gathering of capital, including real estate. But land self-evidently could not be gathered, or piled up. However, as a narrative it could; and in this way it was explained, understood and legitimised. The social network had the effect of metaphorically collapsing the gap between the body and the resource, allowing a single body to 'possess' resources separated from it, and for it to be piled up without physical limit. It was this quality which made economic mobility possible.

In chapters four and five I examine the social production of currency and credit. Gold as a currency, and its movement and storage, was a product of the same social network that produced land. The strong capital networks enjoyed by gentry families like the Newtons increased market participation and the possibility of increasing capital, and so significantly contributed to social mobility. Credit was a matter of reputation and it was a 'cultural currency' of trust used to transact most business. Credit was the 'social communication and circulating judgement about the value of other members of communities', and that this took the form of a reputation for creditworthiness which was key to market participation and therefore wealth.⁵⁰

50 Craig Muldrew, *The economy of obligation: The culture of credit and social relations in early modern*

This notion of an economy of credit can be extended to be thought of as a social production which has the same features as the social production of currency and real estate.

In chapters six and seven I extend the examination of identities. I am not concerned here with identity in the sense of a group solidarity or the shared values, interests, and beliefs of a social group.⁵¹ Status mobility was conventionally the acquisition of increasingly higher status names, but how did it happen at the micro-dynamics level? Like real estate it depended partly on naming, and I will argue that it was a social production just like capital, and emerged from the same social network, and the same social processes.

In chapter six I consider the making of tenants, almsmen and women, and clergy; and in chapter seven I consider the making of Parliamentary representatives. As above, in a complex social network a name is a narrative linked to a social individual. Names and titles, like property, were imagined and expressed as inherent things, but were not. Instead of an ontological identity between a person and a name, there was only a gap.⁵² It was not presence or legal fictions which glued social individuals to their narrative identity, it was the social network. Nominators made names, but they were themselves implicated in prior chains of nominations – someone nominated them, who were themselves always already nominated, to borrow a phrase from Derrida. Spouses (in chapter two) were

England (New York, 1998)

51 See conclusion for a discussion of a gentry class.

52 Identity derives from the idea of unity, sameness or oneness, from Latin *idem* meaning 'same'.

proposed by networks of kin – themselves nominated as spouses, though ultimately the spouses mutually named themselves before witnesses. Tenants were nominated by the landlord, but again were proposed to him by wide networks of people, dominated by the steward, himself already nominated by the landlord. The landlord had already been nominated as a successor, settlee, or heir, legatee, or in a conveyance. Almsmen and women were named by someone who was in a perpetual succession of heirs or assigns. However, a network of kin, servants and parishioners also nominated to the nominator. Rectors were not named by lay rectors alone, but proposed by a social network of people, who made their petitions to them; finally the lay rector named their candidate to a bishop who was himself named by bishops who themselves claimed perpetual succession from the apostles. Burgesses were named in a complicated and complex chain of prior nominations, involving freemen, local gentry and nobles, and a court and alderman.

In early modern England, as in medieval England, it tended to be ceremony, which is to say ritual performance before witnesses, which was most important in the social production of titles and names. Kings were made by ritual words, as were Knights Bachelor, Knights Banneret, Knights of the Bath, and Knights of the Garter.⁵³ In the making of all of these titles written documentation, if it were made, was to record the prior making of the name, after the fact. Marriages in the register recorded the event afterwards, likewise the conveyance of land.⁵⁴ The

53 William Newton, *A display of heraldry* (London, 1846), 340.

54 For similar contests between the authority of writing and the spoken word (customary memory) see Adam Fox, 'Custom, memory and the authority of writing', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, Steve Hindle, (eds.), *The experience of authority in early modern England* (New York, 1996), pp. 89-116; Christopher Marsh, 'Order and Place in England, 1580-1640: The View from the Pew', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:1, (Jan. 2005), pp. 3-26.

production of these names in the parish and the town were bound up in the making of the Newtons' gentility.

Capital and names were understood through narratives of truth, certainty, and an objective exterior reality, but they were, in fact, none of those things; but rather a fluid and unstable system of endless substitutions of signs and people, characterised by gaps and absence, not truthful bonds and knowable certainty. They were bound together in reciprocal feedback loops, mutually producing and reinforcing each other; capital bred gentility and gentility bred capital.

Chapter 1

Making a gentleman

Ivan Roots once wrote that the gentry were a 'mixed lot' but that 'contemporaries seem to have had little difficulty in deciding who was and who was not a gentleman'. Others found the reverse to be true, with contemporaries confessing difficulty distinguishing status grades.¹ Mingay claimed that historians have engaged in controversies over the significance of the gentry which was 'fed by an inability to agree on just who the gentry were', but using the generalisation to interpret was a necessary evil, not least because it was used by contemporaries (statesmen and writers) 'of the past'.² We will see that every attempt to define gentility seems to invite a counter-factual observation. If contemporaries had little difficulty recognising gentlemen, why was it so contested? I will argue that gentility, like capital, was socially-constructed.

Made by writing and speaking

The evidence suggests that there were many opportunities to be made a gentleman discursively, by writing and speaking. The keeping of parish registers by the clergy was ordered in 1538 and the parson of Bassingthorpe began his register in 1541. It shows that a John Newton senior and junior were both living in the parish and baptising their children in Bassingthorpe church. Neither man has any addition to

1 Ivan Roots, 'Gentlemen and others', *History*, 47 (1962), pp. 236-238; Cressy, 'Describing the social order', 29.

2 Mingay, *The gentry*, Introduction, fn. 43.

his name, and neither were taken to be gentlemen.³ The 'senior' was styled yeoman, and died at the end of February 1546 and the 'junior' was a husbandman and great-grandfather of Sir John Newton. Both men paid subsidies in 1544 and 1546 and in each case they were listed by the tax collector without addition, without gentle status.⁴ Twenty years later the yeoman's son and heir Michael (Myghell) Newton and his wife Ellen of Stoke parish conveyed land in Woolsthorp and Colsterworth to John Newton the husbandman.⁵ The yeoman and the husbandman were almost certainly closely related. John Newton senior of Westby and Bitchfield was always categorised as a yeoman.⁶ John Newton junior was styled a husbandman in his will by Richard Armstrong the rector and writer of his will, and was father of eleven surviving children by his wife Mary Nyxe. Two days after his will he settled land on four of his seven sons.⁷

John Newton's fourth son William Newton was probably the one baptised on 30 August 1541 at St. Thomas-a-Becket church in Bassingthorpe parish. William always appears as a 'yeoman'. In 1562 he came of age and probably settled at the farm left him by his father John Newton ('my ferme in Westbie wiche is in the occupyinge of Joan Okelaie'). Around 1576 aged about thirty-five William married the twice-widowed Anne Kelham. She brought numerous step-children into the

3 Joseph Jackson (ed.), *Miscellea genealogica et heraldica*, Vol. 1., new series (London, 1874); Foster, 'Isaac Newton's family', 6-11; Statute of Additions, 1413. All parishes in this section are on Map 4, the family relationships can be found in Appendix 1.

4 TNA, E179/137/421/8, Lay subsidy roll.

5 TNA, 5 Elizabeth, no.6, Feet of fines, 20 July 1562.

6 LRO, Holywell 1/35, 1/39 and 1/40, 10 May 1541 and 2-9 February 1542 (enfeoffment); TNA, PROB11/31/163, 25 February 1546, will of John Newton yeoman of Bitchfield; TNA, C1/1098/44-46, claim for goods.

7 LRO, Bishop's transcripts; LRO, LCC 1562, f.99; 19 December 4 Elizabeth (1562), settlement, cited in College of Arms, 2D 14; LRO, LCC 1565, ff.209-210; TNA, PROB11/48. See 'A story of 7 sons', Gravity Fields Festival, 2014, <http://www.newtontreeparty.co.uk/mr-newtons-new-perspective-bassingthorpe-with-westby-scene-1/>.

marriage and gave William two sons, John and Thomas, and three daughters, all baptised between 1577 and 1585. In 1584 he conveyed his land in Bassingthorpe and Westby to Thomas Cony lord of the manor of Bassingthorpe, the London court clerk records him by the name 'William Newton', without gentle status. Presumably this was land left him by his father in 1562.⁸ In 1588 his elder brother Richard, third son of John Newton of Westby, died and William gave a bond of £200 to the church commissary court on behalf of Richard's wife, Isabel, to administer her husband's estate, the church court clerk wrote him as yeoman.⁹ Around this time he acquired a tenement and land with his step-son Richard Hickson and in 1591 and 1593 William was described as a 'yeoman of Skillington' in a bond. But the following year William was sick and dictated his will probably to George Patison (a scrivener who also witnessed it), Patison identified him as a yeoman, and he was described that way by the escheator for Lincolnshire in the inquisition post mortem which followed.¹⁰

William's eldest son John makes a very light mark in the record.¹¹ William's only surviving son Thomas continues their story. William Newton asked for Edward Marrowe of Grantham, a member of the Grantham corporation, to be guardian to

8 LRO, Skillington register; TNA, Lincoln, 26-7 Eliz., Mich. part no.50, feet of fines, cit in Foster, 'Isaac Newton's Family', 9.

9 LRO, LCC administrations, f.439, 24 May 1588.

10 LRO, MON3-29-72, 20 August 1596; LRO, MON7-12-248, 2 Nov 1591, bond in 20 marks; LRO, MON3-27-85, 5 May 1593; TNA, PROB10/155, 7 September 1594 (original will), and PROB11/84/337, court copy; TNA, C142-291-70, 1605 inquisition post mortem.

11 For John Newton see LRO, Skillington register; LRO, LCC 1606 f76, John Newton will, 5 August; TNA, C142/295/17 and 29, 1607 John Newton IPM, another copy in LRO, MON7-11-7; LRO, MON7-14-1, legacy offer, 20 June 1609; LRO, LCC 1598 ff38, 38d, Anne Newton will; LRO, LCC 1601, ii, f16, George Newton will.

his second son Thomas and to 'bring him up at the school with learning and also some knowledge of the law'. When his elder brother John died in 1606 Thomas then was aged about twenty-three and named as next heir. In a series of property transactions around the Grantham area in the succeeding decades he is named as a gentleman of Gonerby, two miles north of Grantham. In 1616 he is named without any additions in a quit-claim of interest to Robert Hickson, husbandman, for a moiety of a cottage in Barrowby, Lincolnshire; and in 1619 in a lease to Roger Jordeine, yeoman of Buckminster. When his first son, Richard, was baptised and then buried in 1621 and 1622 respectively the presiding clergyman entered the father's name as simply 'Thomas Newton' in the Heydour register. The rector, Francis Quiningborough (or his curate, Richard Northam,) did not take him to be of gentle status at that point, whilst the attorneys and clerks had already done so. In 1624 he is named as a gentleman in a bond to execute a conveyance given to Robert Hodgeson of Siston, Lincolnshire and again in 1625 in a bond to observe covenants to Thomas Archer of Grantham.¹² In 1626 the rector or curate elevated him to the status of 'master' on the baptism of his second and only surviving son John Newton (later Sir John); and the following year he is still 'Maister' in the will of John Colthurst, gentleman of Aunsby, a neighbouring parish to Heydour, and in the same year he is gentleman when nominated as attorney to deliver seisin for his half-brother Richard Hickson, and again at a Grantham borough sessions in the same year. On a quit-claim to Colthurst's daughter Elizabeth Foster in 1630 he is

¹² LRO, MON3-30-5, 1616; MON3-30-6, 1619; MON3-27-5, 1624; MON3-27-96, 1625; MON3-31-1, 1627 and GBQS/11/8.

styled merely 'Thomas Newton', but master on the burial of his son Richard. Later in the year he is a 'gentleman of Gonerby' again named in a bond and a second payment under Colthurst's will.¹³ In the period he seems to oscillate between gentle and non-gentle status. About this time he held the office of chief constable. Chief or high constables were of a hundred, so it is likely that he was chief constable of the one containing Gonerby, which was in the soke of Grantham.¹⁴

Local public office either conferred gentility or confirmed it, but its use is problematic as it was used in both senses. Robert Storey was a Cambridge maltster and high constable of the Chesterton hundred for twenty years. He bore no coat of arms and witnesses could not say whether he 'was borne and descended of the stock of a gentleman' but nonetheless he was reputed a gentleman 'by his place'. This narrative could be combined with the birthright narrative and as a result his son, Phillip Storey, also a chief constable, was reputed a gentleman, both by his father's gentility and his own office. Phillip Storey had been called a coxcombe and a fool by Alexander Ranew, a husbandman, at the house of a constable during a rating for ship money in September 1635.¹⁵ There is a curious circularity to this evidence, with some depositions pointing to a view that the pre-existing gentlemen was recognised after the fact, and rewarded with office, but some witness depositions indicating a view that gentlemen were made by their

13 Turnor, *Grantham*, 69; LRO, MON3-31-1, 1627; LRO, GBQS/11/8; LRO, LCC 1628/1/272, will, a copy at LRO, MON3-31-4; LRO, MON3-27-6, 1630; MON7-11-43; MON3-31-8, 1633 .

14 John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Herald and Genealogist*, Vol. 2 (London, 1865), 124. The source is secretary of State Joseph Williamson notes on the gentry of Lincolnshire, 1667, citing 'old Mr Hobbes'; Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of England*, Vol. 2 of 4, (1831), 250. Heydour is in Winnibriggs and Threo wapentake, the local equivalent of the hundred; Street, *Grantham*, 107.

15 HCCD, Case 627, January 1636, Story v Ranew.

office.

Arms make a gentleman

On or about 13 August 1634 Thomas Newton was summoned to, and attended, the heralds at their visitation at Grantham, and claimed a coat of arms. He was described as a gentleman in the four-generation pedigree recorded by them. It was also a commonplace that gentility was proved by a right to bear arms. Ideas of gentility expressed in early printed books on the subject were dominated by notions derived from the law of arms and theories about the use of coat armour.¹⁶ The heralds defined a gentleman by his right to bear arms. William Dugdale writing in 1681 called arms 'ensigns of honour'. Arms were considered by heraldic doctrine to be freehold property. As such they could be alienated and transferred to another person, who was not their son, though the 'legality' of these disposals and grants was called into question in the Earl Marshal's court.¹⁷ The heralds recognised that a coat of arms could be 'outward demonstrations' of a person's merit (virtuous endeavours) in time of peace. Edward Walker expands on this point, stating that:

'it hath been an Ancient Custome ... that all Estates and degrees have been and are distinguished each from other by sundrie Markes or Signes Called Armes being noe otherwise then outward demonstrations and remembrances of the meanes and worth of the Bearers ... by their valour in the field in tyme of war or by their virtuous Endeavours in tyme of Peace.'¹⁸

16 J. P. Cooper, 'Ideas of gentility', in G.E. Aylmer & J. S. Morrill (eds.), *Land, men and beliefs: studies in early modern history* (London, 1983), pp. 43-77.

17 Joseph Edmondson, *A complete body of heraldry* (London, 1780), 153, and 154 where he cites *Lovel v Morley*, and *Cowyn v Norwich*.

18 College of Arms, Grants of Sir Edward Walker, R23 f124 (my emphasis).

Sir Thomas Smyth echoed this view, holding that the monarch, or 'prince', could make gentlemen 'where he sees virtue able to bear that honour or merit, and deserves it, and so it has always been used among us', because bloodlines are not infallible and the world is subject to mutability.¹⁹ However, kings have never made gentlemen, nor esquires, except as it is included in a royal household title such as esquire of the body or gentleman of the privy chamber. Selden notes that neither a king nor God can make a gentleman of blood, the implication being that only human reproduction can do this. However a king can make a gentleman 'by creation', though he does not state how, though in his earlier work *Titles of Honour* he states that the king made gentlemen by charter, citing a grant of arms. For Selden the gentleman by creation is morally better than the gentleman by birth who is 'civilly' better, because the former 'may be a debauched man' whilst the latter is created because he is a 'person of worth'.²⁰ The heralds acknowledged that 'the greater nobility' 'in early times' granted arms to their tenants and dependants, so that the arms granted visually echoed the motifs of their own. Henry V attempted to limit the display of arms to only those who could show an ancestral right to it, attempting to limit the creation of gentleman to the sovereign, and his officers.²¹ According to the proclamation no man of whatever 'estate, degree or condition should assume arms or a coat of arms unless he held them by right of inheritance

19 Smyth, *De Republica*, 26.

20 John Selden, *Table talk: being discourses being his sense of various matters weight and high consequence: relating especially to religion and state*, (London, 1689), 60; John Selden, *Titles of honour* (London, 1672), 722.

21 A. E. Stamp (ed.), *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1413-1419* (HMSO, 1929), 433. Edmondson, *Heraldry*, 158; D. A. L. Morgan, 'The individual style of the gentleman', in Michael Jones (ed.), *Gentry and lesser nobility in late medieval Europe* (Gloucester, 1986), 16.

or by the donation of some person who had sufficient power to give them'.²²

For most commentators gentility was inseparable from bearing a coat of arms. Earle's study of an improving group of people centred on London after the Restoration, from which he sees a developing English middle class, claims a gentleman 'was properly a man entitled to bear arms, and heralds continued to make periodical visitations to determine who was or was not fit to bear arms..'.²³ Everitt recognised that the problem of 'defining gentry in the lowest ranks' is 'considerable', he includes these untitled men, the gentleman and the esquire, in his gentry group and settled on including men who bore arms plus those who were not of an armigerous family but who married into one.²⁴ Despite this clear qualification he then resorted to an economic qualification. He found a 'pseudo-gentry' in towns by which he meant 'that class of leisured and predominantly urban families who, by their manner of life, were commonly regarded as gentry, though they were not supported by a landed estate', they were younger sons of country gentlemen, impoverished gentry, sons of lawyers, scriveners, doctors, or clerics, former army officers or grandsons of wealthy factors, moneylenders, maltsters and innkeepers in places like Northampton.²⁵ Cliffe claims that the 'official badge of gentility was the coat of arms' and he defined gentry as every family 'beneath the peerage' who had a 'specific right to bear such arms', but even as an 'upper segment in an essentially hierarchic society' they were internally stratified from baronet to 'plain

22 Edmondson, *Heraldry*, Vol. 1, 158.

23 Earle, *English Middle Class*, 5. In fact the heralds had almost completely discontinued the practice by the turn of the seventeenth-century, see Nichols, *Herald and genealogist*, vol. 2, 185.

24 Alan Everitt, *Change in the provinces 1603-60* (Leicester, 1969), 56.

25 Everitt, 'Social mobility', 71.

gentlemen'. Despite this he takes a monetary qualification and defines his gentry group to be those who were not noble with an income over £250, generating a pool of 557 families in 1558 rising to 679 in 1642.²⁶ Beckett settled on the idea that the gentry 'stretched from the peerage ... to gentry landowners acting as justices of the peace', all of whom were 'part of a single indivisible whole'. The 'distinguishing marks' of the group were coat armour and 'the concept of gentility'.²⁷ The heralds divided the country into two and were empowered to summon those known by the title of gentleman or esquire, or otherwise using coat armour, in what became known as visitations. They were conducted about every thirty to forty years by county. A warrant was issued to the high constable of the hundred commanding him to warn the knights, esquires and gentlemen named in the warrant.²⁸ The visitations, though a written record of gentility or otherwise, were also highly inconsistent and incomplete. John Morrill noted that all 400 grand jurymen in the Cheshire sessions 1630-60 were styled 'gentleman', whilst only five of these could be found in the herald's visitations.²⁹ Some were found to be plebeian and yet appeared in a visitation.³⁰ Some were found to be plebeian but later were (gentlemen) plaintiffs in the chivalry court.³¹

Sir Edward Coke asserted that every gentlemen must bear arms (*arma gerens*)

26 Cliffe, *Yorkshire gentry*, 3, 6

27 Beckett, *Aristocracy*, 18, 21, 39, 40.

28 Edmondson, *Heraldry*, 158. Visitations were conducted between 1529 and 1704, being the earliest and latest recorded at the college of arms. They tended to call the gentry to inns, and would bring their books, a registrar (register), a draughtsman, and other 'proper officers and assistants'. It tended to be a summer job. For more information on the process of the visitation see Edmondson, *Heraldry*, pp. 158-160.

29 Morrill, *Cheshire*, 14. See also Everitt, *Community of Kent*, n3 to p.34.

30 For example Stephens in HCCD, Case 187.

31 For example HCCD, Case 174, September 1638, *Duck v Hanslopp* and Case 275 and November 1638, *Hanslopp v Staunton*. See also Case 564 and 597, *Slater v Rodes*.

and that this was the best evidence and proof of his gentility by blood. The argument being that his ancestor must have been a gentleman of valour or worth in order to have been granted a coat of arms. This point was also made in the chivalry court.³² Sir Thomas Smyth called men bearing coat armour esquires, and that their arms were 'testimonies ... of their race, and therefore have neither creation nor dubbing'.³³ Edward Chamberlayne writing in 1684 mixed the antiquity narrative with the coat armour narrative and held that the gentry of England 'are descended of antient families that have always born a coat of arms' and that all nobles are gentlemen but not all gentlemen are nobles.³⁴

Antiquity narratives were drawn on, recalling those of birth we saw earlier. One witness for the defendant Ayleworth intimated that the gentility of Thomas Temple of Gloucestershire was doubtful because the heralds had only granted him arms in 1593, about forty years earlier, whilst Temple claimed to have gentle ancestors going back 500 years.³⁵ Some argued that gentility did not require a coat of arms at all, provided education and income were present, Guy Miede held that

'any one that, without a coat of arms, has either a liberal or genteel education, that looks gentleman-like (whether he be so or not) and has the wherewithal to live freely and handsomely, is by the courtesy of England usually called a gentleman'.³⁶

The equation of arms and gentility, like names, was problematic. Some yeoman claimed arms. The Kelham family of Ropsley display armorials in the church there,

32 Edmondson, *Heraldry*, 154; HCCD, Case 335, *Jones v Paine*.

33 Smyth, *De Republica*, 25.

34 Edward Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia or The present state of England* (London, 1684), 343.

35 HCCD, Case 638, May 1634, *Temple v Ayleworth*.

36 *The New state of England under our sovereign Queen Ann* (1703).

but most of the sixteenth-century instances of the family claim to be no more than yeomen. Some esquires did not claim arms. Richard Hickson was styled gentleman and esquire, and never claimed arms.

Heraldry was said to be the systematic and hereditary use of devices centred on a shield.³⁷ There is ample evidence in the Newton family that this was not the case. Thomas Newton's entry in the 1634 visitation shows a black shield with a pair of silver crossed thigh-bones with a small indistinct bird in the top quarter of the shield ('in chief'), and can be found in an identical design in the visitation of Yorkshire in 1584-5 claimed by Miles Newton of the city of York. The bird appears therefore to be hereditary, and not a difference or cadence, however Thomas and his descendants never used the bird device on a seal.³⁸ The coat of arms of the baronet should have included the addition of 'argent, a dexter hand couped at the wrist gules', the arms of the ancient Kings of Ulster, placed in an escutcheon at certain important points on the shield.³⁹ In his confirmation of arms in 1662 John Newton was entitled to use the arms of Cradock quartered with his own with a 'slipped quatrefoil' in gold at the centre as an 'augmentation'. However, I can find no coat of arms with this device, and the baronets' device was scarcely used. The confirmation from herald Walker included the crest granted in 1567, that of a kneeling Moorish prince offering up his sword. According to the rules of heraldry,

37 Anthony Wagner, herald, cited in Maurice Keen, *The origins of the English gentleman: heraldry, chivalry and gentility in medieval England, c.1300-c.1500* (Stroud, 2002), 12.

38 College of Arms, R23 f238 and 2 D14; John Rylands Library, BAG/22/5/1-2; 1734 memorial at St. Michael's, Heydour; BL, XIX 1-62, 14 91.2.TAB, Kings Topographical Collection; Joseph Foster, *The Visitation of Yorkshire made in the years 1584/5 by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald; to which is added the subsequent visitation made in 1612 by Richard St George, Norroy King of Arms* (Harleian Society, 1875). Charles Best Norcliffe, *The visitation of Yorkshire in the years 1563 and 1564* (Harleian Society, 16, 1881).

39 William Newton, *A display*, 331.

this device was only available to John Newton and his heirs, not to his cousins. Isaac Newton, one such cousin, was told in no uncertain terms by herald, Peter le Neve, that he had no right to use it. However, in various documents sealed by him we can see him using it.⁴⁰ The Newton family were not over-zealous in their display of their arms. They were not carved into stone on the house at Culverthorpe, nor is there any evidence of the same at Barr's Court. They did use them on their seals, on their table-wear, and memorials, and there is evidence of silver spoons and china emblazoned with their device.⁴¹ When they did use them the use was variable, erratic, and unsystematic, both within a generation and between them; a finding which is consistent with the use of titles.

Returning to Thomas Newton, the first to be made gentleman and bear arms. He continued to be styled gentleman of Gonerby during that year.⁴² The last records of Thomas's life were made on a patent from King Charles licensing a conveyance of crown land held in chief from Richard Newton, gentleman, and his wife Elizabeth, to Thomas who was also styled 'gentleman' by the Chancery clerk.⁴³ At the time of making his will on 5 December 1639 he called himself gentleman, and after his death Thomas was recognised as 'gentleman, late of Gonerby' by his half-brother

40 Rupert Hall and Laura Tilling (eds.), *Newton's correspondence*, Vol. 7, X703. See for example Northampton RO, ZA353, 3 April 1697, lease: Isaac Newton to William Groves; For another 'inauthentic' display see Thomas Newton at St Martin-at-Oak in Norwich. (Author's visit to the church).

41 A reference to 'four shovel-shaped salt spoons with Newton's crest, once Sir John's', in *Notes and Queries*, Second series, 61 (1857), 157; armorial china plate, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, G710.

42 College of Arms, C23, f73, see below for an exploration of arms. One of the pedigrees entered with this date. LRO, MON3-27-7, 1634; MON3-28-9; MON3-27-100, 1636.

43 TNA, C66/2761/32, Patent rolls, 1638. He may be Isaac Newton's great uncle Richard Newton.

Hickson, and in his inquisition post mortem.⁴⁴ Thomas was aged about fifty-six when he was buried at Gonerby in St. Sebastian's church.⁴⁵ However, after 1699 he was promoted again to esquire by his grandson Gervase, and it appears etched in marble in Bitton church.⁴⁶ The heralds were incorporated as a body by Richard III.⁴⁷ Commissions were later issued giving the heralds 'full power and authority to reprove, controul, and make infamous ... (anyone who) had usurped or taken upon him or them any manner of title of honour, dignity or worship, as esquire, (or) gentleman'. The legal system, and the church, were both enjoined to enforce this prohibition on using the titles of gentleman and esquire in any public place without the authority of the heralds.⁴⁸ In roping in the legal framework, the heralds made the act of calling yourself a gentleman something much more than a formality, or merely a title of courtesy and politeness. Church monuments – with the additions of gentleman or esquire or a coat of arms – could be put up by parishioners, and taken down or defaced by heralds.⁴⁹ Title additions were added in other places in a church, for example to record churchwardens, and these were equally contested. Thomas Stephens was published as gentleman on a board in the church recording the names of churchwardens. Somebody blotted out the addition to his name, which caused Stephens to be in a 'great rage'.⁵⁰ One man, though an esquire,

44 LRO, 1626 Gonerby register, op cit; MON7-11-43, 1630; Gonerby register op cit, LRO, MON3-27-6, MON7-11-43; TNA, PROB11/185/96, Hickson draft will 2 Oct 1640, sentence PROB11/188/117, another copy LRO, Thor 1/2/AL37/44.

45 Great Gonerby register cit in Turnor, *Grantham*, 66-77; TNA, PROB11/184, 1639, Thomas Newton will; TNA, C142/593/22, 1640, IPM; TNA, WARD7/94/57, Court of wards.

46 Monument to Sir John Newton, north chapel, see Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 209.

47 TNA, Patent Rolls, 2 March 1453 1 Richard III, p.3 m5, cited in Edmondson, *Heraldry*, 142.

48 Edmondson, *Heraldry*, 159.

49 HCCD, Case 351, February 1635, King of Arms v Tuckfield.

<http://www.creditonparishchurch.org.uk/history/the-tuckfield-memorial/>

50 HCCD, Case 187, October 1638, Edgecumbe v Stephens. F. T. Colby, *The visitation of the county of Devon in the year 1620* (London, 1872), 102.

was buried at Great Mongeham with an effigy of a man in armour, implying that he was a knight.⁵¹ Occasionally the chivalry court ordered that a plebeian should not only disclaim but refrain from writing the addition to their name.⁵²

There was a narrative, that arms passed like gentility from father to son, paternally by birth. On this basis John Newton husbandman and his son William a yeoman had the right to bear arms by birth, as there were no grants to either of those men. At the visitation in 1634 Thomas Newton, was summoned to Grantham on or about 13 August.⁵³ It showed Thomas Newton's grandfather John Newton of Westby said to be 'desand from the Newtons in Lancastr'. No other male relative, of which there were dozens, except Isaac Newton, was summoned or made a claim in any of the visitations in 1562-4, 1590, 1634 or 1666.⁵⁴ Despite living in Lincolnshire at that time and being one of the county gentry, Sir John Newton did not attend that visitation.⁵⁵ There was no visitation in Lincolnshire in the 1680s but Sir John Newton was summoned from Oldland in Gloucestershire to the visitation of the heralds in 1682 and 1683. Neither Sir John, nor his servants, attended the two heralds, Gregory King and Thomas May, and no pedigree was entered or disclaimed, either in Gloucestershire or in Lincolnshire.⁵⁶ The names and arms

51 HCCD, Case 6, Argent v Crayford

52 HCCD, Case 156, West v Crutchman alias West.

53 College of Arms, C23 f73 (Thomas Newton); A. Gibbons, *Notes on the visitation of Lincolnshire 1634* (Lincoln, 1898), preface.

54 College of Arms D23 f19, 1666, (Isaac Newton). For a good image of his seal see Trinity College Library, 30 April 1689, Isaac Newton to John Covel.

55 Visitations in Gloucestershire were carried out in 1530, 1569, 1623, and 1682/83, see P. L. Dickenson, 'The heralds' visitations of Gloucestershire 1682-3', in *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 117 (1999), pp. 11-33.

56 Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 206; T. F. Fenwick and W. C. Metcalfe (eds.), *The Visitation of the county of Gloucestershire, 1682, 1683* (1883); Dickenson, *Ibid*, 11.

recorded or disclaimed in visitations can be seen from this brief survey of the Newton experience to be partial, inconsistent and with significant and persistent omissions.

Thomas's half-brother was Richard Hickson. Hickson had multiple identities and was variously recognised and described as a yeoman, gentleman and esquire. He was born about 1570 (reconciling his mother's three marriages with known children), and the first notice that we have of his property activities was in the 1590s in the Grantham area. He was also involved in several suits in the London chancery courts concerning mortgages. He purchased at least seven manors in the Grantham area, namely Heydour, Culverthorpe, Hanbeck, Oasby, Aisby, Barkston and Ropsley, holding on to all but Hanbeck and Ropsley at his death, but he also held much land and property elsewhere. He is probably the 'yeoman of Barrowby' mentioned in a document in January 1592 and he is probably also the 'yeoman of Gonerby' a month later. He appears with this name and title again in 1593 and 1596, but in a 1597 conveyance he has no title. In the years 1598, 1601, 1602, 1603 and in 1604 he was pardoned by King James by the title 'yeoman of Gonerby'.⁵⁷ In 1607 he was for the first time recognised as a 'gentleman of Gonerby', and he appeared again as a gentlemen in 1608. He was back to being a yeoman in 1610 when he was recorded as such by a clerk and he paid £700 of silver for the manor of 'Pullockes' in Ropsley to his cousin Ralph Kelham. Hickson

57 LRO, MON3-29-2, 1592, and MON3-29-91; MON3-29-6 and MON3-27-85, 1593 ; MON3-29-72 and MON7-12-249, 1596; MON3-29-73, 1597; MON3-27-86, 1598; MON3-29-31, 1601; MON3-27-88, 1602; MON3-29-71, 1603; MON3-30-58, 1604, Royal Pardon.

was in fact both yeoman and gentleman in 1610, as he is given the latter name in a lease for 1,000 years at Barrowby. After his purchase of Ropsley manor he settled there as a gentleman and appeared in numerous further transactions.⁵⁸ In 1613 he was called master or mister by the inhabitants of his Heydour manor as they complain of depopulation and enclosure, then a year later he was both yeoman and gentleman on the same day. Between 1614 and 1619 he was less unstable and had a steady-state identity – that of 'gentleman of Ropsley'.⁵⁹ In 1620 all this changed. He was still living at Gonerby, but now he was 'esquire' though a few months later he was gentleman again. He was collector of subsidies for hundreds around Grantham in 1621 and made Sheriff of Lincolnshire in November 1621 and appointed an under-sheriff all by the name of esquire.⁶⁰ In 1620 and 1621 he was named 'gentleman of Ropsley' a different residence to his apparent Gonerby abode.⁶¹ He acquired Barkston manor in 1622 and the licence to alienate the manor from James I was by the title of esquire. This lasted for a few years until in 1630 he became 'esquire of Aunsby' until 1632 when he reverted to his status as 'esquire of Gonerby'.⁶² It is probably he who was sheriff of Rutland in 1633 as esquire, and when Hickson made his will, which is dated 2 October 1640, he called himself esquire. This lasted until his death at a significant age in 1641

58 LRO, MON3-30-16, 1607 ; MON3-30-18, 1608; MON3-27-90, 1610; MON3-31-49 (yeoman); MON3-30-19 and MON3-28-37 (gentleman); MON3-30-50, 1611 (yeoman); MON3-30-20, 1612 (gentleman).

59 LRO, MON7-11-15, 1613; MON3-29-93, 15 Apr 1614 (yeoman) and MON3-27-39 (gentleman); MON3-30-51, 1615 .

60 HMSO, *List of Sheriffs for England and Wales from the earliest times to A.D. 1831 compiled from documents in the Public Record Office*, (London, 1898).

61 LRO, MON3-27-93; MON3-30-23 (cf. 1616, MON3-30-21).

62 LRO, MON3-30-7, 1620 (esquire) and MON3-27-93 (gentleman); MON3-32-517, 1621 (subsidy collector) and MON3-30-63 (sheriff); MON3-30-64; HILL 23/615 (sheriff's return); MON3-30-4, 1622 ; MON3-27-98, 1630 and MON3-31-48; MON3-27-99, 1632.

when he was recorded by the presiding clergyman as 'Richard Hickson, Esquire, buried 14 January'.⁶³

The social process of making a gentleman by writing can also be found in the depositions made to the honour court. In some cases there are glimpses of the negotiated quality of titles committed to writing. John Wenlock, an Essex gentleman scrivener for John Leming, said he had written many documents for him over twelve years styling him ironmonger, he once wrote Leming as 'gentleman' but Leming 'did seeme to dislike of it', and it was erased. Gentlemen were known to do the erasing to degrade another.⁶⁴

Thomas's only son John Newton was a ward of king Charles as a fourteen year old on the death of his father in 1640. Thomas asked his half-brother Richard Hickson to 'be a kind uncle to my sonne ... (and arrange that) my sonne maie be brought upp with learninge'. As the son of a gentleman he was the first of our subjects who could claim to be a gentleman by the birthright narrative. That a gentleman was made by birth was a commonplace, a gentleman was one who was the son of a gentleman. Sir Thomas Smyth held that gentlemen were those 'whom their blood and race does make noble and known' or in fewer words 'old riches or prowess remaining in one stock'.⁶⁵ The deponents in the chivalry court depositions frequently turned to this trope to justify their claim to gentility.⁶⁶ Birth had its own

63 List of sheriffs. LRO, 1641, Gonerby parish register. He must have been around 70 years old at his death.

64 HCCD, Case 367, January 1637, Leming v Clopton. See also Case 691, Watson v Filcot.

65 Smyth, *De Republica*, 26.

66 HCCD, Case 17, no date, Babington v Atkyns; Case 406, Easter 1635, Mantell v Sampson; Case 79, November 1637, Bucknell v Leyfield; Case 569, May 1639, Rugely v Smith. See also Case 624,

precedency.⁶⁷ Descent from a knightly person or family together with antiquity could confer gentility.⁶⁸ Merely being born of a gentleman was not always enough, gentlemen newly made by the heralds were scorned and called 'gentlemen of the first head'.⁶⁹ Many plaintiffs, defendants and witnesses went to some trouble to claim long descents from an original gentle ancestor. Various claims to antiquity were made, with sixty years, including 100, 300, and 500 years. Some of them being so old as to be at the very earliest ever mentions of gentlemen.⁷⁰ Two families both claimed descent from in continuous succession from the time of the conquest, whilst another claimed just three years.⁷¹ This was in contrast to the length of time that parishioners referred to when assessing the gentility or otherwise of one of their number, which was sometimes said to be seven years, whilst for others it echoed the test of customary right, one referring to 'tyme beyond the memorie of man'.⁷² These examples illustrate that the degree of antiquity drawn upon was clearly highly diverse and contested, and rested (at least) variously on quantitative measures, historical measures, and customary measures. The birthright narrative, though simple to state, was problematic. The problems did not end there. If gentility was a question of birth then knowledge of the social status and title of

Stepkin v Dobbins.

67 HCCD, Case 353, February 1636, Kingston v Copely. See also Case 226, Michalmas 1635, Freeman v Hartell; Case 461, no date, Newman v Freeman; Case 563, March 1636, Robartes v Samuel; Case 567, May 1635, Rowden v Mace.

68 HCCD, Case 3, Trinity term (April) 1638, Amcotts v Shuttleworth; Case 123, May 1639, Constable v Constable; Case 644, June 1640, Thorold v Trumbell; See also Case 97, Carnaby v Johnson and Carnaby.

69 Smyth, *De Republica*, 26.

70 HCCD, Case 284, July 1640, Hassell v Fletcher. See also Case 221, November 1637, Fowke v Barnefield. Case 123, Constable v Constable.

71 HCCD, Case 353, Pierrepont, earl of Kingston v Copley; Case 26, June 1637, Ballard v Kestian.

72 HCCD, Case 267, January 1636, Gwyllim v Roberts; See also Case 64, Brandling v Southgate for this formulation.

the father was key to an assessment of the status of the person. Francis Jefferies, a Kentish yeoman, said of his antagonist Edward Doyley that instead of being a gentleman Doyley's father 'might be a sheppard for ought he knew'.⁷³ A yeoman too was made by birth.⁷⁴ Plebeian women passed this quality to their sons, one of whom was said not to be a gentleman because his 'mother did use to ride upon a payre of panniers to Barneslie market to sell butter or soape'.⁷⁵ The paradox of birth lies in the endless chains of nominations, the absence of an origin. If every gentleman is born of a gentlemen, who was the first gentleman?⁷⁶ As a title its origins are very early and very cloudy, and certainly early medieval. However, birthright was far from the only basis for claims to gentility.⁷⁷

Returning to John Newton, the first to qualify as a native gentleman (born not bred), was soon called by the name, and raised to the higher status, of esquire by his uncle William Blythe of Stroxtun.⁷⁸ By 1646 John was temporarily settled and each time he baptised one of his four sons and thirteen daughters at Heydour between 1646 and 1661 the rector (his kinsman Henry Pight) recorded him in the

73 HCCD, Case 170, February 1640, Doyley v Jefferies.

74 HCCD, Case 196, October 1639, Eure v Harris; Case 678, July 1639, Walter v Stepney.

75 HCCD, Case 353, February 1636, Kingston v Copley. See also Case 461, no date, Newman v Freeman; Case 199, May 1638, Eyre v Keresforth; Case 563, March 1636, Robartes v Samuel, Case 567, May 1635, Rowden v Mace; Case 540, Poyntz v Coxe.

76 John Ball famously recounted this paradox.

77 For accounts of very early development of the title see: John Gillingham, 'Thegns and Knights in Eleventh-Century England: Who Was Then the Gentleman?', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1995), pp. 129-153. Peter Coss, *The origins of the English gentry* (Cambridge, 2003), and *The foundations of gentry life: the Multons of Frampton and their world, 1270-1370* (Oxford, 2010), and 'Knights, Esquires and the Origins of Social Gradation in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1995), pp. 155-178. Colin Richmond, 'The rise of the English gentry 1150-1350', *The Historian*, 26 (1990), pp. 14-18. See E. Acheson, *A gentry community: Leicestershire in the fifteenth century, c.1422-c.1485* (Cambridge, 1992) for the view that the title resulted from the Statute of Additions of 1413 requiring writs and indictments to record status, however the forgoing shows otherwise.

78 LRO, LCC 1649 ff.454r-458r, January 1645.

Heydour register with the title esquire.⁷⁹ In 1646 he was sequestered by the Lincoln commissioners for the Parliament, and he was now styled a 'delinquent', and his title before the commissioners for sequestration was 'Master'. Henry Pelham reported for the Committee to the parliament in the same year and ordered that the forces in Lincolnshire be paid from various delinquents including John Newton, styling him 'Mr', however, a few months later he appealed for his case to be heard by the Commons, and in January 1647 they did so and agreed to his composition of £3,000, calling him 'of Haveresquire'. In the following year on 30 March he was pardoned by the parliament and his sequestration taken off (discharged), in the name of 'esquire' still 'of Haver', and a month later he was 'Mr' again, this time before the Committee for Advancement of Money. He was pardoned under the great seal, but the order from parliament gave him no title.⁸⁰

The 1650 parliament survey of Grantham and its soke, one of the manors and possessions of the King and Queen, listed John Newton in the lower rank of gentleman and lord of the manor of Barkston. William Hodgkinson, the clerk of the Grantham corporation, consistently wrote him as esquire, firstly as his fine was returned to him after being made a freeman of Grantham, in anticipation of his standing for the town in 1660, then in the returning indenture, in the certificate of his election, and again by others – the clerk to the Committee for Privileges and Elections after a double return in the said election.⁸¹

79 LRO, 1646 Heydour register.

80 TNA, CAM, Vol. A 104, p 34, 1646 (delinquent); SP20/2, f386, 1646 (sequestration) ; JHC, 1647 Vol. 5, 64-6; TNA, CAM, Vol. A 104, p35, 18 April 1648; JHC, Vol. 6, 231-232, (pardon), 13 June 1649.

81 TNA, E317/Lincs19, 1650 (survey); JHC, 13 Jun 1659, 5 Aug 1659, and 11 Jan 1660; Joad Raymond, 'John Streater and The Grand Politick Informer', *The Historical Journal* 41:2 (1998), pp. 567-574; LRO, MON3-28-50, 25 Oct 1660 (commission). LRO, MON7-11-50, election certificate; JHC, Vol. 8.

In the same year he was appointed a Gentleman of the privy chamber extraordinary, by the title of esquire. It gave him privileged personal access to the King. Under Charles I there were a limited number of these men, but after Charles II's restoration there were 490 of them in 1667.⁸² During this time he was called gentleman in the lists of men proposed to be made Knight of the Royal Oak. The Knights of the Royal Oak was an order of knighthood intended by Charles II at the time of his restoration as a reward for several of his followers who had 'adhered faithfully to him in his distresses'.⁸³

In May 1661 he gave money to rebuilt St. Wulfram's spire, and though still an esquire he nevertheless appears on the list after the nobles and with the title 'Sir John Newton Bart.'.⁸⁴ By 6 August 1661 John Newton was 'Knight and Baronet, at the Sugar Lofe', when he had not yet risen above esquire. A patent making Sir John Newton at Barr's Court in Gloucestershire a Baronet was dated a year previously. A special remainder in the patent making his Lincolnshire namesake the heir to this title was included in the patent, but the first baronet was very much alive. John Newton's title as 'esquire' never really settled, but the doubt was put rest on 14 February 1662 when he became second baronet by the special remainder.⁸⁵ In succeeding letters, mortgages, leases, conveyances his name was written 'Sir John Newton, Baronet'. The title of baronet was an hereditary title but

pp. 35-36. (*British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol8/pp35-36>, accessed 20 July 2016).

82 TNA, LC3/2, Records of the Lord Chamberlain, 1660; Nicholas Carlise, *An inquiry into the place and quality of the Gentleman of His Majesty's most honourable privy chamber* (London, 1829), 159.

83 William Dugdale, *Antient usage*.

84 Turnor, *Grantham*, 6. This could be Turnor's error, a late production by writing.

85 TNA, C66/2977/5, patent in English re discharge of a baronet's fee, 11 August 1660; C66/2922/7, patent in Latin, 16 August; LRO, MON7-14-4, 23 February 1661, John Cradock alias Newton to John Newton. He was buried in Bristol Cathedral on 21 February, Bristol RO, Bristol Cathedral Register.

not one of the peerage, standing in precedence between a baron and a knight bachelor. Its use was renewed by James I in 1611. Notionally it was an acknowledgement of financial assistance to the Crown sufficient to maintain thirty foot soldiers in Ireland for three years at 8d a day, commuted to a payment of £1,095. No-one was to be admitted to the rank save those who were 'upon good proof ... men for quality, state of living, and good reputation, worthy of the same', and descended of a grandfather by the father's side who bore arms, and have a yearly revenue in lands of inheritance in possession of £1,000.⁸⁶ Why was a special remainder put in the patent? This question has vexed antiquarians for centuries.⁸⁷ The two Newtons were known to each other before the Restoration, as we saw in chapter two, and by some accounts there was an attempt to match John Newton's son with one of John Newton alias Cradock's daughters, which came to nothing. Claims and counter-claims in the chancery court over the next few decades followed.⁸⁸ He was mistaken for the attorney general by Joan Trotter, begging for her son to be taken as a servant, and as member of parliament for Lincolnshire, when he was burgess for Grantham.⁸⁹

Military rank was occasionally implied to prove or adduce gentility. John Newton was first made a captain (though a boy) at Newark, and then in rapid succession a

86 William Newton, *A display*, 330

87 Notes and Queries, Second series, Vol. 1, 351; Third Series Vol. 1, p190 (1862) in reply to a letter in the same year, 3rd Series Vol. 1, 158.

88 See Chapter 2, 'Gathering land: Purchases'. The chancery cases are TNA, C3/455/33, 1662, Stone v Newton; TNA, C6/168/40, 1664, Elizabeth Dillon (alias Sarsfeild) and Penelope Palmer v Sir John Newton Bt., Anthony Eyre and Dame Grace Newton, property in Barr's Court; TNA, C5/476/83, and C6/252/56, 1684, Elvard v Newton; TNA, C22/1019/22, Sir John Newton v James and Elizabeth Elvard, and Anna Palmer re East Harptree manor.

89 For solicitor general see D1844-C20-2; For member for Lincolnshire see MON7-12-14.

lieutenant, captain, then colonel in 1659, and deputy lord-lieutenant of Lincolnshire in 1662, then Gloucestershire from 1669.⁹⁰ William Harrison said that those who give service as a captain 'in the warres' or good counsell given at home, whereby his commonwealth is benefited may also be accounted a gentleman', but only after the heralds have thereby granted him a coat of arms, which he says are made by a charter pretending 'antiquity and service'.⁹¹ An aged gentleman of seventy-one years deposed that William Hudson was a gentleman by his 'good descent, rank and quality' and his being a captain in one of Surrey's trained bands.⁹²

We saw that university education was held to gentlemanly, though again the causality is circular, sometimes the university made the gentleman, sometimes it confirmed him. Sir John Newton was gentleman and esquire whilst not university educated whilst his eldest son Richard was entered as a fellow-commoner to Trinity College Cambridge in 1664, the first of the three ranks in which students were admitted, sharing his cousin Isaac Newton's tutor Benjamin Pulleyn. He made little impression on the archive but was called esquire by his cousin William Blythe of Stroxtton in 1669.⁹³ His brother Thomas Newton was admitted to Christchurch College, Oxford. His tutor Dr John Fell 'prepared to settle him in the condition

90 JHC, 13 January 1660; LRO, MON3-28-50, 26 October 1660, Montague Bertie to John Newton. Bertie was Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire and second earl of Lindsey (1608-1666), succeeded by his son Robert Bertie, the third earl (d.1701). John Newton served under both. See also lists of knights, esquires and gentlemen in John Newton's hand, possibly nominees for officership of the militia, LRO, MON7-11-57 and 58. For lists of the foot raised in Holland and Kesteven naming one Captain and the number of footmen in each wapentake see LRO, MON7-11-71; LRO, MON3-28-51, 15 July 1662, list of deputy lieutenants. He retained the office until some time before 1680. He held the same post in Gloucestershire in 1669 until February 1688. Between 1669 and 1680 he held the deputy office in two counties.

91 William Harrison, *The description of Britain and England* (London, 1587).

92 HCCD, Case 314, February 1638, Hudson v Vicars.

93 W. W. Rouse Ball, J. A. Venn (eds.), *Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge*, 5 Vols., (London, 1913-16), he is omitted from J and J. A. Venn (eds.), *Alumni*; LRO, 1669/ii/593, LCC wills.

which Mr Eyre and your self though most convenient for him, that of a Commoner', but Thomas insisted on being entered a gentleman commoner, 'pretending that it was left to his option'. A gentleman commoner at Oxford was the highest rank of student and intended for 'lords, knights and gentlemen of good place in the commonwealth', at least according to one college. They were expected to live better and spend more than the others, or face social censure.⁹⁴ Jack Newton was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge, as a pensioner, the second of the three ranks. The titles given to sons and fathers showed remarkable ambiguity and variation. The fathers of entrants to two Cambridge colleges were both gentlemen and esquires, and Stone found the 'status-category of gentleman used in the surviving registers .. both vague and volatile.'⁹⁵

Three of the four sons were sent to Gray's Inn, none was given a title, even though many other sons of gentlemen, and esquires were given those titles. Richard was admitted on 8 November 1666, Jack Newton on 8 May 1672 and Gervase Newton on 1 July 1679.⁹⁶ Jack Newton remained esquire, for example when he was admitted to the freedom of Grantham corporation in 1679, when his daughter Cary was baptised at Heydour by Isaac Carter on 10 June 1680, when his wife Abigail was buried at Heydour by Carter in 1686.⁹⁷ Gervase, though second surviving son, was described as eldest son in 1693, and was esquire in all

94 LRO, MON7-13-247, 8 March 1670; Stephen Porter, 'University and society' in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *Seventeenth century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), 37.

95 Cressy, 'Describing the social order', 36; Stone, 'The educational revolution in England, 1560-1640, *Past and Present*, 29 (1964), 58 cited in Cressy, *ibid*, 36.

96 Joseph Foster, *The register of admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889* (London, 1889).

97 LRO, GHB, f660v, 29 January 1679; LRO, Heydour register.

documents.⁹⁸

These extensive and detailed records allow for this examination of the use of titles at the micro-level, and though it may appear trivial it reveals an unexpected result. The shift from husbandman to esquire over four generations, whilst it is interesting in itself, is far from uniform and actually disguises even more variation. Not only did titles change between generations, they also changed within a generation, changed with a single person, and changed back and forth. Instead of a smooth transition from one status to a higher one there was actually considerable instability at a micro-level. We can see from the foregoing that the husbandman, John Newton, had produced seven sons, of which all six traceable men were labelled as yeoman. The fourth yeoman William had two sons – John and Thomas, the first accounted a yeoman and a gentleman, the second a yeoman, gentleman and esquire. Hickson had multiple names. John Newton oscillated between gentleman and esquire. This was not an isolated phenomena. Rapid status mobility up and down was already evident in the 1400s, with one man first a yeoman then a gentleman two years later, and another a gentlemen then a yeoman three years later.⁹⁹

The writing of the heralds themselves was sought out as evidence of (prior) gentility, but in fact helped to produce it.¹⁰⁰ Forgeries of pedigrees were made by

98 See for example Somerset RO, DD/GB/149/45, 17 February 1693; TNA, PROB11/626.

99 Acheson, *Gentry community*, 43-44.

100 HCCD, Case 45, Billiard v Robinson. See also Case 151, Neville v Davy.

heralds. Men could purchase 'a coat and (have) arms bestowed upon him by heralds (who in the charter ... do of custom pretend antiquity and service, and many gay things)', another quipped in rhyme that 'a herald can make a gentleman scarce a year old to be descended of a race, of ancient kings in a small space, .. and what is more for a piece of coin, twist any name into the line'.¹⁰¹ Faking pedigrees was common. The Townshend family of Norfolk faked their pedigree for a visitation to disguise their farming origins.¹⁰²

There is evidence that the Cradock alias Newtons of Barr's Court forged their pedigree. A confirmation of arms was granted to Sir John Newton in 1567. Descended from Sir Richard Newton, a Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Sir John claimed that his family came from an ancient princely stock in Wales. According to Sir John Newton his ancestor Sir Richard was 'properly' Sir Richard Cradock but the name Newton came by 'error and use', and helpfully passed this information to John Leland, who recorded it in his Itinerary.¹⁰³ There is very strong armorial evidence which contradicts the Cradock claim. Sir Richard Newton, the judge, lived at Yatton in Somerset and his son John Newton was a Lancastrian knight of the shire for Somerset in 1453, returned as an esquire, knighted in 1471. Contemporary armorial evidence gives this man's coat of arms as a green shield with a pair of silver crossed thigh-bones, a highly unusual device which differs from

101 Harrison, *Description*; William J. Thoms, *The book of the court, exhibiting the origin, peculiar duties, and privileges of the several ranks the nobility and gentry more particularly of the great officers of state and members of the Royal Household* (London, 1838), 149.

102 W. Rye, *A history of Norfolk* (London, 1885), 29-31.

103 Lucy Toulmin Smith (ed.), *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, Vol. 5, (London, 1910), pp. 84-86.

the Lincolnshire coat only by the colour of the shield.¹⁰⁴ The Cradock coat is silver with a blue chevron between three gold wheat-sheaves, and quite different to the Newton thigh-bones device.¹⁰⁵ This evidence points to a conclusion that Sir John Newton falsified his pedigree in 1567, but the herald's writing gave it gravity and authority. The evidence suggests a common Newton ancestor in or before the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁰⁶

Gentility was not only made discursively by writing, but also by speaking. A man's gentility could be publicly and positively acknowledged by gentlemen and plebeians alike. The chivalry court was also full of plaintiffs complaining of being verbally denied the title and honour of gentleman. The suits which sometimes followed led to plaintiffs, defendants and witnesses making statements confirming or denying one or other's gentility. At the conclusion of a case the Earl Marshal or his deputy could pronounce on or deny the defendant's status, and an unsuccessful defendant could be ordered to speak a submission – a public statement of their opponents gentility. At visitations men could be ordered to disclaim any right to arms or to use the addition of gentlemen or esquire. Positive statements of another man's gentility were rarely captured by the chivalry court depositions, however Christopher

104 Altering the shield colour as a difference whilst retaining the central device was an old practice, see the two Sir William de Ros's with red and blue shields and the characteristic three water bougets in Nicholas Harris Nicholas, *A Roll of Arms of the Reign of Edward the Second* (London, 1829), 136.

105 Josiah C. Wedgwood and Anne D. Holt (eds.), *History of Parliament: Biographies of the members of the commons house 1439-1509*, Volume 1 (London, 1936), xlv, 631-2 and Volume 2 frontispiece (plate of coats of arms); Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 101-102; For further evidence see John Newton of Crabaton, Devon who came out of Somerset in Frederic Thomas Colby (ed.), *The Visitation of the County of Devon In the Year 1620* (Harleian Society, 6, 1872), 198; and Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales; comprising a registry of armorial bearings from the earliest to the present time* (London, 1884); For a fifteenth-century Derbyshire branch see Nichols, *The Herald and Genealogist*, 357.

106 See Conclusion: 'Stability and continuity: gentry longevity'.

Slater a yeoman 'acknowledgeth himself to be far inferior' to Sir John Rodes.¹⁰⁷

Submissions were public affirmations of a man's gentility together with an apology.

They were spoken by the losing defendant bare-headed and in a loud voice mostly in public places, the market place, standing on a stile, in the churchyard, in the church, the assizes, and more rarely in the Painted Chamber, but were sometimes 'distainful' rather than regretful.¹⁰⁸ The heralds had the power to order a man to be publicly disclaimed by 'common cryer' in the market place near their 'usual place of abode'.

Witnesses in the honour court were involved in producing gentlemen. They were required to respond to the libel which often included a statement of the plaintiff's qualification to gentle status. Their answers either confirmed or denied that gentility. Consent was not always obtained: one yeoman refused to answer that part of the libel.¹⁰⁹ Sentences including the honour court by the Earl Marshal were verbal acts making a gentleman. This was recognised by some and could be heard spoken in the parishes of England. Edward Doyley was heard 'speaking that my Lord Marshall made a difference betweene a gentleman and a yeoman', and Walter Fowke in a dispute over unpaid debt told Richard Barnefield that the Lord Marshal would 'make him know the difference between us'.¹¹⁰ However, judges were also said to unmake a gentleman. An adverse verdict in the Star Chamber was said to

107 HCCD, Case 564, May 1636, Rodes v Slater senior and junior; the counter-suit is Case 597; The Newton correspondence is replete with affirmations of their gentility, salutations of 'your worship', 'your honour', 'Sir', 'Worthy Sir' and so on begin every letter.

108 See for example HCCD, Case 634 - standing on a stile, Case 651 - in the Painted Chamber, Case 653 - at quarter sessions, Case 639, 638, and 644 - in church; For a submission by a gentleman see Case 544, May 1639, Prust v Pincombe.

109 HCCD, Case 21, Badd v Rigges. See also Badd's patron joining the libel, Case 167, earl of Dorset v Rigges, and a counter-suit, Case 557, Rigges v Badd.

110 HCCD, Case 170. Case 221, November 1637, Fowke v Barnefield.

have stripped one man of his gentility. Bland countered that his father Thomas had been pardoned, thereby restoring (or remaking) his gentle status.¹¹¹

The evidence is that plaintiffs were especially concerned with the magnitude of the publicity – how often and how widely spread.¹¹² Frequently one of the issues facing a man being libelled was a threat to publish the libel over and over, spreading the defamation around the community.¹¹³ Some were accused of bragging about their libellous speeches.¹¹⁴ Gentility was evidently a matter not of fact, but of repute. Repute was in terms of a complex system the exchange (reproduction and copying) of narratives featuring a social individual. Most witnesses deposed not that they knew someone to be a gentleman, but that that person was reputed one, or that they had heard it said, or they were commonly accounted one.¹¹⁵ Good repute and credit could be allied together.¹¹⁶ If gentility could be identified by common repute then so could other negative labels. Bad repute and credit were allied together, just as good credit was.¹¹⁷

In the parish it was the shared community experience which produced gentility, and witnesses reported that gentlemen were reputed, or accounted, or taken for, or

111 HCCD, Case 180, abt October 1635, Garton v Bland. See also Case 406, Henry Mantell v Alexander Sampson.

112 HCCD, Case 678, July 1639, Walter v Stepney, Stepney and Stepney. See also *ibid*, Case 406.

113 HCCD, Case 645, October 1639, Thymelby v Hills.

114 HCCD, Case 661, Vaux v Cheney. See also Case 169, June 1639, Dowman v Faulcon, and Case 520, Pincombe v Prust; Case 3, Trinity term 1638, Amcotts v Shuttleworth. A related case in the Star Chamber concerned Robert Callis, a relation of Richard Hickson, and Amcotts and Shuttleworth in 1619, one of the witnesses was John Newton's uncle. For concerns about 'persons of good credit' Case 208, Fisher v Perkes; Case 298, Hitchcock v Clement. For 'diverse witnesses' Case 634, Sydenham brothers v William Cruse. For 'multitudes of people' and 'open streets' see Case 729, no date, Wortham v Fawcett.

115 HCCD, Case 4, June 1638, Andrewes v Farmer.

116 HCCD, Case 68, February 1640, Brome v Woodman.

117 HCCD, Case 108, November 1637, Claxton v King.

lived in the manner, of a gentleman. The depositions show a marked concern over notoriety, fame – bywords for the scope and scale of that narrative's social reproduction. Gentlemen were parochial productions, resulting from living among other parishioners.¹¹⁸ Public display of liveried servants was part of this parochial production.¹¹⁹ Some failed the test of living in the fashion of a gentleman.¹²⁰

Mediation in parochial disputes was an important part of producing gentility. Making speeches was part of this process.¹²¹ It was the interventions of servants, clergy, friends and neighbours who shared in beating the gentility of these men into shape. In reconciling them they participated in a social ceremony acknowledging that each was a gentleman. However, stirrers of conflict could in effect do the same. When Richard Somers, an attorney and a grand juryman, egged William Dingley to press his case in the chivalry court it was after Dingley had made up his differences having 'pledged each other, lovingly and friendly' over a pot of wine.¹²²

Making the gentleman physically

The writing of the appellation 'gentlemen' or 'esquire' on a page after a name, or painted on a plaque, or written on a notice in a church, or chiselled into marble or Ancaster stone, was part of the discursive production of gentility (by marks and

118 See above, HCCD, Case 21, Badd v Rigges.

119 HCCD, Case 367. Case 684, June 1638, Warner v Lynch.

120 HCCD, Case 24, Baker v Spenser.

121 HCCD, Case 6, Crayford v Argent; See also HCCD, Case 45, May 1637, Billiard v Robinson. For a successful reference to 'good neighbours' and a certified joint declaration to accept certain conditions of peace see Case 127, Cooper v Billops; For a failed mediation by yeoman, and a vain request for mediation before sentence see Case 317, Hungate v Reynolds.

122 HCCD, Case 161, May 1639, Dingley v Maulton.

narratives), but it was also a physical process. Protecting a manuscript which evidenced real estate title in a box, as we saw Sir Jack Newton doing, was much like holding a pedigree, the title to gentility. The custody of manuscripts guarding against theft or fire or vermin was a major concern to gentlemen, another left it in his brother's custody'.¹²³ The security demanded of writing, as evidence of title, was as we saw repeated for borough charters, pedigrees, and property deeds. The risk was not only theft but fire. If gentility could be made discursively by writing it could be destroyed by destroying the writing by fire.¹²⁴

If making the marks of gentility in the form of arms could help to make a gentleman, then the opposite – breaking or damaging those marks – could unmake a gentleman. The heralds knew this and their powers extended to destroying the marks of gentility in portraits, churches and by defacing seal rings. The heralds were empowered by the crown: 'to reverse, pull down, or otherwise deface ... coat arms, helmets, banners, standards, pennons, and hatchments of tents and pavilions; as also in plate, jewels, paper, parchment, windows, grave-stones, tombs or monuments.'¹²⁵ Edmund Underwood for example had his seal ring defaced.¹²⁶ Seal engravers fabricated coats of arms in brass and gold for their clients.¹²⁷ Painter-stainers likewise produced painted coats of arms for display, and manufactured pedigrees.¹²⁸ In 1638 John Woodhall, a barber-surgeon of London, was charged

123 See above HCCD, Case 567, May 1635, Rowden v Mace.

124 HCCD, Case 123, May 1639, Constable v Constable; The counter-suit is Case 124, June 1639.

125 Edmondson, *Heraldry*, 158-159.

126 HCCD, Case 180, May 1634, Arthur Duck v Edmund Underwood.

127 From the Latin *fabricare* 'to make, construct, fashion, build'.

128 HCCD, Case 181, May 1634, Duck v Winchell.

with obtaining a false escutcheon with a forged mark of one of the heralds, Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms.¹²⁹ Similarly a knight's title could also be destroyed physically, breaking sword and spurs.¹³⁰

Like real estate and credit the extent to which gentlemen were produced by physical means extended to the body of the gentleman and the plebeian themselves. The Earl Marshal had the power to imprison malefactors in the Marshalsea. This often interfered with the prisoner's ability to maintain their business and livelihood, which put them in a double jeopardy. A father and son team found themselves imprisoned in the Marshalsea in around 1637, and were forced to petition Arundel for their release as they had 'divers suits in lawe' which 'must needs fall to the grounde' if they were not freed. In praying for his lordship's long life and much increase in honour, they helped to produce his gentility whilst denying their own.¹³¹

There were no true gentlemen. In a complex material system all gentlemen are copies. The original gentleman was always preceded by an earlier 'original' gentleman, and therefore not original, each is the first and also the second.¹³² In this sense all gentlemen were fabricated, made by someone. The question was not whether they were real or not, but who made them. The heralds and the Earl

129 HCCD, Case 182, March 1638, Duck v Woodhall; See also Case 450, Morris v Woodhall, Case 727, Woodhall v Morris, and Case 5, Andrews v Morris for more of Richard Morris in the Company of Barber Surgeons.

130 See James Dalloway, *Inquiries into the Origin and Progress of the Science of Heraldry in England with explanatory observations on armourial ensigns* (London, 1793), 303.

131 HCCD, Case 648, Tracy v Longe and Longe; See also Case 24, Baker v Spencer and Case 595, Seaward v Ebdon.

132 Original is from the Latin *originalis* 'beginning, source or birth'.

Marshal, and the civil lawyers going about their business in the honour court were not engaged in a process of determining whether the men who came before them in the Painted Chamber at Whitehall were gentlemen or not, they were engaged in a process of producing gentlemen. Whilst some men were found by the court to be plebeian in one case, they could counter-sue later as a gentleman.¹³³ Newton gentility was made by their tenants, their neighbours, Grantham freemen and its corporation, paupers, the almsmen they nominated, the rectors they instituted. Gentlemen in early modern England were made not only by contested but positive discursive and physical exchanges but also by the tacit acceptance of those activities. The systemic imperatives of social individuals in a complex adaptive system to copy and reproduce was an acquiescent reinforcing behaviour which itself produced gentility as a narrative. The act of doing nothing was an act of acceptance. It is by its nature impossible to discover positively in the record, it was only when gentility was positively stated or written or both, or when it was denied or its marks destroyed or defaced that its prior ongoing acceptance can be recognised. The newly-made gentility of Sir John Newton's family and his father Thomas were stabilised and reinforced by this enormously cohering imperative. Taken together this social process was a cooperative activity involving a network which implicated everyone. They were not products of themselves alone. One yeoman Jefferies said 'that he could be a gentleman if he would (and) .. he could be a gent if he pleased'. This idea was exceptional. From a complexity

133 For example HCCD, Case 597, Slater v Rodes, yet Slater was found to be plebeian in Case 564. Case 50, Trinity term 1640, Bland v Clarke, yet Bland was found to be plebeian in Case 180, Garton v Bland.

perspective yeoman Jefferies could not be a gentlemen if he pleased, but only if his offers were accepted by those around him. The heralds referred to a presumption which was derived from the Latin *sumere*, to take meaning literally to take beforehand, and a mid thirteenth-century meaning of seizure or occupation without right. It was the self-proclamation, the public self-making of gentility, that offended the heralds, gentlemen could be made they averred, but only by authorised men, not by the unauthorised. John Constable was accused of having 'arrogated and assumed unto himselfe the title of Esquire, and in diverse writings hath written himself with the addition of the title of Esquire'.¹³⁴ The idea of making yourself a gentleman was one which was equated with fraud and forgery.¹³⁵

This economy of gentility produced the variation and diversity in names and coat armour demonstrated above, and was not error but instead a function of a complex system in which titles were produced and changed by iterative social processes with feedback. Offers were made of gentility and those offers were either accepted or rejected. The result of those micro-exchanges was committed to paper by other social individuals, and occasionally (for example when Thomas Newton wrote his own will and called himself gentleman) by the social individual themselves. Titles were committed to paper, parchment or stone by rectors, clerks, scriveners, friends, attorneys, tax assessors, sheriffs, sign-writers and masons.

Changes in economic circumstances, or changes in other titles – such as when one became named as a ward of the king, or heir – changed the terms of the next

134 HCCD, Case 123, *Constable v Constable*; For a yeoman 'entitling himself' gentleman in a bond see Case 546, *Pudsey v Johnson*.

135 HCCD, Case 170; Case 631, February 1635, *Strode v Dawe and Allen*.

micro-exchange when it came. When Hickson became lord of the manor of Ropsley the following social exchanges resulted in the recording of his status advancement from yeoman to gentleman. When Thomas Newton's son died Thomas himself was advanced from gentleman to esquire by the negotiation of his grandson, family, the rector of Bitton, and the mason who fabricated the memorial. Similarly, Thomas's grandfather John Newton the Westby husbandman was elevated in the twentieth-century by his ancestors to the rank of knight.¹³⁶

Gentility and the title gentleman was a flow and not a noun or a thing, a flux of valencies, an economy of identity. It was a collection of competing and diverse stories about social individuals like Sir John Newton recorded as biological structure in the memory of people who knew of them and in marks on paper and in stone. When exchanged it was (like credit, reputation, and gold) a social currency. This narrative identity, as a product of a complex system, had fractal-like qualities with an infinite border, with no definition, and without a category.

Evaluating gentility

For most historians of the gentry it is the possession of landed estates which singled out the gentleman from the rest of society. William Robison claimed that although the group 'showed enormous variety' it enjoyed 'primary common denominators' of land ownership and gentle status derived from not working the land themselves.¹³⁷ In spite of its 'ambiguities' the group was 'not difficult to

136 Archer-Houblon, *The Houblon family*, Vol. 2, 276.

137 'Social structure and ranks' entry in Ronald H. Fritze and William B. Robinson (eds.), *Historical dictionary of Stuart England, 1603-1689*, (Westport, Connecticut and London, 1996).

identify', and consisted of landed proprietors above the yeomanry and below the peerage, well-to-do farmers, 'the more eminent lawyers', divines and 'occasional medical practitioner', 'wealthier merchants' including those who were not younger sons of gentry but received a similar education and moved in the same circles such as to be 'commonly recognised to be socially indistinguishable from them'.¹³⁸ Mingay concludes that 'it is misleading to write as if the gentry formed a homogeneous and uniform social group', but determines that they are a group, identifiable by their sharing 'a common bond of interests forged by ownership of landed property and an appreciation of its advantages and responsibilities' and sharing a cultural bond through a common educational background. Gentlemen were distinguishable from yeomen or land-owning farmers by an 'elusive quality of gentility', a distinction acquired by birth, education, and the wealth and leisure to follow gentlemanly pursuits'.¹³⁹ Some have based their definition of gentry of land tenure and income, setting it at freehold land of at least £10.¹⁴⁰ However, not all gentleman held land in freehold, whilst some yeoman had freehold land income above this, and some gentlemen below it.¹⁴¹ Other non-landed men were accorded gentle status. Stone goes as far as to exclude anyone living in a town, on the grounds that they were social-climbing bourgeois.¹⁴² He concludes that the line between gentleman and commoner was 'hopelessly blurred by the late seventeenth-

138 Tawney, 'Rise of the gentry', 4.

139 G. E. Mingay, *The Gentry, The rise and fall of a ruling class* (London, 1976), 1,3, 188, Introduction and Conclusion.

140 T. B. Pugh, 'The magnates, knights and gentry', in S. B. Chrimes (ed.), *Fifteenth century England 1399-1509* (Manchester, 1972), pp.96-7.

141 Acheson, *Gentry community*, 30.

142 Lawrence Stone, 'The educational revolution in England, 1560-1640', *Past and Present*, 28 (1964), 58.

century, because increasing numbers of bourgeois men of business in the cities and towns... (were) styling themselves Gentleman'.¹⁴³ Rosemary Horrox argued against the necessity for gentility to follow landownership and for an urban gentry in the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁴ Extending gentility beyond landownership and considering the gentleman in the later period of 1700-1914 Penelope Corfield held that the gentleman was in practice 'eclectic. His numbers were legion, although not infinite. In principle his word was his bond; while culturally he strove to blend and civilise the rival claims of the landowner, the businessman, the courtier, the man of letters, the army officer, the respectable leaders of the 'middling' citizenry..'.¹⁴⁵

Gentlemen did not work with their hands. Peacham held that working destroyed nobility and therefore gentility, however some said that such a person got it back when they stopped.¹⁴⁶ Peacham thought that 'whosoever labour for their livelihood and gaine have no share at all in nobility or gentry..the reason is, because their bodies are spent with labour and travaile'. Why a spent body cannot be gentle he does not say, and an active soldier and bearer of arms, a gentleman soldier, labours enormously. However, he immediately excepts 'as the custom of the place determine the contrary'. This double take – both discounting labourers and accepting them – is due to his inability to resolve two conflicting narratives, the commonplace English narrative that gentlemen don't work with their hands with the

143 Stone, *Crisis*, 6-29

144 Rosemary Horrox, 'The urban gentry in the fifteenth century', in J.A.F. Thompson (ed.), *Towns and townspeople in the fifteenth century* (Gloucester, 1988).

145 Penelope Corfield, 'The Rivals: landed and other gentlemen', in N. Harte & R. Quinault (eds.), *Land and society in Britain, 1700-1914: essays in honour of F.M.L. Thompson* (Manchester, 1996), 23.

146 Henry Peacham, *The compleat gentleman* (London, 1622), 13.

narrative of custom, in this case foreign custom. He cites the 'great turk himself is bound to exercise some manual work, for none must be idle'.¹⁴⁷ William Lock implied that those who worked with their hands were not gentlemen, he said of Francis Grove that he was 'not a gentleman, but a mechanik fellow'.¹⁴⁸ The idea that gentlemen were made by men and not God may have been Ball's objection but it had common currency by the sixteenth century at least. Gentility could be merited not only by heroic deeds or civil labours but also by the apprenticeship process in a town context. Francis Groves, styled esquire, complained that his opponent William Lock, a lower ranking gentleman but one by birth, had 'by many disgracefull speeches derogated from Mr Grove's gentilitie saying that he was first an apprentice, then a journeyman and then a master, and soe came to his gentilitie by degrees'. Lock had already argued that he was a gentleman born and would ever remain so.¹⁴⁹ If they were not gentlemen then they could be a yeoman. Richard Ingepen was said to be a yeoman because he 'laboureth in husbandry ordinarily with his own handes, holdeth the plough, maketh hay, (and) selleth his corn att the market', he was a regarder of the New Forest and they were 'accounted yeoman only'. Likewise Thomas Fulwood was no gentleman because he 'doth hedge and ditch, and goe to plow and cart ... offices and labourious workes no befitting a gentleman'.¹⁵⁰

Some held that existing gentility was not undone by taking up a trade.

147 Ibid., 12.

148 HCCD, Case 385.

149 HCCD, Case 385, February 1638, Lock v Grove; Case 265, Lock v Grove.

150 HCCD, Case 325, February 1639, Ingepen v Penny. Case 230, November 1639, Fulwood v Greene.

Chamberlyne does not specifically state that becoming a shop-keeper undid any prior gentility derived from birth, however he did dedicate a long diatribe against it. Husbandry he says has never made a gentleman ignoble, citing classical precedents.¹⁵¹ William Mott, a grocer in Colchester, deposed in the chivalry court that 'those that are gentlemen and soapboylers do not loose their gentilitie'.¹⁵² The polls of electors of the 1620s agreed with this view. The lists are full of occupational descriptions such as 'gentleman-grocer', 'gentleman-tanner', 'gentleman-baker', 'gentleman-draper', and to distinguish them from plebeian tradesmen we find plain 'baker' and 'tanner'.¹⁵³

A narrative of correspondence (one thing matching, suiting or fitting another) offered a connection between rank with wealth. Its application to capital matched income or capital worth to a social rank, so that a peer was imagined to have a fitting income per annum, whilst a knight, esquire and gentleman had equivalent and progressively smaller incomes.¹⁵⁴ This formulation, whilst being very commonly reproduced, was itself highly contested and variable. In the fifteenth century incomes were no guide, as £5 was described as a fair living for a yeoman yet many could spend more than £100 a year, and knighthood was still distrained at £40 a year, implying that a yeoman could bring in and spend more than some knights, and men of £6 a year in 1436 were respectively yeoman and gentleman, in

151 Chamberlyne, *Angliae Notitia*, 344, 349.

152 HCCD, Case 367.

153 Derek Hirst, *Representative?*, Appendix VI, 227.

154 See for example, Harrison, *Description of Britain*; Chamberlyne, *Present state*; Gregory King, *Natural and political observations and conclusions upon the state and condition of England 1696*, printed in Peter Laslett (ed.), *The earliest classics* (Farnborough, 1973).

addition some families were distraised with less than £40 a year. Consideration of the graduated tax returns showed that esquires' income ranged from £6 to £54 with a mode of £26, gentlemen were much poorer with a modal income of £6, with the highest at £8, and many at £5. There was a gulf between gentleman and esquires but there was little economic distinction between these gentlemen and the wealthier peasantry.¹⁵⁵ Mingay reviewed incomes of seventeenth-century gentry and asserted that higher rank or title went with higher incomes. However, the 'situation was confused... by continual fluctuations in family fortunes, with some families rising in wealth above the level normal in their rank' and others falling below it.¹⁵⁶ In practice the income of men across this period, in any status category, was extremely wide, such that for example a gentleman's income significantly overlapped with knights above them and yeomen below them. As a definition or even an indicator of gentility income appeared rarely in the chivalry depositions. Daniel Dobbins, a London merchant, was said to be a gentleman because he lived like a gentleman, 'in good ranke, quality and condicon .. and hath been and is lord of parte of the manor of Kiddermister', he was worth more than £250 per year, and kept a court leet and court baron.¹⁵⁷ Worth in goods was rarely used to delineate a gentleman, but little worth with the implication of poor attire could be used pejoratively. Alexander Sampson called Henry Mantell 'a two penny or three half penny gentleman, or no gentleman but Goodman Mantell', and said he wore a

155 Acheson, *A gentry community*, 35, 42, 43.

156 Mingay, *Aristocracy*, 4. Despite his claim his own table of gentry incomes shows a wide variety, and crossover between ranks, and incomes rising into the nineteenth century, see pp. 11-17.

157 HCCD, Case 624, October 1637, Sepkin v Dobbins.

threadbare coat.¹⁵⁸ The same income test was used to rank yeomen among yeomen so that a man could be 'not .. a yeoman of the better but rather mean quality, as a fermor of small estate and no inheritance at all'.¹⁵⁹ George Penny said of himself that he had a 'good estate and revenues to support him in the degree of gentle'.¹⁶⁰

A gentlemen was expected to pay more toward the costs of the commonwealth, in taxes, in keeping the poor, and in maintaining the militia and foreign wars. A gentlemen, wrote Sir William Vaughan 'must stretch his purse to give liberally unto soldiers and unto them that have need, for a niggard is not worthy to be called a gentleman'.¹⁶¹ This concept of gentility can be found frequently in the chivalry court depositions. John Leming a gentleman was 'sessed as much for armes and services payments for the king as the mayor or any gentleman or alderman in Colchester except the high sheriff of the county of Essex, and that he payeth accordingly'.¹⁶² Tax assessments defined a yeoman in the eyes of the parish and yeomen were ranked among themselves on the same basis.¹⁶³ The birthright narrative and the occupational narrative could come together and conflict with social reality. John Pincombe was reputed to be the son of a clothier from South Moulton in Devon, though styled esquire and an utter barrister, however by the occupational and birthright narratives a clothier could not be a gentleman so neither could his

158 HCCD, Case 406, Mantell v Sampson.

159 HCCD, May 1638, Balleston v Snell, Case 23.

160 HCCD, Case 325.

161 William Vaughan, *The Golden Grove* (London, 1600), Volume 3, Chapter 16.

162 See above HCCD, Case 367.

163 HCCD, EM68, Case 24, Baker v Spencer, August 1637, certificate of Spencer's good behaviour and that Baker was not reputed a gentleman.

son.¹⁶⁴ The narrative of office could conflict with the occupational narrative. Working with the hands for the sovereign did not derogate from gentility, and so a conventionally low-status plebeian occupation such as a skinner could be proof of gentility if it was in the service of Queen Elizabeth, as it was for the grandfather of George Bland. By his grandfather Adam Bland's gentility, evidenced by his royal office, Bland claimed to be a gentleman.¹⁶⁵

The twin qualifications of bearing coat armour and not working also came into conflict, especially in the towns and cities. The visitations of the Heralds in London show that ninety-one per cent of men confirming their right to bear coat armour were the younger sons of county gentlemen.¹⁶⁶ This was partly a product of the narrative of primogeniture, which tended to leave younger sons without an income. The sons were, by the narrative of birthright, gentlemen, but had no right to the income of the paternal estate. The response of their families to this dilemma was to establish them in a profession or trade in London. Both would provide them with an income, and though it required capital it was affordable, and left the estate intact. However, where trade was selected, this solution to an economic need, which was both human and social, conflicted with the narrative that gentlemen do not work with their hands. One source of the competing and incompatible narratives of gentility was economic expediency. Most younger sons of county gentry families had gone into trade in London, or into the church, and their

164 See above HCCD, Case 544.

165 HCCD, Case 241, *Garton v Bland*, Michaelmas 1635. The sergeant skinner was responsible for among other things 'beating and airing' the coronation robes, see Maria Hayward, 'Dressing Charles II: The King's Clothing Choices (1660-85)', *Apparence(s) Online*, 6|2015. <http://apparences.revues.org/1320>

166 J. Grant, 'The gentry of London in the reign of Charles I', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* vii, (1962), pp. 197-199, cited in Earle, *English middle class*, Introduction.

daughters had married London merchants more frequently than local gentry sons.¹⁶⁷ Over a quarter of apprentices in a survey of some prestigious London livery companies were described as the sons of county gentlemen. Apprenticeship in a livery company was a normal and necessary step before trading in the city of London as a freeman. This had the effect of raising the status of trade rather than reducing the status of younger sons trading in London.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion

The aim of applying complexity and deconstruction to the letter-books has produced empirical findings that point to a conclusion that gentility was produced by a social network in three distinct ways. The product of this social network was a gentility that was unstable, a flow rather than a thing, which has been characterised as an economy. This aim has also produced a picture of gentility described in non-trivial but unexpected terms of endless substitutions of signs and people, gaps or absences, and perpetual variation. Extending the evidence to include the Court of Chivalry has demonstrated that this conceptualisation may be extended beyond the case study to gentility more generally, and further, that the diverse narratives of gentility generated by the social network contradicted and competed with each other, a finding which would be expected from a complex system.

167 Everitt, 'Social mobility', 67-68. See also P. Styles, 'The heralds' visitation of Warwickshire 1682-3', *Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 71 (1953).

168 Stephen R. Smith, 'The social and geographical origins of the London apprentices, 1630-1660', *The Guildhall Miscellany*, vol 4, number 4 (April 1973), pp. 195-206; William F Kahl, 'Apprenticeship and the freedom of the London livery companies, 1690-1750', *The Guildhall Miscellany*, vol 7 (August 1956), pp. 17-20; both cited in Earle, *English middle class*, 7.

Chapter 2

Lending land

The Newton family employed estate stewards and house stewards, as well as other domestic servants. Estate stewards dealt principally with tenants and held manorial courts; house stewards were responsible for the desmesne farm, the house and the garden.

The estate stewards were the eyes and ears of the landlord master in the parish and outside it, they were a vital link between landlord and tenant where tenants 'seldom if ever saw the landowner', and they were responsible for the equitable discharge of manorial affairs navigating a difficult path between the interests of the tenants and the landlord, whilst understanding the complexities of English land tenure and custom.¹ But they were much more than this, they were also the brains, and the critical interface between master and tenant, master and servant, master and family, master and neighbour, master and freeholder, master and clergy. Social history study of stewards in early modern England has been thin, though historians have been more generous with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The only full scale study of the seventeenth century has been D. R. Hainsworth's work on tens of thousands of letters to and from stewards of high-ranking nobles in the later Stewart period.² There has been no detailed study of stewards to more

1 J. H. Bettey, 'The eyes and ears of the lord: seventeenth-century manorial stewards in south Wiltshire', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 96 (2003), pp. 19-25; Idem, 'Manorial stewards and the conduct of manorial affairs', *Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society*, 115 (1993), pp. 15-19; Idem, 'Parish life in Dorset during the early 17th century', *Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society*, 114 (1992), pp. 9-12.

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

modest employees save some families discussed in the three brief articles by J. H. Bettey.³ The records of the Newton family stewards help to fill out the scarcity. Hainsworth's nobles were of higher status than the Newton family but the picture of the steward which emerges in his account is very recognisable in the Newton letter-books.⁴

Stewards are identified for the purposes of this study less formally than in the strict sense of those men who conducted the business of a manorial court on behalf of a lord of the manor. Stewards are instead identified as those men and women who were employed by members of the Newton family to conduct estate business generally. Stewards were mostly called servants and the ambiguity of the title is apparent when William Jackson, a long-time steward to Sir John Newton and subsequently to Sir Jack Newton, who was referred to by John Thompson – himself servant to Sir Jack Newton's brother-in-law Francis Stringer – as 'Mr. Jackson, your servant', and when the godson of a steward John Padman called him a bailiff.⁵ The actual term steward was used rarely in the letter-books, but the term servant was used extensively.

The letters begin in 1660 and continue through to the 1730s indicating that the family continually retained between one and up to three stewards in Lincolnshire during the whole of the period 1660 to 1743 and beyond. The pattern of

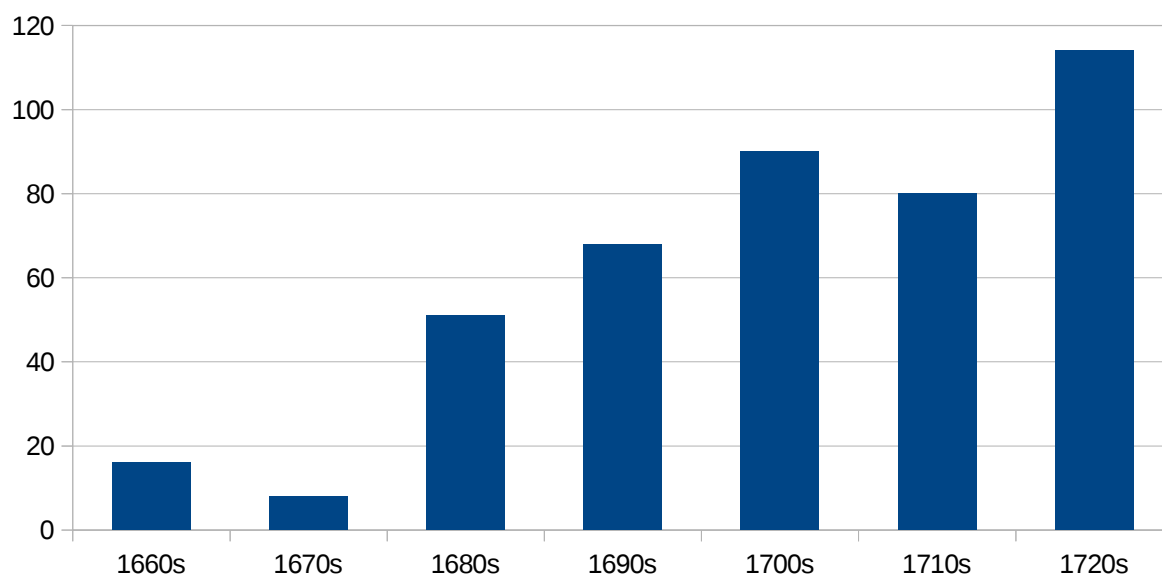
3 Bettey, 'Manorial stewards', for instance John and Leonard Snow, stewards to Sir Joseph Ashe.

4 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 266. The Newton family steward correspondence is omitted from Hainsworth's extensive source list, however William Blathwayt, a neighbour friend and potential father-in-law is mentioned.

5 GRO, D1844-C5-22; GRO, D1844-C14-20.

correspondence shows that estate matters took up a large amount of the Newtons' time, and were a continual concern. The digitised letter-books contain over 487 letters from twenty-one stewards (402 in, 85 out) representing just over twenty-eight per cent of the 1720 digitised letters (nearly thirty-seven per cent if remaining undigitised letters are included).⁶ The number of letters in each decade increases fairly steadily until it reaches a peak in the 1720s (Figure 4), reflecting Sir Jack Newton's continued absence and heightened economic stress.

Figure 7: steward letters, number by decade, 1660-1720



The Newton family also employed domestic servants – nannies, cooks, grooms, coachmen, postilions, man-servants, clerks, gardeners, and most importantly a house steward. The letter-books contain numerous letters from the domestic servants, principally the house steward. There are forty-four letters to and from identifiable

⁶ Including 123 in GRO, D1844/C17 and 20 in D1844/C20.

servants in the letter-books between 1661 and 1739 (forty-one in and three out) including seven letters from a gardener. The number of letters between master and servant is considerably smaller than those between master and steward which reflects the degree to which the servant was not separated in the way that the steward was. The household servant was a trusted companion, and was part of the gentry household. In the same way that the steward was the eyes and ears of the lord in the parish, the house steward was the eyes and ears of the master or mistress in the household.⁷

Who was employed as steward?

During the period before the civil war it is likely that William Parkins was steward to John Newton, though no letters survive. Parkins gave evidence in Newton's favour to the parliamentary authorities, and was the Grantham corporation's attorney. He was also steward to Isaac Newton's grandfather Robert and father Isaac before the latter's death in 1642. He continued to be steward for the natural philosopher until the later 1600s.⁸ Parkins was still keeping manorial courts for Sir John in 1668 at Heydour and Kelby.⁹

John Padman was employed for over a decade and the last few letters indicate

7 For studies of this domestic relationship see Steve Hindle, 'Below stairs at Arbury Hall: Sir Richard Newdigate and his household staff, c1670-1710', *Historical Research*, 85 (2012), pp. 71-88. For detailed studies of servant relations see Timothy Meldrum, *Domestic service and gender: life and work in the London household* (Harlow, 2000); Laura Gowing, 'The haunting of Susan Lay: servants and mistresses in seventeenth-century England', *Gender and History*, 14 (2002), pp. 183-201; Alison Sim, *Masters and servants in Tudor England* (2000); Deborah Youngs, 'Servants and Labourers on a Late Medieval Demesne: The Case of Newton, Cheshire, 1498-1520', *The Agricultural History Review*, 47:2 (1999), pp. 145-160; C. Oestmann, *Lordship and Community: the Lestrange Family and the Village of Hunstanton* (Norwich, 1994).

8 Huntingdon Library, Babson 421.

9 GRO, D1844-C2-10, 11 April.

a rapidly deteriorating health and being 'in physick', so he almost certainly died in service.¹⁰ John Fleck was in Sir John's employment continuously for fifteen years until August 1697, and during two periods worked for both father and son. He moved three times during his service with the family, successively at Culverthorpe, Stroxtun, Great Ponton and Asgarby.¹¹ Richard Pett was employed by Sir John from around 1682, and then Jack Newton's service from about 1685, but disappears within two months of his letter of 31 May 1686 less than three weeks after the death of Jack's wife Abigail, when he recommends a lady of £20,000 to him.¹² He may have remained in service, as a passing reference in 1688 indicates that he had gone to Sir William Ellys's in 'Mr How's place, who is so ill, they despair of his recovery'.¹³ William Jackson's term was shorter at three and a half years, but he kept up a prolific correspondence.¹⁴ The absence of Lincolnshire correspondence from 1700 to 1708 is matched by a surge from Gloucestershire and Yorkshire, from Thomas Dafter at Bitton and Timothy Kiplin and John Dickson in Sheffield and Doncaster respectively. Thomas Slater lived at Culverthorpe until December 1708 when he moved to Heydour, and was almost certainly continuously in service during the period 1699 to 1713, but his most prolific output of ninety letters was in the period of Sir Jack's absence from Culverthorpe between August 1708 and June 1713.¹⁵ His son of the same name, Thomas (2) Slater took over from him after his

10 See GRO, D1844-C2-31, D1844-C3-2, D1844-C3-5.

11 First letter D1844-C4-47, last letter LRO, MON7-12-134.

12 LRO, MON7-12-54.

13 LRO, MON7-14-72, 24 February 1688.

14 First letter MON7-12-65, last letter D1844-C9-22; The John Jackson who tried to remove William Mackinder is probably his son and the 'John Jackson, yeoman of Barkston' (LRO, LCC will 1722 i/93); his wife is probably the 'Sarah Jackson widow of Barkston', (LRO, LCC will 1723/184).

15 GRO, D1844-C26-62, 1705.

death in 1718 and estate business is continued by him through to 1721. His replacement by Sir Jack Newton was not on account of his death, but rather for practical or personal reasons.¹⁶ Between father and son the Slaters' service spanned a period of almost twenty-two years.¹⁷ Thomas Headon lived at Culverthorpe and his service lasted over a decade. The drying up of missives at this time is probably owing to the great age of Sir Jack Newton, who died the following year aged 83.¹⁸ John Calcraft, a Grantham attorney, was one of a family who provided aldermen and officers to the Grantham corporation, and is the only other steward who can be positively identified as an attorney. Calcraft's service of a decade to Sir Jack until April 1719 was followed by service to Sir Jack's son-in-law William Archer until 1727. John Richardson was employed for a shorter period of six years between September 1719 until July 1725, based at either Culverthorpe or Aslackby Park, a few miles south of Culverthorpe, and his employment seems to have been ended by old age, or ill health. He is one of the few stewards who was not obviously succeeded by a son.¹⁹

It appears that at least one steward was retained then at all times at Culverthorpe by Jack Newton. Stewards were employed at Culverthorpe by Jack Newton almost continuously, with gaps of only a few years, from January 1690 until September 1733, a period of over forty-three years.²⁰ The gaps can be explained

16 First letter from Thomas Slater LRO, MON7-12-98, the last is GRO, D1844-C11-26. The will of Thomas Slater is at LRO, LCC ii/156, his inventory MISC WILLS/O/1288. His son is probably the 'Thomas Slater farmer of Anwick' who died in 1740, (LRO, LCC wills).

17 For an even longer (90 years) father and son service relationship see Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 19.

18 First letter - Sir Jack Newton to Headon GRO, D1844-C26-42, last letter 8 September 1733 D1844-C21-9.

19 First letter concerning him GRO, D1844-C9-29, last letter D1844-C26-37; his will in 1727 – LRO, LCC 1727/249, John Richardson, grazier, Aslackby.

20 William Jackson January 1690 to June 1693, John Fleck September 1693 to August 1697, Thomas

by reference to bouts of frequent residence at Culverthorpe, or simply loss.

Sir John Newton was not based permanently at Barr's Court until about 1681, and his son Gervase probably took residence after Sir John's death in 1699 so no correspondence exists until 1704. The Dafter family, first Thomas Dafter, then his wife Mary, were employed in the Gloucestershire estate between at least 1704 and 1730, between them they handled estate matters for the family for nearly three decades.²¹

Marriages and inheritance brought land in Yorkshire, Berkshire, Suffolk, and Buckinghamshire to the husbands, as a result the family employed as many as six stewards.²² Timothy Kiplin was steward for Sir John Bright's Badsworth estate which was managed for his widow Susanna Newton;²³ John Dickson, based in Pontefract, Yorkshire, managed Yorkshire estates inherited by Cary Newton from her grandmother. Across the whole of the period covered by the letter-books there are as many as twenty-one individuals who could be identified as stewards. In addition to the principal stewards numerous others acted briefly or on a one-off basis.²⁴

The social status of stewards varied, some were gentlemen whilst others were affluent yeomen farmers.²⁵ About half of the stewards employed by the family were

Slater May 1699 to June 1713, Thomas (2) Slater 1718 and April 1721; Thomas Headon July 1721 to September 1733.

21 Thomas Dafter from 1704 (MON7-14-102) until June 1713 (C16-12), continued by his widow Mary from 1714 until 1730 (C26-20). For the Dafter family tree see a note in Jack Newton's hand GRO, D1844-C16-1, undated.

22 In 1710 Sir Jack could count John Richardson (Linc.), Thomas Slater (Linc.), Thomas Dafter (Glouc.), John Dickson (Yorks.), John Townend (Yorks.), Timothy Kiplin (Yorks.) as stewards.

23 There are fourteen letters from Kiplin in the letter-books, and others from Sir Jack Newton to Kiplin in Sheffield RO, WWM/Br P/208 1701-1715.

24 GRO, D1844-C2-45, 10 May 1662; LRO, MON7-12-18, 2 June 1662 and MON7-13-68; in the west see GRO, D1844-C10-13; GRO, D1844-C10-20, Roger North to Jack Newton, 7 December 1709.

25 Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 19; Bettey, 'Manorial stewards', 15; Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 23-26.

gentlemen. William Parkins appears in the visitation of Lincolnshire 1634 and he displayed an heraldic seal on his letters.²⁶ Richard Pett likewise used an heraldic seal and his was also quartered.²⁷ George Beaver used a coat of arms in full achievement with a crest of what looks like a horseman on a letter dated 1668.²⁸ John Fleck, a steward in the Lincolnshire estate, used a seal with a distinct coat of arms, an heraldic seal quartered, indicating that his mother or one of his female line was the daughter of an armigerous man.²⁹ Either he or his eponymous son was in dispute with one of the family in 1702, identified as a gentleman.³⁰ Joseph Lawson, servant to Sir Jack in the early 1700s, used an heraldic seal without quartering. Robert Barker who was employed not as a servant but as a contractor for building work at Culverthorpe also boasted a coat of arms.³¹ Thomas Headon was perhaps one of the Headon family who appears in the visitation of Lincolnshire 1562.³² John Calcraft was described as a gentleman in 1702 and a steward of Foston manor.³³ Calcraft and his father of the same name both worked as stewards for Sir Jack Newton and for his nephew William Archer. Both father and son were attorneys and trained in London at the Inns of Court. Some of the stewards employed by the family were middling-sort farmers in their own right, and continued in that business whilst carrying out business for their masters. They did

26 They do not appear in the 1562 and 1592. Nor in the 1666. eg. GRO, D1844-C2-30, 27 June 1661, Parkins to Newton.

27 For Fleck see for example GRO, D1844-C5-20, D1844-C5-35, D1844-C9-10; for Pett see GRO, D1844-C4-5, D1844-C4-9, D1844-C20-3.

28 GRO, D1844-C2-1, 1 April 1688, George Beaver to Sir John Newton.

29 GRO, D1844-C5-18, 15 August 1695.

30 GRO, D1844/L2, answer of the defendant in John Archer, esquire v. John Fleck, gentleman, 1702.

31 For Lawson see for example GRO, D1844-C10-54, for Barker GRO, D1844-C10-153. Robert Barker may have been a son or similar relation to Gervase Barker, Jack Newton's gardener at Culverthorpe.

32 Walter Metcalfe (ed.), *Visitation of the county of Lincoln in 1562-4* (London, 1881), 62.

33 LRO, LD/24/2/1/b/4, 26 January 1702.

not use armorial devices although they all used seals. Some had devices on them, others used a monogram. Thomas Slater, a farmer, used an anchor motif. John Richardson called himself a grazier, and used a monogram as did William Jackson, whose social status is undetermined.³⁴ Both estate and house stewards employed by the family were not related in any way to the family, even very distantly, there was no inter-marriage between the family and the families of stewards or tenant bailiffs. All were very literate and could draw up accounts, read and understand leases and the law concerning tenancies and arrears. Jack Newton's gardener at Culverthorpe was literate at twenty-three, and wrote the first of his seven surviving letters to him at the start of his long relationship with him in May 1689.³⁵

How were they employed, and on what terms?

Good servants were sought after and bad ones were common. Gentry masters competed for good servants and when Thomas Taylor took Thomas Tavenour from Jack Newton the latter's steward complained that Taylor had 'dealt very ill with you (and) given .. me the dog to hold.'³⁶ Many estate owners produced very detailed letters of appointment with 'careful instructions on duties and conduct'.³⁷ Servants were a fact of life and a ubiquitous experience for everyone in seventeenth-century England. Middling sort farmers and tenants of the Newton family like William Mackinder had servants. He was alleged to have got his servant girl pregnant, and

34 For an anchor device see GRO, D1844-C10-139, 18 June 1709, Thomas Slater. For seal devices see for example GRO, D1844-C5-15, William Jackson, GRO, D1844-C11-51, John Richardson, LRO, MON7-14-187. For an example of a monogram see GRO, D1844-C10-74, Timothy Kiplin.

35 GRO, D1844-C4-26.

36 GRO, D1844-C9-5, 2 August 1685, Pett to Newton.

37 Bettey, 'Manorial stewards', 15.

some of his other servants were the source of the allegation.³⁸

There is no evidence, at least in the households of Sir John Newton and his son Jack, or Jack's siblings, of any obvious formal domestic structure. The letter-books are nearly void of the domestic service titles of butler, serving man, valet, ladies maid, maidservant, chambermaid, or scullery maid. It is not likely that any formal demarcation of duties was followed. These developed in the eighteenth century, but at this time the term servant covers many people, and was used as a catch-all term.

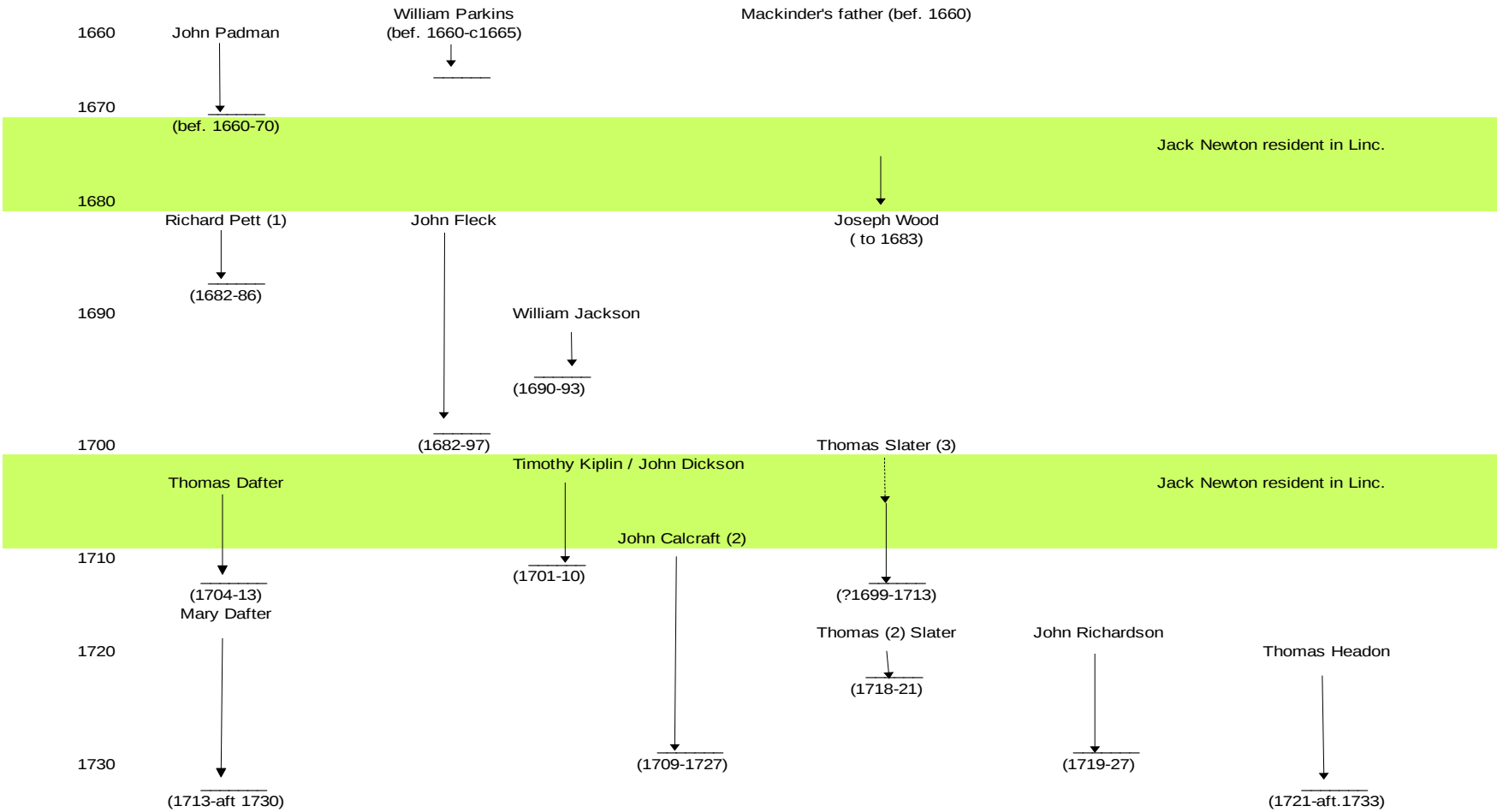
There is no evidence in the Newton letter-books or in the associated collected papers of any contract between any member of the Newton family and an estate steward, house steward or bailiff, nor is there any mention of one in the letters themselves. The archive covers the period 1660 to c1730 in great detail but there is no evidence, directly or indirectly, of a formal contract. Terms of service must therefore have been agreed informally and must have been based on an customary understanding of what was expected of a steward. In practice the letters show that the relationship was based on iterated instructions and feedback. The work expected and carried out was not fixed at the outset but rather constantly amended, updated, and varied. There, must of course, have a been an overall understanding as to the level of commitment and scope of work expected of the steward, but after that the specific work carried out was subject to a feedback loop. An absent landlord could leave his steward with a power of attorney, however if this was the

38 GRO, D1844-C10-159.

case in the Newton family no copy was taken.³⁹

³⁹ Hainsworth, Stewards, 43.

Figure 8: tenure of principal stewards, 1660-1730



Notes: 1 – may have transferred to Sir William Ellys
 2 – Latterly for William Archer, Sir Michael's brother in law

3- most correspondence 1708-13

The stated farming occupations of some of the estate stewards makes it clear that they usually had their own livelihood to look after, and that the work done for the family was not exclusive to their own affairs; they could mix their own business with their master's business.⁴⁰ The fact that there was no formal agreement regarding time spent by the steward on the estate affairs left room for varying interpretations of what was appropriate and what was not.⁴¹ Stewards might still be felt to be giving less time than they ought to the family's business. Indeed Jack Newton once upbraided John Fleck for minding his own business too much, Fleck went into Scotland to sell his conflicting interests there, but was still dismissed by him.⁴² There were economic benefits from mixing their own business with their master's, economies of scale and access to drovers and money agents willing to preference their master over other local people.

Stewards were paid a salary though somewhat modest, of the order of £40 or £50 per annum.⁴³ Unfortunately, in the absence of a contract or remuneration payments, we cannot conclude whether the work was lucrative or not for the steward. Hainsworth argued that the compensation that stewards received for their onerous and time-consuming duties was not primarily remunerative but rather the status they achieved by the close connection with a distinguished family.⁴⁴

Stewards could also be tenants. John Fleck had a house in Culverthorpe which he rented for £4 5s a year, and reference was made to 'Sherard's house and

40 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 35.

41 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 251.

42 LRO, MON7-12-38, 14 October 1682, Pett to Sir John Newton.

43 Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 20; Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 31.

44 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 30-31

grounds, and after briefly being Jack Newton's steward in 1682, was Newton's tenant at Kelby and Culverthorpe, whilst he himself lived at Stroxtun. John Padman rented a close in Culverthorpe for £17 per year and John Townend in Coningsborough Park in Yorkshire was both tenant and steward in 1710. Thomas Headon had a lease with Sir Jack Newton in 1723. Stewards could take leases into their own hands after tenants died.⁴⁵

Steward duties

The estate and house stewards' correspondence with the family tells a story of men and women with very wide-ranging authority and a relationship of deep trust. Stewards managed their master's business with great autonomy and in immense detail. Stewards found new tenants for farms and cottages, negotiated rents and repairs, collected rents, chased arrears, pursued tenants for unpaid rent, distrained their goods and stock, oversaw repairs, negotiated coal and iron extracting contracts. They were approached with offers of land for sale, informed their master when they heard that land was available, viewed it, negotiated a price, gave advice on value, and conducted due diligence on potential land purchases. They were expected to deal with the church clergy in as far as the family had rights to nominate a rector by owning an advowson, and to deal with the almshouse as the family had the right to nominate beneficiaries. They also dealt with the master's relations with the freemen in various parishes when issues of the poor arose –

⁴⁵ GRO, D1844-C26-74, 9 March 1723, Lease to Headon; GRO, D1844-C11-27, 10 February 1710, Townend to Jack Newton.

handling vagrancy, common land usage and other issues. In the town they could be found involved in canvassing and electioneering on behalf of their master.

They handled all aspects of money – they collected money on bonds, delivered trade bills, made returns, held money and kept accounts. Some were responsible for the desmesne or 'home' farm, including the animal husbandry (mainly sheep) and crops (wheat, oats, barley, beans and hay) on the farm belonging to the family. Those that were responsible for that part of the estate were also responsible for the house itself and the garden – liaising with gardeners, masons, architects and builders, and organising building works and repairs. They sent and received letters, food, gifts, and household stuff as well as the physical money already mentioned. On top of all of these tasks they were expected to be vigilant and to pass on all local news and intelligence that might be informative and useful to the family in London. They involved themselves in the purchase and transport of horses, and at least two stewards were keen on brewing and made ale for Sir Jack.

Those men (and they were all men) who are identifiable as house stewards became involved, as did their estate steward counterparts, with all aspects of the family's life. There did not seem to be a clear distinction between the roles of the house steward and the estate steward, there was such considerable overlap that at times it is hard to say whether an individual was one or the other. The house steward, although not involved in choosing tenants and collecting rents, was involved in every other activity that the estate steward was. They could be found

in a communication network of information and physical things; liaising with dedicated carriers as well anyone else who was travelling in the desired direction. They collected and passed information and news about almost anything. Like estate stewards they could be found sending food and household stuff or money or documents by carrier, holding and paying money, keeping accounts, buying clothes, carrying messages, helping to make marriage matches, meeting other servants, stewards or family members, and witnessing documents.

Domestically they could be responsible for overseeing the commission and execution of building works to the interior and exterior of the mansion house, including fish-ponds, chapels, gardens, staircases and wainscoting, during which time they were expected to hire labourers on their own account, and pay in lieu of the absent master.⁴⁶ They were involved in the domestic duties of the household, and on one occasion rescued the family from a house fire. They took horses to London, purchased horses at fairs, trained them, bred them and sold them, they trained and kept dogs including hunting dogs. House stewards were certainly educated, and could put pen to paper with ease, and make contracts and keep accounts.

Relations with tenants

The Newton family had a large number of tenants in the parishes of Ropsley, Hanbeck (Wilsford), Swarby, Barkston, Silk Willoughby, Welby, Heydour, Culverthorpe, Kelby, Allington, Gonerby, Hanthorpe, Horsley Heath, Bishop Norton, Heckington, and

⁴⁶ Hainsworth, *Stewards*, chapter 13.

Swineshead (Map 4).⁴⁷ According to English land tenure law all land in England was held of the crown, and in this important sense everyone was a tenant. Although some must have been freeholders alone, very many were landlords but also tenants. The family themselves were tenants of the king holding land in capite, and Sir Jack Newton was also a tenant in his long-term London home at Soho Square. Gentry were sometimes copy-holders within a manor, and – being conscious of their status – gave the steward many difficulties.⁴⁸ The tenants of the manors and freehold land of the Newton family were unrelated middling sort tenant farmers, who could also be bailiffs and parish officers. Both William Mackinder in April 1709 and John Jackson were stewards, bailiffs and parish officeholders – either a churchwarden or overseer. Thomas Shaw at Barkston was an overseer of the poor. There were also tenants who were clergymen, kinsmen, gardeners, stewards, and widows.⁴⁹ This intricate interconnection of landholding and renting gave rise to an equally intricate web of relationships based on land as capital. The steward was the critical interface in this network of relationships.

Stewards dealt with all the people their master would deal with, including attorneys when necessary.⁵⁰ One of the hazards and frustrations of the steward was

47 Rent rolls reveal a large number of names in each parish. See for example LRO, MON7-12-300, 1682; MON7-12-298, 1692, a debt book; MON7-12-299, 1692; MON7-12-297; MON7-12-302; MON7-12-303, 1705-7; MON7-12-304, 1717; MON7-12-305, 1718; MON7-14-182, c1730; Court roll of Barkston, MON7-11-18; GRO, D1844-C11-66, 1712.

48 Bettey, 'Manorial stewards', 16.

49 The steward John Fleck rented Culverthorpe, the rector John Troughton wanted to be a tenant, the gardener Gervase Barker rented land in Barkston, and his son was to be a tenant, the kinsman Thomas Newton had the lease of Heydour vicarage (from his sister GRO, D1844-C5-25, D1844-C9-11, from Thomas D1844-C5-13). Widow tenants include Cicily Adkins, widow Shaw, widow Pagett, widow Watson, widow Brotherwell, and widow Jackson.

50 See for example GRO, D1844-C26-71, 20 February 1728, Newton to Headon; LRO, MON7-12-218, 20 August 1726, Headon to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-51, 17 October 1719, Richardson to Newton;

communication with tenants who were best spoken to in person and thus met at their house. The greater distances that the steward was expected to travel obviated a local messenger on foot, so the steward was forced to try their luck with a visit. This frequently met with an absent tenant. In May 1662 John Padman travelled from either Grantham or Culverthorpe to Swineshead to find Mr Cocklon, but he was at Dunnington; accordingly he then called in at Dunnington only to find him gone from there as well. It is of course entirely possible that Cocklon was avoiding Padman deliberately.⁵¹ Those tenants whose leases had been very long could expect to deal with more than one steward in their lifetime. William Mackinder dealt with John Fleck, John Richardson and Thomas Slater, and was a tenant from about 1688 until 1728.⁵² Thomas Shaw, John Jackson, the Pagett family, the Sherman family all had such leases.

Tenants could avoid the steward interface and write directly to their lord – to become tenants, remain tenants, abate their rents, to be named to the bead-house, or to ask for more time to pay rent.⁵³ Negotiating a rent abatement or rebate could also be done through an attorney in London, John Blow for example received a request from Mr Berridge in 1694 for a mediation with 'any two indifferent persons' or a rebate of half a year as he had not been allowed to enter his farm on the

D1844-C4-10, 6 June 1685, Pett to Jack Newton; D1844-C3-10, 25 February 1680, Beaver to Sir John; D1844-C2-4, 18 February 1669, Miles Long to Sir John; D1844-C2-17, 14 April 1669, Miles Long to ? Sir John.

51 GRO, D1844-C2-49, 18 May 1662, Padman to Sir John Newton.

52 See for example GRO, D1844-C11-79, LRO; MON7-14-201; GRO, D1844-C10-79, 19 January 1709; D1844-C26-71, February 1728. In January 1709 he declares he has been tenant for twenty years and he is still there in 1728.

53 See for example GRO, D1844-C9-36, John Sherman; D1844-C11-73, Thomas Hare; D1844-C11-162, Daniel Lees; LRO, MON7-14-236, Michaelmas Oates; MON7-12-240, Jane Fisher; MON7-13-245, Christopher Hales.

first day. Blow advised against the mediators as he felt they were always against the landlord, however six months rent was too generous, and advised paying about £30 'or more or lesse as you thinke fitt or refer itt'.⁵⁴ There is no evidence of the Newton family as landlords writing to tenants (with just one exception), it seems this was just not done. Sir John and Sir Jack only ever communicated with tenants through stewards, attorneys and clergy. Tenants did wait on them, but they did not wait on tenants. William Swift visited Sir John in London in 1684 and was 'soe happy ..as to have the honour to be in your Worship's company'.⁵⁵ On another occasion when a petition was carried by hand the bearer was introduced by James Sheppard as his neighbour, who offered to be a witness against his landlord who 'has stolen' his house from him.

Stewards were involved, in addition to purchases and lettings, with the oversight of repairs to buildings such as cottages and barns. When a great wind blew down Mr Pittons' 'great barn' John Padman met him and received his demands for Sir John to rebuild it. Pittons withheld money in his hands from other tenants until Sir John agreed, Padman 'could not get a penny of' it. Another tenant Mr Retheres had 10,000 bricks to hand for repairs, but he expected Padman to pay for them on Sir John's behalf. Padman countered that he knew no reason why Sir John should be 'at any Charges'.⁵⁶ John Sherman approached and met with the steward William

54 GRO, D1844-C5-8, 12 June 1694.

55 GRO, D1844-C4-70, 20 December, Swift to Sir John. See Chapter 5 'Making a tenant'..

56 GRO, D1844-C2-49, 18 May 1662, Padman to Newton.

Jackson when he wanted Sir John to do something with his neighbour's cottage.⁵⁷

The cost of building a barn was a subject for negotiation. When Thomas Pagett wanted to build a new one the steward negotiated between him and his landlord. Pagett agreed to pay one third of the cost and estimated it to be a total of £3, but William Jackson estimated the cost at more than four times that, at £14. He negotiated with Pagett to pay one third of the higher cost.⁵⁸ Stewards were no the only interface and tenants could ask for 'honest men' to mediate. Mackinder told Sir Jack Newton that 'I desier that you would be pleased ether to scee them (plowing in the West field and fence erected at Barkston) youer self or in ploy sum onist men that understand land'.⁵⁹

Manorial rights were upheld by the family through their stewards and formal manorial courts were kept, a warren was maintained and tenanted.⁶⁰ There are a few manor court rolls for the various manors owned by the family, they were probably kept in the customary manner but we cannot be sure how regularly, the evidence is scant and patchy. They were little more than small fee-raising forums for the landowner. In 1668 William Parkins kept a court at Heydour and Kelby. The freeholders at Kelby asked for a stint and to have common pasture. Padman, as steward, was against it saying 'this doth not please me' and offered an

57 GRO, D1844-C5-27, 12 September 1692; D1844-C5-28, 1 October 1692. For other examples see GRO, D1844-C26-3, 16 April; MON7-14-219, Dolby's repairs; MON7-14-221; MON7-14-222; MON7-14-223.

58 GRO, D1844-C5-28, 1 October 1692, Jackson to Newton; , D1844-C5-7, 18 March 1693, same to same.

59 GRO, D1844-C10-79, 19 January 1709.

60 Thomas and Winifred Pagett were tenants of the warren in the 1700s.

alternative, asking for Sir John's choice. The freeholders were to meet in two weeks and he would represent Sir John at their meeting. Padman's advice was to yield to their demand 'for with out order noe tennat (of Sir John's) Can live with these freeholders for they will eat him out of doores, but the other way you will Improve your farme 20£ a year'. Padman's inclination to improve his master's farm was, in his own words, not shared by Sir John, whom Padman had 'heard say you did not matter for the Improving it'.⁶¹ Richard Pett held a court in 1685, after which he reported that the tenants were complaining.⁶² Thomas Buck kept courts for Jack Newton until his death before 1697, he was replaced by Mr Proctor, who also kept courts for Sir John Newton. Buck was probably a relation of Peregrine Buck who was a gentry neighbour in Barkston, who involved himself in nominating almoners to the almshouse.⁶³ Freeholders at Kelby later asked for a court on the grounds that they could not live in peace with each other without the manorial court as a mediator. However, Proctor had died and had kept the last courts. Slater had to seek the advice of Newton's attorney and steward John Calcraft in Grantham, as well as one Mr Secker. Calcraft informed him that a 'court may be kept without the roules if they cannot be found'.⁶⁴

In 1690 one of the tenants shot a hare and was found out. The steward pushed forward the prosecution at the next quarter sessions. In 1719 the tenants were

61 GRO, D1844-C2-10, 11 April 1668.

62 GRO, D1844-C4-9.

63 LRO, MON7-14-88, 4 September 1697, Jack Newton to Sir John.

64 GRO, D1844-C10-150, 18 April 1709, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-40, 4 June, same to same.

warring again, this time in numbers. Widow Pagett the tenant of the warren at Heydour complained to Sir Jack Newton about it saying that the tenants had been out with dogs and guns killing her rabbits in large quantities near the warren, and she asked him to 'put a sudaine stop to those unjust proceedings' otherwise she would be ruined and unable to pay his rent. She sent the original letter to the steward, Richardson, and a copy to Newton. Newton ordered his steward to investigate and punish the offenders. The steward interviewed the jury men and found that she had allowed her warren to extend over Goss Hill, which her husband had never done, and forcing them to 'lay the land bastard' to their loss. They gave her notice, and took matters into their own hands, which Richardson did not approve of 'theare intended going on' and would have had them acquaint your Worship with their 'Greveances' before they proceeded 'in such a meanes as they have don'. Newton ordered that Pagett and the other tenants should settle amongst themselves the extent of the warren, being no further than the tenants before the Pagetts.⁶⁵

Landlords introduced new crops and improved farming methods, with the approval and direction of their stewards.⁶⁶ Farming efficiency was not a very high priority for the Newton family by the account of the letters, even less so for Sir John, though Sir Jack was interested in improvements and take some action in that direction

65 LRO, MON7-12-65, 11 January 1690, William Jackson to Jack Newton; MON7-14-195, 29 December 1719, Winifred Pagett to Newton; GRO, MON7-14-196, 31 December, Newton to Richardson; same day, Newton to Pagett (draft on same folio); LRO, MON7-14-198, 10 January 1720, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-200, 21 January, Newton to Richardson.

66 Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 21.

encouraged by his stewards.

Relations between tenant neighbours were occasionally poor. But across a period of seventy years from around 1660 there are not very many disputes. In 1713 Widow Jackson wrote to Sir Jack asking him to intervene in a dispute over tethering rights on Ropsley common, in Lincolnshire. Widow Jackson was a tenant at Ropsley, whose husband and father had also been tenants in the parish before her. Her neighbour Thomas Rolling (another of Sir Jack's tenants), encouraged by Mr Thompson, claimed that she could not tether her horse on Ropsley common, and had impounded her goods and forced her to go to law to recover them. She said she was following the custom of her father and grandfather, and that it was 'Use and Custom time out of mind'. Thomas Rolling claimed that he did it by Sir Jack's own order. Jackson maintained that Mr Thompson had 'Long oppressed his Neighbours by the same Injust ways'. Widow Jackson and twelve others 'agreed together to vindicate our Right against them two', and she hoped Sir Jack would 'not take it ill at me' since the tethering of horses was their ancient use and custom. She asked him to 'signifie to me your pleashure' by the agency of his servant.⁶⁷

In 1713 Thomas Westby a tenant at Ravensfield near Doncaster received a letter from Jack's steward John Dickson telling him of Sir Jack's orders to pull down his park wall, as he was accused of having enclosed some part of the waste on the Common.⁶⁸ Westby wrote to Sir Jack directly to prevent a 'necessary defence' in

67 LRO, MON7-12-200, 14 February.

68 GRO, D1844-C11-146, 17 August, Westby to Newton.

court because he had 'never yet had a suit with any man', and would be glad to 'go to my grave in Peace without one'. Westby's alleged encroachments stemmed from the neglect of his guardians who allowed some neighbouring tenants the liberty of turning out a few sheep into a corner of his field whilst he was under-age. That was, according to Westby not the only loss he sustained by them, and had they been as careful as Sir John Newton in discharging their trust his circumstances of wealth would have been easier. The precedent, having been set by neighbours on unguarded land in 'the very midst and center of my free hold' and more than half a mile from any 'ground that ever was or can be called Common', was taken as a Common. The other four or five freeholders of the town were jealous of their rights and 'would have been at me upon invading their rights, if I had done as I'm charged'. Encroachment, Westby pleaded, was not his principle or practice, and Mr Dickson himself seemed to recognise that the neighbours in question doubted that they were his well wishers. The outcome is unknown but the steward was clearly about to enforce a physical act of breaking down a wall, which had been put up by the landowner. Westby had a legal defence, but was proud of his inactivity in the courts, something alien to Sir Jack and his father.

Stewards sometimes batted for the interests of the tenants. When tenants at Aisby were worried that soldiers would be billeted on them in 1685 they informed the steward and he passed on their concerns to their lord.⁶⁹ John Richardson argued on their behalf that Scottish drovers who were taken in by the tenants in return for

69 LRO, MON7-12-47, 2 December 1685, Pett to Jack Newton.

money on their way to London were 'much helped in paying their rents and do not complain of damage'. Richardson was not successful in his advocacy and the drovers were not permitted any further. The steward was afterwards responsible for maintaining this decision on behalf of his master and promised him 'the Scotch droves shall not come any more'.⁷⁰

Being a tenant could lead to an expectation of cooperation. When it was proposed by freeholders that Kelby field be enclosed Jack Newton demanded that his tenant there, Mr. Thompson, be 'Charged' with not opposing the proposal. The experience of the landlord in the same matter was quite different. Jack himself was asked to 'so far Countenance the thing' as to write to his steward William Jackson ordering him to cooperate with the freeholders' proposal, to obey his master's instructions and 'concurr with us'.⁷¹

Relations with neighbours

Some neighbours were also landlords to the Newton family. Sir John Newton evidently rented some ground at Siston from Mr Thorold. In March 1662 Thorold demanded that the ground be quitted on 25 March, giving just a few days notice, and intending to rent it at a higher rent. John Padman enclosed the letter from Thorold, advising that he should give it up only if Thorold would 'bye all your stocke and give you satisfaccion for the grass that is on the ground then wee may treat with him'. Padman was aware of the law and noted that Thorold could not

70 LRO, MON7-14-232, 233 and 235.

71 LRO, MON7-12-82. See also GRO, D1844-C9-3.

raise the rent until he had 'he hath taken it Frome you'. Padman tried to meet him the same day at a fair but (as a justice) Thorold had already gone to Lincoln assizes.

Stewards could also be caught up in gentry neighbour disputes, such as the one between Sir John Newton and Francis Creswick esquire in the next manor. Anne Palmer and Elizabeth Townsend, sisters of the late baronet began their suit in 1680 against Sir John in the manors of Bitton, Hannam and Oldlands. The servants, being also tenants, bore the brunt of the onslaught, encouraged (so Beaver thought) by a trio of Sir Thomas Bridges, a neighbour, the late baronet's widow Grace Newton and her relation John Jones. A declaration of 'ejectment' was served on twelve of Sir John's tenants, including Beaver.⁷² Beaver and the tenants were in a great stir about it and begged for his intervention in the 'weighty affaire', he said that 'here is a great noise in this Countrey about it', and noted that Sir John needed to defend his own title as well as those of his tenants. The notices gave very little warning and Beaver was concerned that they would lose their case by default by not acting quickly enough; he suggested Thomas Edwards or Mr Oldfield, the two attorneys regularly used by Sir John. Beaver sent one of the declarations to Sir John in London, begging him to appoint an attorney. A week later nothing had been heard at Bitton and an anxious Beaver wrote again repeating his information and requests. In the interim he visited Thomas Edwards and resolved to hire him without Sir John's orders if he did not get them soon, hoping he would

72 GRO, D1844-C3-11, Beaver to Newton, 21 January 1680; D1844-C3-13, 28 January; D1844-C14-17, Anna Palmer to James Leonard, no date but 6 February; D1844-C3-14, 7 February, Beaver to Newton; D1844-C3-16, 16 February; D1844-C3-12, no date but after 21 February; D1844-C3-15, 15 March.

not be displeased 'if I doe imploy him to give appearance for your selfe'. Beaver did not know how much Edwards would charge, but he would have to pay him anyway, and he hoped that Sir John would pay the bill and for the other tenants too. Mrs Townsend, it was said 'some times comes in the night to John Jones and the Ladye Newtons'. Sir John Newton's answer crossed in the post (though it is now lost) and on his order Beaver and James Leonard visited Ann Palmer at Sir Thomas Bridges, where she was said to be, and was, staying. She pretended to be out, and 'although I (Beaver) knockt soundlye att both doores, I see one in the Garden and through the windows I could see them, but noe bodye answered'. After a second call she left a note to Leonard to which 'she hath not put her hand', saying she knew nothing of her cousin Townsend's proceedings.⁷³ By the time Sir John's letter had arrived Edwards had left for London, so Beaver was forced to square the communication circle by writing to Edwards, Sir John and Miles Long – another attorney, who was clerk to Sir John's steward William (2) Parkins.⁷⁴ The heat was out of the situation by 16 February once Beaver had mustered Sir John and Thomas Edwards and confronted one of the litigants, and the tenants. By the end of February Beaver was at Barr's Court 'to take care for yor recptcon'. By mid March Edwards was in full swing and the litigants were 'very coole and quiett att present'. Another neighbour, Richard Hart a gentleman wanted to inform Sir John privately, without being named as the source, that he thought Sir Thomas Bridges

73 The note was sent to Sir John in London by Beaver, and is undated and signed A.P. in the same hand as another signed letter from her. GRO, D1844-C14-17.

74 He was granted freedom of Grantham corporation, apprenticed to William (2) Parkins, see LRO, GHB, 3 October 1679.

was the 'cheife agitator or agravator in this bussines'.

Creswick obtained a judgement against James Leonard for erecting and possessing a house on some of the waste belonging to the manor of West Hannam in the parish of Bitton. When he sued the writ directed to the sheriff of Gloucestershire Sir John told him not to and insisted on 'his priviledge of parliament'. Sir John's attorney Thomas Edwards threatened Creswick's attorney, Mr Innes, 'to proceed no further therein at his peril whereupon the said Mr Innes did for bear to put the said writ of possession in execution until after the dissolution of that parliament'.⁷⁵

We get a small insight into a wealthy Bristol and London attorney's life in July the following year when Thomas Edwards found that Sir John had just arrived back at Barr's Court and that Sir John wished to talk about the Palmer and Townsend case. Edwards apologised that he could not attend Sir John as his horses were all 'att grasse' because his 'man' had gone to the fair the previous day, got drunk and had not returned home. The following day, a Saturday, was a day he never went 'from house beinge a certesye day for all Country people to meete with me att home and many are appoynted to come to me'. If he were to see Sir John on Saturday he would disappoint fourty expectant visitors, however the case was looking good as 'the lady's hart failes her'. It appears that Anna Palmer had lost her resolve before and that Elizabeth Townsend was pursuing her claims alone in Chancery but, according to Edwards even she was waning.⁷⁶

75 TNA, C22/1019, 12 April 1686, country depositions.

76 GRO, D1844-C6-15, 29 July 1681, Edwards to Newton. The discussion probably relates to TNA, C5/567/69, Elizabeth Townsend, widow v Sir John Newton, property in Bitton.

The crisis of potential homelessness was abated, but a few years later a new enemy arose in the parish, Francis Creswick, lord of the manor of West Hannam, which interleaved with Sir John's East Hannam, Bitton and Oldland manors took to physical measures to aggravate Sir John's tenants. In November 1683 Creswick and one Mr Stubbs 'hath now laid all my wall flatt to the ground(,) they pulling down the fence of my hay barne for feare I should have any hay for my cattle', and they threatened him and his wife.

'Sir my troubles are very great for Creswicke and Stubbs was here yesterday and hath now leaid all my wall flatt to the ground(,) they pulling downe the fence of my hay (?mene barn) for feare I should have any hay for my Cattle. left but a very little before the doore and threaten that too'.⁷⁷

This seems to be an opening salvo in a renewal of the dispute between Francis Creswick and Sir John that led to Creswick's ruination, and imprisonment for high treason. It was followed by a suit in the Exchequer court in 1684 by the Attorney General for Creswick and others concerning the Kingswood Chase. In 1684 Gervase Newton wrote to his father to say that there was 'activity in the woods' against the tenants, who are being driven out.⁷⁸ By 1689 it was Creswick who was fighting Thomas Stubbs in the Chancery court over some property in Kingswood.⁷⁹

In April 1708 Mr Towne allowed his shepherd George Bullimore to bring 280 of his

77 GRO, D1844-C4-53, 27 November 1683, Beaver to Sir John.

78 LRO, MON7-14-127.

79 TNA, C5/135/33, Francis Creswick v Thomas Stubbs and another. Creswick was outlawed in Ireland in 1696 by his creditor Sir Richard Holford, he forfeited his house and manor to King William III as a result, and after agreeing in the law courts to a financial resolution between Robert Rochfort, Holford and some part of his wife's esate in Ireland but failing to complete it, attempted Rochfort's life in St. Andrews church in 1704, for which he was imprisoned until 1713, see Josiah Brown, *Reports of Cases Upon Appeals and Writs of Error Determined in the High Court of Parliament*, Volume 1 (London, 1803), 171. Robert, Lord Raymond, *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas*, Volume 3 (Dublin, 1792), Britton v Cole, 145.

sheep onto a parcel of about 200 acres of Barkston heath which was rented by Lady Mary Newton to six tenants – Richard Mackinder, John Baker, William Wright, Edward Galling, John Stevenson and Joseph Hill – at £3 a year. About eighteen acres of the parcel were sown with peas, oats and barley, and the sheep were allowed to graze on the tenant's crops. John Baker and William Wright impounded forty-five of Towne's sheep in Barkston common pound, and as a result of this damage to crops and seizure of animals various suits were begun in law. Towne claimed customary rights, but Newton's lawyer John Calcraft of Grantham claimed he would have difficulty in proving a custom as neither he nor his ancestors had used sheep on the heath for forty years, but had kept them on Siston heath, and had strayed 'by way of trespass' on Barkston heath, but Mr Towne's own shepherd had taken them off. The dispute rumbled on in the assizes and out of court for a couple of years, but then resurfaced more than a decade later when Towne repeated his earlier acts.⁸⁰

Stewards were expected to deal with the poor, and in particular those who were to become a charge on the parish. In 1691 Robert Nichols went to William Jackson at Culverthorpe and told him that the nearby parish ('town') of Bourne intended to send him and his family to Culverthorpe the following week and 'told me I might provide him a House'. Jackson 'made slight of it, telling him he would find no

80 GRO, D1844-C10-160, 2 July 1709; LRO, MON7-12-151, 6 August 1709; GRO, D1844-C10-37, 9 August, Mary Newton to Jack Newton; LRO, MON7-13-6, 18 August, Newton to Mary Newton; LRO, MON7-12-152, 2 January 1710, Calcraft to Newton (including a summary of the case); MON7-12-155, 26 March 1711, same to same; LRO, MON7-14-104, 1 May 1712, Newton to Calcraft; LRO, MON7-14-211, 7 March 1720, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-213, 24 March, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-214, 8 April, Richardson to Newton.

harbour here'. Jackson discussed the matter with Joseph Weld, the rector and kinsman of Newton's. They informed Newton that 'tis said' that by an Act of Parliament that a town could send their poor to their 'last abiding' within four years, so that Nichols could become a charge to Culverthorpe.⁸¹ The issue was an ongoing one and in 1707 Jack Newton wrote a kind of promissory note to Thomas Hilton, his steward, forbidding him to 'take any tenant to serve in any office the the parish of Haither but what are provident and careful, in puting the parish to as little charge as is possible'.⁸²

In April 1709 William Mackinder, overseer of the poor and tenant at Barkston, got word that one Henry Reanes 'a man in the town' was turned out of his tenancy on Lady Day (25 March) and that Thomas Shaw and John Jackson were about to petition Newton to have him put into one of Mackinder's cottages. Mackinder felt that had they had 'got Thomas Slater of their sid (side,) and they think to do what they please'. The cottage was on Mackinder's tenancy but he said that he built it from the ground himself, there were five other cottages of Newton's, of which Mackinder and his brother had built and repaired three. Sir John Newton had once agreed that Mackinder should build the cottage and for it to be allowed in his rent, but the allowance was never made. He would give over the cottage if it were paid for, and he argued that it would be hard on him to give a house he built 'to save the free houlders monny'. Reanes, said Mackinder, could no more keep the house in repairs than Mackinder could keep London in repairs. Reanes was a bad tenant

81 GRO, D1844-C5-15, 4 February 1691, Jackson to Newton.

82 LRO, MON7-14-188, 6 October.

and had let Newton's cottage fall into disrepair, and his arrears remained unpaid. According to Mackinder Shaw and Jackson 'did not question but they can prevail with' Newton. Shaw and Jackson did petition, just as Mackinder had expected, a few days later, complaining that they were 'put on by the town' to give Newton the trouble of their petition. Henry Reanes they said was an old tenant of the honourable Newton family, who married a wife with a good portion, and through misfortune and the cost of his children 'became lowe in the world'. John Fleck, the steward, they said with Mackinder's persuasion threw him out so that his brother Richard Mackinder could have it. Reanes 'has shuffled up on down and is to be thrown on the towne on Easter week. Mackinder, they said, had a cottage which did not belong to his farm but which he let for profit and so 'rackes the poore and prefers it for 5 or 6 pounds', 'the country', they said, 'condemns Mackinder very much for In grossing the cottages into his hands which is set apart for the poore'. 'The town' they said hoped Newton would not let cottages be bought and sold 'from your poore tenants'. The town had built a house within the year for a family which cost a great deal. The town was itself growing poor 'for heere is a greate many to Rescue but fewe to pay'. Two days later Slater wrote to say that Reanes came to him saying he was 'out of Harbour'. The cottage he wanted was Lady Mary Newton's and he repeated Shaw and Jackson's story, adding the caveat 'as they tell me'. In May Mackinder claimed that Slater was sure that Newton would not take the cottage from him to please the freeholders. In June the freeholders were keen to express Newton's view for him, and told

Mackinder that they 'must have it and a low (allow) me what they please', though he would only part with it with Newton's express order. He was sure that even if they had twenty empty houses they would not let any of them to Reanes, and there was one on Mistress Stringer's farm. 'if they can put such like famlys up of you they will'.⁸³ Mackinder claimed that his own record of looking after the poor was good, and he not only met his own rent and was never in arrears, but had 'lade downe for the pore tenands A great many time bee Case I would have the hole to be clerid'. Slater eventually told the Barkston freeholders to 'take care about Henery Reins to gitt him harbour if Mackinder cannot spare his house', putting the burden back on the parish.

This was the last of the issue concerning Reanes, but the Jackson and Shaw were not yet finished. In September they tried to defame him, saying he had a bastard child by his servant in his house, but that the child died and there was 'muttering amonge the wimming as it was morderd for it had a black suckel about the neck but all is husht up'. Not only this but by 'the dis course of his sarvants and the towne he has followed this wicked life along time'. According to them he ruined widow Holmes by promising to marry her and bedded her but 'she cride out and said that she had Ruind both boddi and Soule with liing'.⁸⁴ These accusations indicate deep divisions in the Barkston community among the freeholders, officeholders, and the large tenants of the Newton family. The divisions were long-

83 GRO, D1844-C11-7, 2 April 1709, Mackinder to Newton; D1844-C10-152, 16 April, Jackson and Shaw to Newton; D1844-C10-150, 18 April, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-96, 9 May, Mackinder to Newton; D1844-C10-81, 4 June, Mackinder to Newton; D1844-C10-40, 4 June, Slater to Newton.

84 GRO, D1844-C10-79, 19 January 1709, Mackinder to Sir Jack Newton; D1844-C10-159, 3 September, Jackson and Shaw to Newton.

standing and erupted again in 1720 when Mackinder's lease was up. By that time Shaw had fallen on bad times and was in the hospital, but Jackson's hostility remained unabated.⁸⁵

In 1722 another woman had a bastard child in another parish and was expecting to come to Culverthorpe. Newton expressed the view that it was 'very hard that the Woman should be gott with child in one parish and brought upon another'. He ordered Headon to 'do your best to keep her off of Thorpe if you can', and Headon for his part promised to do all he could.⁸⁶ In 1723 Newton's opinion of the poor had hardened even more. A woman had a bastard child at Swarby and Newton instructed Headon to intervene to keep her 'from coming to be chargeable upon Thorp parish' and to 'oblige the man to keep the woman and child'. Recognising that this might be impossible he instructed Headon if he couldn't prevent it to put her in the 'cottage that Barker has(,) rather than build one'.⁸⁷ Neighbours intervened to sort out paternity payments to the mothers of illegitimate children. When Sir John Newton appears to have fathered an illegitimate child by Mrs Clutterbuck's daughter, the Gloucestershire neighbour Thomas Chester arranged to meet the mother about the payments. Sir John had agreed to the paternity in his own courts.⁸⁸

85 See Chapter six 'Making a tenant'.

86 GRO, D1844-C26-56, 16 June 1722, Newton to Headon; GRO, D1844-C2-32, 22 June, Headon to Newton.

87 LRO, MON7-12-213, 13 July 1723, Newton to Headon.

88 Stirling, *Coke and his friends*, 140. The original cannot be found at Holkham Hall.

Conclusion

Viewed through the prism of complexity and deconstruction, the evidence from the letter-books indicates that the Newtons' possession and retention of real estate was a social production of their social network. Stewards were central to this social network, but the Newtons themselves, and their tenants and neighbours, were implicated as well. The making of this network was partly a function of the making of names and titles. Stewards were nominated by their master, who was himself made a gentleman by others. We will see in chapter three that this network helped real estate to be accumulated, as well as possessed in absentia, and in chapter six that tenants were caught up in the same network, a parochial web of nominations. Possession relied on a rhetorical, social and legal conceit, that of being present, whilst physically being absent. This permitted real estate to be piled up beyond what could be defended or lived on, and in turn this permitted it to be accumulated, as we shall see in chapter three.

Chapter 3

Gathering land

'We are most anxious for gatherers in this College, than for scatterers, and they who recklessly squander their own, seem but seldom to make acquisitions from others.'

Richard Fox's Statutes for the organisation of Corpus Christi College, Oxford¹

Land was nominally acquired by inheritance, settlement, marriage to an heiress, or by purchase. Purchasing land was a social activity involving many people. Relationships were brought into being by, and fostered by, landownership, marriage, arms-length monetary relationships, and friendship. They all intersected to inform an absent cash-rich local landlord of available land. Those same networks made it possible to: conduct due diligence on the tenants; to assess the productivity of the land; relay the experience of the existing owner to the potential buyer; to probe into the local knowledge and memory of tenants, servants and neighbours; to assess the existence and chances of competing buyers; to uncover potential or actual faults in title not disclosed by the seller; to negotiate the price; execute the conveyance; and move and pay substantial quantities of gold and silver as consideration. Stewards were at the heart of these networks, and were often approached by neighbours with land which was available for purchase. Neither Hainsworth's study of stewards nor Bettey's two shorter articles on the same found evidence of this phenomena.² Kinsmen, clergymen, neighbours, attorneys and servants were all necessary and important intermediaries in this central relationship at a distance.

1 G. R. M. Ward (ed.), *The Foundation Statutes of Bishop Fox for Corpus Christi College in the University of Oxford, A.D. 1517* (London, 1843), 194.

2 Hainsworth, *Stewards*; Bettey, 'Eyes and ears'; Bettey, 'Manorial stewards'.

In 1528 Richard Fox, born at Ropsley just south of Grantham, re-founded a school in Grantham established in the fifteenth century by a Grantham alderman as well as Corpus Christi college in Oxford, endowing a trust with land accumulated in and around Grantham, including many of the parishes which furnished the capital base of John Newton in the following century.³ When John Newton was born in 1626 his father Thomas held no manors, but did hold some land including land held in chief. Recalling Fox's concern for concentrating rather than dissipating land, Sir John Newton had accumulated numerous manors and land in a number of counties by the time he died in 1699, significantly multiplying the holdings of his father. Accumulations of real estate came by settlement, purchase and inheritance. It is not clear that any real estate came to him or his forbears by marriage to an heiress. Further accumulations came from his own purchases and from lending money on a mortgage. Only a very few sales were made, and they were for land quite isolated from the other estates. His purchases were made as a result of networks who made it possible to source, value and convey property in Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire whilst he spent much of his time in London.

In the early decades of the eighteenth century his son Jack was offered and sought out more land in Lincolnshire and these offers were carried out through an even more convoluted and deep network of local people in and around Grantham than his fathers. This network operated locally, but information came to Jack

³ Fox had previously purchased estates from Sir William Pounder of Barkston including land in Barkston, Gonerby, Manthorpe, and Heydour.

Newton and he gave out instructions, whilst he himself remained in London. Purchasers, their neighbours and stewards were keenly aware of land values, and negotiations could be hard. At this time there was clearly financial stress in the area, and a number of forced sales presented opportunities which were readily taken up by men like Jack Newton who had ample surplus gold. Unsurprisingly, none of the purchases were made with associated mortgages to finance the purchase.

Inheritance and settlement

Sir John Newton's great grandfather John Newton left 'my ferme in Westbie (Bassingthorpe cum Westby, Lincolnshire) wiche is in the occupyng of Joan Okelaie widowe, ii stere calves, two kye, a donne mere and xl^s in monye towards the byng of a waine'. to his fourth son William Newton, Sir John Newton's grandfather.⁴ William, a yeoman, sold the farm to Thomas Cony merchant and lord of the manor of that parish and his wife Alice in 1584.⁵ He married a twice-widowed Ann Kelham but there is no evidence that she brought land to their family, but probably personal wealth, as both her husbands were middling sort in the Grantham area. When William died in 1593 he left Sir John Newton's father Thomas 'all lands in Westborough, Denton (in Lincolnshire), and Bradmore (in Nottinghamshire)'.⁶ When Thomas's only brother John died in 1606 he inherited all

4 Foster, 'Sir Isaac Newton's family', 30-32.

5 TNA, Feet of Fines, Lincoln, part no.50, Michaelmas, 26-7 Elizabeth I. A messuage, a garden, an orchard, 20 acres of land, 5 acres of meadow, 5 acres of pasture, and 20 acres of furze and heath in Bassingthorpe and Westby were conveyed.

6 TNA, PROB 10/155, original will, PROB 11/84/337, court copy. William's will states 1594 but the Inquisition Post Mortem states 8 September 1593, TNA, C142-291-70.

the remaining land his father held in Barrowby, Harlaxton, Skillington, and Great Gonerby, all in and around Grantham. The Barrowby land was held in chief, in addition to which his brother had acquired two further parcels held in chief, one in Gonerby and one in Skillington.⁷ His brother also gave him land in Allington and Manthorpe, but his Skillington leases were to be sold and the money divided among his Denton half-brothers and sisters.⁸

Thomas Newton made a number of purchases in the Grantham area over the succeeding decades, including further land in chief in Skillington, Grantham, Spittlegate, Buckminster and Sewstern from Richard Newton, gentleman, in 1638 who is probably a distant cousin.⁹ His marriage in 1619 to a Leicestershire yeoman's daughter Elizabeth Parker probably did not bring any land into their family. By 1640, when Thomas died, his only child John Newton (later Sir John) inherited significant property in the area.

Thomas's half-brother Richard Hickson was a wealthy man, one-time sheriff of Lincolnshire, and with no children at his death. He was an active lender and buyer of property, Lord Monson calling him a scrivener and money lender 'who accumulated large property around Grantham'.¹⁰ Thomas Newton and Richard Hickson were evidently close and Thomas's father William was allowed to enjoy the interest from a huge statute staple loan, and Thomas was sometimes mentioned as attorney to

7 TNA, C142-291-70, IPM of William Newton. 2 messuages, 8 bovates of land, meadows and pasture and appurtenances, all parcel of the manor of Barrowby, held of the King, and parcel of the honour of Eye by a knight's service. His son John Newton's IPM states that the land is in Ancaster manor, C142/295/17 and 29.

8 LRO, LCC 1606, f74.

9 TNA, C66/2761/32, Easter 1638, patent rolls, patent granting licence to alienate the land.

10 Notes and Queries, Third Series Vol. 1, (1862), 190 in reply to a letter in the same year, Third Series Vol. 1, 158.

deliver seisin during the early 1600s.¹¹ In 1640 Richard named Thomas's only son as his heir to a number of manors in a lifetime settlement.¹² As a result of this settlement on 14 January 1641, and with his own father dead, John Newton became possessed in his minority of the manors of Heydour, Oasby, Aisby, Culverthorpe, and Barkston; together with lands in Ropsley, Pickworth, Humby, Grantham, Spittlegate, Rauceby, Welby, Swineshead, and Helpringham, a rent charge of £72 from lands in Heckington and Great Hale and a rent of £40 from lands in Buckminster. He also acquired the manor of Ropsley from Hickson, purchased in 1610 from his cousin Ralph Kelham, though not by this settlement, and leasehold lands in Wilsford, and Sewstern, on the Lincolnshire/Leicestershire border by his will.¹³

Marriage

Marriages and procreation created the kinship network, creating family alliances, and extending anyone's existing social network. It was, of course, intimately related to the accumulation of capital.¹⁴ Spouse identity, like other social productions, were made physically, discursively and reflexively in iterated social exchanges. The ongoing production of spouse identity is beyond the scope of this thesis and I

11 LRO, MON_3-27-85. For Thomas's role in the conveyance see for example LRO, MON_3-30-7, 1 May 1620, purchase of a messuage in Barrowby, and LRO, MON_3-31-1, 18 June 1627, purchase of messuage, 5 cottages and about 300 acres in Barkston.

12 LRO, extracts from deeds of settlement, MON7-11-24. The Hickson settlement is dated December 1618 in the extract but must be between April 1640 and January 1641, between Newton's death and Hickson's death.

13 LRO, MON_3-31-49, 4 March 1610. Notification of receipt refers to Richard Hickson as his cousin, LRO, MON_3-30-50, 1 June 1611; TNA, PROB11/188, 2 October 1640, Richard Hickson will.

14 H. J. Habakkuk, 'Social Attitudes and Attributes', in A. Goodwin (ed.), *The European nobility in the eighteenth century* (London, 1953), pp. 1-21; Lawrence Stone, *The crisis of the aristocracy* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 594 et seq.

propose to consider only the lead up to the first making, in other words match-making. Marriage was, in common law, an activity of mutual naming before witnesses, in which each took the other as their spouse. At an early date the church took no interest in the ceremony, but later made it one of the sacraments. It was not the minister who made the marriage, it was still the mutual exchange of vows, nominating one another as spouse, which made the marriage in law. Cromwell's injunction to register marriages was to record what had already taken place, and the marriage contract (although enforceable in equity) was outside of the social act of making a husband and wife. What came before this social act was a convoluted activity in which their social network cooperated to bring the two together, or keep them apart.¹⁵

Marriages were a great concern in the Newton letter-books. There are at least ten proposed marriages which are the subject of correspondence, the majority relating to the sons. Of Sir John and Lady Newton's four sons, none died in infancy, all growing to be young adults. Richard, Jack and Gervase all either tried to marry or did marry. Richard, as Sir John's heir before he died, suffered at least two aborted attempts to arrange a match.

Marriage arrangements for Richard seem to start up in the winter of 1668. Catherine Bright, the daughter of Sir John Bright, was considered. Draft articles of a settlement were drawn up on 18 September, but quite unexpectedly Richard wrote

15 For more on contemporary courtship practices see David Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), chapter 10.

to his father to explain that she was married to one Master Liddell.¹⁶ Richard's fortunes did not improve to his advantage, and he was dead by May 1672¹⁷. By a bizarre twist of fate Richard's younger brother Jack married the widow of Catherine's father, but not until twenty years later.¹⁸ Jack married twice and was survived by his widow Susanna. Thomas the third son died at Oxford university as a student, and there is no record of arrangements for his marriage. Gervase like his elder brother married twice, and was a match-making subject for his kin.

It is evident that partners were introduced entirely through intermediaries. There is no case or mention of a marriage in the family which is the result of a meeting of two adults under their own supervision without the influence and organisation of another party. There is only one hint where this formulation did not apply, and which resulted in a clandestine marriage. During investigations as to the suitability of the daughter of Lady Smith for one of Sir John Newton's sons William Sacheverell discovered that she had been thought to be engaged to Mr Lister, but 'all the report concerning Mr Lister and the young Lady was onely raised upon theirs and others playing at Cards together at one Mr Halls'.¹⁹

The process of bringing together a couple appears to have been tortuous at times, secretive, and under the public gaze. It involved numerous intermediaries, travel from county to county, meetings and missed meetings, introductions during

16 For the other side of the story see Sheffield RO, WWM/Br P/72 Letters, 1669.

17 His brother is named heir apparent in that month. No record of an memorial or burial register entry at Heydour.

18 Jack married Susanna Warton, widow of Sir John Bright, in 1691, Catherine is Bright's daughter by his first marriage.

19 LRO, MON7-13-176, 22 Jan 1687, William Sacheverell to Sir John Newton.

house visits, occasions when the proposed bride and groom are (at least thought to be) unaware of the machinations of their relations, numerous letters to and from between many parties, lost letters, misunderstandings, horse-trading about money, meetings with attorneys, papers and boxes sealed up and transported, disappointment and failure, as well as occasional successes.

The process could take months or even years. Despite Sir John Newton being so very keen to hasten his eldest son's marriage it took between at least September 1668 and December 1669 to reach a conclusion. Discussions with the Molyneux family seem to have lasted for at least the period between July 1667 and January 1669. When Jack Newton was made a widower in May 1686 on the death of Abigail he was the subject of match-making talk within the month, and discussions are current in April 1688, ongoing in October 1690 and the marriage is concluded with Lady Susanna Bright in 1691. There was therefore ongoing activity for five years. It is unlikely that such long negotiations were a feature of the marriage of Sir John's youngest daughter Dorothy who married Francis Woodward in 1668 aged only about seventeen.

The initiation could come from a match-making aunt. Elizabeth Eyre visited her sister's family and proposed a match for her young niece Hester Newton, and said she would 'marry her own daughter off to him if she were old enough'²⁰. In another case a friend of the family tells a servant that he knows of another party who could help the groom to a match. Servants were also involved in another occasion when another friend of the family (who may also be kindred) says that he

²⁰ LRO, MON7-13-173, undated. The writer died in 1694.

can mediate directly with the father of a young available woman.²¹ Naturally the initiative could come from the male suitor, as was the case with George Scrope and also with Jack Newton's second marriage.

Once the match was initiated anyone could get involved, for example uncles could encourage nephews: Jack Newton for example urged his nephew Gervase Scrope to 'push his suit with Mr Creswell' in 1709.²² Servants could be not only part of the initiation but also do some of their own urging. John Padman was said by Richard Newton to have been 'soe importunate' with him to visit a young daughter of Sir Thomas Cave via the introduction of Mr Yorke, who met him by accident a few days earlier, that Richard gave in and paid the old man a visit, 'where he stayd one night(.) but ingaged in noe discourse of that nature with the old Gentleman'.²³ At least two matches involved several parties on both sides. Whilst Richard was wooing Catherine Bright at Badsworth no fewer than four of his kinsmen were involved in the matter, in addition to his father. His uncle Anthony Eyre wrote to his father, and his potential father in law, Sir Godfrey Copley, a cousin, wrote an account of the match to his father, and Francis Stringer his brother-in-law wrote to both father and father-in-law, and 'cossen Jessop' passed information to one of them. In addition to these letters there are references to numerous letters between them, which are not in the letter-books. All of the first three names appear as witnesses on a head of agreement marriage contract dated

21 LRO, MON7-12-54, 31 May 1686, Richard Pett to Jack Newton; MON7-13-136, 27 Feb 1670, Francis Stringer to Sir John Newton.

22 LRO, MON7-13-15, 12 Nov 1709.

23 LRO, MON7-13-136, Francis Stringer to Sir John Newton.

18 September 1668.²⁴ When Sir John Newton's daughter Lucy was proposed to be matched with 'Mr Hesketh' it was negotiated partly between kin of Sir John, namely Dr William More (husband of Ann Eyre, sister of Sir John's wife Mary), 'Lady Eyre' and 'cousin Rigby' on the one side and the Molyneux family on the other, who were also cousins. Again the surviving letters point to other intermediary letters between the parties.²⁵ It is very evident that kin-ship networks played a huge role in generating possible matches for couples and their parents to consider.

The process of match-making was spoken of in very business-like terms. Richard Newton referred to it his father's business.²⁶ Sir John Newton complained that delay would be 'prejudicall to his Affaires' and elsewhere 'prejudice to our concerns'.²⁷ Anthony Eyre, brother in law of Sir John Newton, writing from Rampton in Nottinghamshire to Sir John Bright about Richard Newton's match with Bright's daughter Catherine spoke of it as an alliance, Sir John used the same term in a later letter.²⁸ The negotiation was also referred to as a treaty, which also seems to borrow from the language of international diplomacy.²⁹ Elizabeth Eyre, Sir John Newton's sister in law, merely refers to 'the proposall', and a lawyer for Edward Coke used the same term.³⁰

24 GRO, D1844-C24-4; LRO, MON7-12-24; GRO, D1844-C24-3; LRO, MON7-13-136; LRO, MON7-14-52.

25 LRO, MON7-13-248; MON7-12-22; MON7-14-12 and 13; GRO, D1844-C2-20.

26 LRO, MON7-14-58. For the same description see also GRO, D1844-C25-2; LRO, MON7-14-13; GRO, D1844-C24-3; LRO, MON7-13-136.

27 GRO, D1844-C25-2; LRO, MON7-13-2; LRO, MON7-14-54.

28 GRO, D1844-C24-4, 7 Dec 1668; LRO, MON7-14-13, 13 Jan 1669. See also GRO, D1844-C24-3, 9 Feb 1669, Francis Stringer to John Bright.

29 LRO, MON7-14-133, 19 Apr 1688, Jack Newton to Elizabeth Eyre.

30 LRO, MON7-13-106; LRO, MON7-12-91, 18 Mar 1696, Draft answers to Mr Newton's proposals.

Marriage could be seen as a conclusion, one which could lead to perpetual good or bad. Richard Newton wrote of marriage as something 'wherein a mans happyness or misery is concluded'.³¹ The woman's ability to bear children could be a concern. The property and estates held by a family depended frequently on a male heir 'of the body', and failure would result in the ownership passing to male cousins, but not to the children of the present holder. Such was the concern of Jack Newton, who after the death of his first wife Abigail was left with a young daughter Cary, but no son. His brother Gervase had no children at this stage (nor was he to have any by his death) and there were no other brothers. The Lincolnshire estate with five manors would pass to the Welby family based on the settlement of John Newton's step uncle Richard Hickson without a male heir. Jack Newton, with this in mind, asked his aunt Eyre to enquire as to the age of Lady Susanna Bright, she returned with the news that she was neither older than forty-one nor younger than thirty-nine, and did not need to consult 'the Church Book'.³² Further questions from Jack reveal that his main concern was her child-bearing ability. Elizabeth replied with a catalogue of older women producing healthy children into their forties, including Jack's mother who had borne at least two children since she was forty-two, and 'my Grandmother Coventrye' who 'had my Uncle Will when she was forty-eight' but went on to add that 'indeed these were all constantly Childbearing'.³³

31 LRO, MON7-14-58, 1 May 1670, Richard Newton to Sir John.

32 LRO, MON7-13-107, 13 October 1690, Elizabeth Eyre to Jack Newton.

33 LRO, MON7-13-109, 25 Oct 1690, to Jack Newton.

Parents voiced their approval in terms of 'affection' and 'kindness'. Mary Newton was said by her husband to have 'so much affection for this match she will cheerfully comply with relinquishing her interest in the house', referring to the mansion house at Culverthorpe. Parents cared that their children and in-laws should be available and not live so far away. Sir John Newton thought it was a good thing that Catherine Bright would live 'but one days journey from her Fathers house'.³⁴ Sir John Newton praised Sir John Bright and his wife for Bright's 'great inclinations to my sonn' and 'your encouragement and the manner of your treatment of my sonn in his addresses, has beene so obliging', and Newton was said himself to 'hath sett his Heart so much upon the Allyance' and 'sincere and cordiall in his intentions', and he said of his own desire about the marriage 'I have soe much endeavoured after, and which is still cordially sought for'.³⁵ Recourse was often made to view of 'friends'. Elizabeth Eyre told her nephew 'it being very acceptable to all your friends to hear you have any designe of comitting Matrimony'³⁶ However Richard Newton did not seek the advice of friends and later wished he had.

Jack Newton in 1688, a little under two years after he lost his first wife, and just after the death of her grandmother Lady Abigail Carey, was being pushed towards a second wife.³⁷ His father's attorney Thomas Edwards was engaged in the negotiations, probably with Michael Warton ('Mr Wha:') and agreed with his father to

34 LRO, MON7-13-2, 5 September 1668, Sir John Newton to Sir John Bright.

35 GRO, D1844-C25-2, 24 October 1668, Newton to Bright; D1844-C24-3, 9 February 1669, Francis Stringer to Bright; D1844-C24-4, 7 December 1668, Anthony Eyre to Bright; MON7-14-13, 13 January 1669, Newton to Bright.

36 LRO, MON7-13-107, 13 October 1690, to Jack Newton.

37 LRO, MON7-14-72, 24 February 1688, Jack Newton to Sir John.

meet him in London, while he was there dealing with one of his father's legal suits. His aunt was 'in great admiration of the young Lady', but Jack put off agreeing to her proceeding in any negotiation until he saw his aunt because she had 'a good knack in getting off when she pleases'. His aunt thought Mr Warton could 'be brought to give £6,000 but not without some 'stratagem' on her part.

Was love a concern in match-making?³⁸ Sir John Newton spoke of a contract 'after the young people have a likeing for each other'.³⁹ Affections towards a wife were something that could, at least for some, be the object of volition, a man could choose to be affectionate to his selected bride. Richard Newton stated that he would 'cherfully subject my will and affections' to his chosen bride.⁴⁰ He later wrote to his potential father-in-law that he would be dutiful and 'content and proud' to be son in law. The word love is entirely absent from discussion from any party involved. It was concern for financial management (what could be afforded), interest and power of the other party's relations, and the possibility of inheritance from 'a great estate which is possible may fall in', that was more important to Richard Newton. For Elizabeth Eyre it was 'advantagious an alliance' that was a

38 For the argument that short marriage spans due to high mortality prevented emotional investment in a spouse and therefore affectionless marriages see Lawrence Stone, *The family, sex and marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York, 1977). For the argument that the concerns of patrimony, kinship, primogeniture and extending connections for social advantage outweighed any emotional or physical concerns see Miriam Slater, 'The weightiest business: marriage in an upper-gentry family in seventeenth-century England', *Past and Present*, 72 (August, 1976), pp. 25-54; Miriam Slater, 'A rejoinder', *Past and Present*, 85 (November, 1979), pp. 136-140. For critics of this view see Sara Heller Mendelson, 'Debate. The weightiest business: marriage in an upper-gentry family in seventeenth-century England', *Past and Present*, 85 (November, 1979), pp. 126-135; Vivienne Larminie, 'Marriage and the family: the example of the seventeenth-century Newdigates', *Midland History*, 9:1 (1984), pp. 1-22.

39 LRO, MON7-14-12, 14 September 1667, Sir John Newton to his cousin Ann More.

40 LRO, MON7-14-58, 1 May 1670, Richard Newton to Sir John.

draw, and Jack's parents agreed 'saying they knew not any Family in England whose alliance they should so much covet. She also pointed out that the lady in question was handsome and rich (and) made such an excellent Wife to an Old Gentry...there can be no other objection to her ... (but she) could wish her indeed ten year younger for your sake'.⁴¹

The decision to marry or not could be left in the hands of a younger daughter. Frances Newton was observed by her mother to have been 'long before she could resolve of it'⁴² Richard Newton her eldest brother was at the opposite extreme. In a letter to his father he seems to hand over all power to him with respect to the choice of bride. After stating that he was 'full of Love and Duty towards you which I hope will manifest against all suspicions to the contrary', he says that his father's 'kindness has bin so particular that I shall by an implycite obedience cherfully subject my will... to your choyce and directions for me.' However, Richard retained some influence, even having apparently relinquished it. He goes on to say that 'if upon consideration you finde that your busines may be as well done with a less portion and a settlement proportionable ... I should be pleased you would fix upon Mrs Packington'.⁴³ The potential groom had real autonomy when they were a widow and established in their own right, Jack Newton made his own running (with the help of his aunt Eyre) when it came to sounding out a second wife. But even in this case his aunt reminded him that the 'consent and approbation' of his parents

41 LRO, MON7-14-58; MON7-13-105.

42 LRO, MON7-14-43, 19 November 1703, Mary Newton to Susanna Newton.

43 LRO, MON7-14-58.

before the marriage meant they 'can neither upbraid nor blame you whatever happens' after the marriage. Gervase married twice but there is no record of the courtship.⁴⁴ Occasionally the couple in question take no-one's advice and arrange a clandestine marriage without consent or approval, or become engaged on the same basis. In both cases the bride appears to have been a potential match for one of Sir John Newton's sons, and the writer gave him the bad news.⁴⁵ Richard's own father's marriage to Mary Eyre was arranged by the King himself, whilst at Newark garrison. As a ward of the Crown King Charles had the right to select a bride for John Newton. There was almost certainly no choice on John's part, the decision lay with the King, but there it is highly likely that his choice would have been suggested to him by others. That Mary's father, Sir Gervase Eyre was a royalist commander based at Newark with an unmarried daughter would have made him an obvious choice. However if John Newton had not found himself in Newark garrison, then under siege, he is more likely to have reached twenty-one without the King's intervention. God could also be called upon to help decide. Elizabeth Eyre appealed to her nephew saying 'I cannot tell what to adde more, but onely pray to God direct you in this so weighty a matter'.⁴⁶ Marriage contracts too could appeal to the same authority. The aborted marriage contract between Richard Newton and Catherine Bright referred to an agreement 'by the blessinge of God that a Marriage shall shortly bee had and Solmenised'.⁴⁷ There was no etiquette evident that the

44 LRO, MON7-13-109.

45 LRO, MON7-12-30, 24 May 1670; MON7-13-176, 22 January 1687, William Sacheverell to Sir John.

46 LRO, MON7-13-109, 25 October 1690, Elizabeth Eyre to Jack Newton.

47 LRO, MON7-14-53, 19 Mar 1669, Newton to Bright.

groom's side should make the first advance or vice versa. There are cases where a daughter's father is making the proposals and waiting for an answer and cases where the reverse is true. Advice was often sought by every party from every other party. Richard Newton sought his father's advice, the advice of friends and heeded encouragement from his potential in-laws, in addition 'he acted nothing without the Councill and Direction of his unckle Eyre'.⁴⁸ His brother Jack sought the council of his aunt Eyre, and Gervase Scrope sought advice from his uncle Jack Newton.

Intermediaries by their nature were both bearers of information, but also the eyes and ears of the couple and their parents. They were trusted to act in the best interests of their 'charge', to convey information orally or by letter faithfully, to persuade, to 'put the best gloss' on the match, and to intervene if the proposals were falling apart.

There were certain practicalities which tended to oppose progress in the pursuit of matrimony. Travel was seasonal so that during the winter months meetings would have to wait, which led to delay. Letters were lost, miscarried, or misunderstood. Frequently writers refer to making their meaning clear, or referring to earlier misunderstandings. Parties who were supposed to meet in London found that one had left for the country. Sir John Newton claimed that a single meeting could make up for months of letters, and his son in law bemoaned that letters were so capable of misinterpretation, and speaking face to face would remove all ambiguity, leaving

48 LRO, MON7-13-136.

everyone's sense perfectly clear. Sir John Newton complained that he understood 'ye business to have been in more forwardness, which seems to be at some stand att present' and that the remiss was not on his part and not a result of his own slackness, unless a result of a 'want of good intelligence'. Sir Michael Warton wished only that the proposed match between his sister Susanna Bright and Jack Newton 'may not long hang Suspence'. Elizabeth Eyre, after a query about a match, made 'all the hast I can to answer yr query.' She adds for good measure a proverb aimed reiterating the desire for speed, 'happy is the woeing (wooing) that is not long a doing'.⁴⁹ The chief concern of Sir John Newton, at least during his negotiation of the marriage of his son and heir Richard and Sir John Bright's daughter was delay. Over and over he begged for a meeting instead of further letters, which would bring the matter to a close more quickly.

Despite the many intermediaries who could be involved the introduction and courting stage it was always down to the fathers to conclude the financial side of the marriage. Where the father or both parents were dead, the widow or grandparents would take the father's role. Mary Newton negotiated on behalf of her daughter Frances who married John Wigfall in 1703, four years after the death of her husband.⁵⁰ A grandfather could also treat on behalf of a grandchild. Thomas Osborne negotiated on behalf of Edward Coke when he married Cary Newton in

49 LRO, MON7-14-13, 13 January 1669, John Newton to John Bright; MON7-13-105 and 107, Elizabeth Eyre to Jack Newton.

50 LRO, MON7-13-45 and MON7-14-43.

1696, Edward's father having died of smallpox in 1679.⁵¹

Pin money was something of a new concept in the late seventeenth century and does not appear in earlier marriage contracts. However by 1690 Elizabeth Eyre was giving advice to her nephew Jack Newton on what he should expect to allow his wife in the marriage contract. Pin money she notes 'being now adays as solemnly indented for as a joynture'. In this case the potential wife was asking £300 per year 'for her owne spending', which Eyre supporting saying 'I would have you comply with her'⁵²

Purchase

There is no evidence that any real estate was brought into the family when John Newton married Mary Eyre in or around 1644. John Newton began acquiring further property. Land in Hanbeck in the parish of Wilsford was acquired from Cicily Adkins in 1653, the widow of Thomas, to save her from her creditors including John Newton. His old friend William Parkins was to act as a mediator, and he probably drew up the memorandum. Her late husband had lawsuits with John Newton during the civil war, and was probably one of the informers against him to the parliamentary Committee for Advancement of Money in 1650.⁵³ John Newton made or investigated further purchases of land including cottages and around eighty acres in Heydour from John and Susan Rollinson in 1655, and land

51 LRO, MON7-14-245; MON7-12-90; MON7-12-91; MON7-12-285; Stirling, *Coke of Norfolk*, 136, 143.

52 LRO, MON7-13-111.

53 LRO, MON7-13-103, 18 April 1653; LRO, MON7-14-2, 11 May 1649; TNA, SP19-140, f38.

in Hanbeck, Wilsford from John Beech two years later.⁵⁴ Local neighbours who were kin and freemen of Grantham could help in these purchases. In 1661 he looked at a purchase in Bassingthorpe, in Lincolnshire, the birthplace of his grandfather William Newton, and one of his kindred Edward Woodruffe informed him that Sir John Bromley 'is like to buy it' but the bishop of Rochester 'hath left it and will not meddle with it'. Woodruffe had asked around on John Newton's behalf, he was at that time in Westminster as Grantham's burgess, and warned him against it as 'the business is darke and I feare the title is not good'. The seller was believed by the neighbours to have 'married before', and 'as they say hath severall Childeren by her'. This exchange highlights the social and informal nature of important information relating to capital. Good legal title depended on whether the present title-holder did or did not have children by an earlier marriage. This information was not recorded formally such that it could be discovered by a purchaser who was a stranger to the seller, but instead in the memories of local people.⁵⁵

The single largest purchase at this time, or any other time, was that of the 'western estate' in 1660. The purchase was linked to the obtaining of a baronetcy for John Newton, and it was contested in courts for more than twenty-five years. The purchase of the manors or moieties of Bitton, East Hannam and Oldland in Gloucestershire and East Harptree in Somerset cost near £9,000. There is no

54 LRO, MON3-31-12, 1653; MON7-12-294, 2 November 1657.

55 LRO, MON7-12-14, 29 November 1661, Edward Woodruffe to Colonel John Newton.

evidence as to how the two John Newtons became acquainted, however by October 1659 they were in correspondence and they, and others, called themselves 'brother', and 'sister'. Both Newtons were Royalists and the John Newton alias Cradock had acquaintances in the Leicestershire area.⁵⁶ Edward Bigland, an attorney knew both of them, and seems to have partly brokered the purchase, informing the Lincolnshire Newton of the sale for £8,000 – 'Mr Jones of our house is my author for it'. Mr Jones was probably Grace Newton's relation. According to a hostile witness decades later John Newton alias Cradock, having no heir, proposed a match with his niece, a mistress Edwards, with the other's son, and that even after the match broke down John Newton should purchase the estates as he bore the same name, so that the Newton name stayed with the estate. According to others Newton alias Cradock was 'desperately involved; he borrowed largely, mortgaged his property (to John Newton) and actually sold the title of cousin to John Newton'.⁵⁷ The property 'lapsed to the creditor' on his death soon after. There is evidence for this as Newton alias Cradock wrote to Newton asking for money.⁵⁸

Whatever their relationship, deeds were prepared of sale and a settlement on Newton alias Cradock's wife Grace for a lifetime annuity with a charge on Barr's Court estate. According to John Newton the conveyance was signed on Newton alias Cradock's deathbed in the presence of witnesses. However, according to the hostile neighbour in Gloucestershire the conveyance was never signed in Newton

56 For the early correspondence and the baronet's patent see LRO, MON7-14-8, 23 October 1659, John Newton to John Cradock alias Newton; same day, draft letter, John Newton to Edward Bigland, on the same page; GRO, D1844-C14-53, 15 January 1660, Bigland to Newton; see above, chapter one, 'Gentlemen: Made by writing and speaking' for a discussion of the baronetcy.

57 *Notes and Queries*, Third Series Vol. 1 (1862), 190.

58 See chapter four, 'Informal credit'.

alias Cradock's lifetime, but was fraudulently signed and sealed with men paid to perjure themselves as false witnesses afterwards. Lady Grace Newton, years after her husband's death and in the teeth of litigation with her family and Sir John Newton (as he then was), confessed to 'some of the county gentlemen' that Edward Bigland and Howell Jones, who was an attorney in London and her brother, had sealed the deeds after her husband's death. She claimed that John Newton offered Mr Waite £500 to swear before a justice that the conveyance was bona fide. Waite is said to have confessed on his deathbed 'to two eminent neighbours' that he was offered the money to perjure himself. Sir Thomas Bridges, a neighbour, was asked to witness, but did not come and later when showed a copy of the alleged settlement said he never sealed the copy or the original, and had refused it once when it was given him to seal.

Whether the conveyance was signed by Newton alias Cradock or not, the money was paid over (perhaps discharging a loan made by Newton to Newton alias Cradock), and £500 for Barr's Court and £8,200 for East Harptree was paid. Lady Grace continued to live at Barr's Court with her annuity, and two co-heiresses of Sir John Newton's personal estate. One was Anna Palmer the other Elizabeth Townsend. However, the story does not end there. Sir John Newton, wanting to live at Barr's Court, and finding that she refused to leave, persuaded the co-heiresses to sue her for £1,000 and funded the law-suits, exhausting her gold resources. Unfortunately for Sir John, the women's attorney started asking awkward questions about the original conveyance, asserting that it was a pretended sale

arranged between Sir John and Lady Grace to swindle the co-heiresses out of their share of the estate. This unexpected blow-back caused Sir John to send Thomas Edwards, his long-time trusted Bristol attorney, to Lady Grace and to ask her to swear that the deeds were properly executed by her husband in his lifetime, and threatening to stop paying her annuity, and to turn her out of Barr's Court, if she did not conform to his wish. The source is Francis Creswick who was lord of the manor of West Hannam, and lived at Hannam Court. Creswick and Newton disputed manorial rights in East and West Hannam, and Creswick made notes damning Sir John at the time of the suite of James and Elizabeth Elvard against Sir John Newton in 1685. In his turn Sir John Newton was apparently instrumental in having Creswick imprisoned for high treason in June 1685, after speaking with an officer friend from Monmouth's army who were camped at Sydenham meadow on 25 May, just adjacent to Hannam Court.⁵⁹

In May 1662 a tenant George Seawell informed Sir John Newton that Mr Leake – a neighbour in Balderton, Nottingham – wanted an end to the dispute between them, as did Seawell. The solution according to Seawell was for Sir John to either lease or buy Sir Edward Wingfield's half of a lease in the south farm. Sir John met Seawell at Grantham or Culverthorpe and they discussed the value of the farm. Seawell at first valued the income at £18 to £20 a year and valued the land at £130, however Sir John, through his steward John Padman, pressed him to 'truley

⁵⁹ Henry Thomas Ellacombe, *The History of the parish of Bitton* (Exeter, 1883); TNA, C5/476/83, Elvard v Newton, and C6/252/56, Elvard v Newton.

inform' himself of the value and to view it himself, after which he found it to be in a parlous state and 'not worth tenne pounds this year'.⁶⁰

In 1675 Sir John Newton and Jack Newton purchased the manor house and land in Barkston from Peregrine Buck, gentleman, for £4,000. Eight years later they put it into trust with Francis Stringer. The land was not sold until 1722, when it was sold to Lord John Fitzwilliam.⁶¹ Land in Stroxton came up for sale in December 1690, Jack Newton became aware of it through his London connections and he asked his brother-in-law Francis Stringer to treat for it, Stringer was induced by the proximity to Culverthorpe but old and infirmity had 'overtaken' him which rendered him 'very unfitt to struggle with much business', in any event at £4,000 to £5,000 he thought it too expensive. Stringer though was keen to be informed if the cousins (presumably Edward and Cary Coke) would sell their Yorkshire lands, he and a friend might 'deale for them'. Stringer passed on the information about Stroxton's availability to his cousin Eyre, who seemed at first 'very eager to be a chapman' then indifferent. A neighbour of Stringer's then asked on behalf of his friend for permission to wait on Jack in London, to get directions from him 'whome he might treat in London for Stroxton', and Stringer felt unable to refuse him the small kindness which would give Jack some trouble.⁶² Sir John Newton acquired the other half-manor of Bitton called Oldland.⁶³

60 GRO, D1844-C4-7, D1844-C1-13, D1844-C2-48, 3 February, 17 March, and 2 May 1662, George Seawell to Sir John Newton.

61 LRO, Thor 1/1/2/17-19, 10 December 1675; Thor 1/1/2/20-22, 16-17 May 1683; Thor 1/2/P15A/1-2, 31 July 1722.

62 LRO, MON7-13-142, 6 December 1690, Francis Stringer to Jack Newton; MON7-13-164, 13 December 1690; MON7-13-170, 19 January 1691.

63 Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 84.

There is (unusually) evidence of real estate being brought into the family by marriage when John Newton's eldest surviving son Jack Newton married Abigail Heveningham in 1676. The manor of Southley and the manor house of Datchett was conveyed to Sir John Newton by his son Jack and daughter-in-law Abigail Newton further to an indenture settling his debts and raising portions and maintenance for his younger children.⁶⁴ Jack Newton's second marriage to Susanna Warton, widow of Sir John Bright, brought her income but no real property.⁶⁵ However, when her brother Sir Michael Warton died she was co-heiress of his real estate with her two sisters. In 1650 and 1651 their grandfather Sir Michael Warton of Beverley in Yorkshire bought a considerable part of the Gorges estate in Chelsea and Kensington, including in Chelsea fifty-three and a half acres of arable and around seven acres of meadow, mostly in Little Chelsea, Westfield, and Eastfield near Chelsea common. After Sir Michael's death in 1655 his estates passed to his son Michael, and then to the latter's son Sir Michael Warton in 1688. On his death in 1725 Sir Michael left his estates to his three sisters Elizabeth, wife of Charles Pelham, Mary wife of Sir James Pennyman, and Susanna Newton, wife of Sir Jack Newton.⁶⁶

64 The indenture dated 3 March 1677 between Sir John and William Sacheverell, Francis Stringer and Edward Bigland is recited in the codicil to Sir John's will TNA, PROB11/454. Dr. Browne was to devise the manor to Sir John. A suit in chancery was begun in 1682, see TNA, C6/287/80, Sir John Newton and Thomas Browne v Samuel and Truth Browne, Thomas Staples and John Whitfield.

65 LRO, MON7-11-24, 23 February 1691.

66 Patricia E. C. Croot (ed.), 'Landownership: Later estates', in *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 12: Chelsea* (2004), 123-45.

Jack Newton' purchases

Jack Newton was, like his father, a gatherer not a scatterer of property. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century numerous sales of land were made known to him in Lincolnshire, and on many occasions he purchased land. His purchases occurred over most of his adult life from 1684 to the 1730s. In 1684 he (or Sir John) purchased 'the Lordshipp Farme of Swarby' for £850 10s.⁶⁷ In 1685 land in Barkston from widow Bunworth and in 1686 land in Kelby.⁶⁸ There is evidence of further land purchases in Kelby for £300 and £350 on 20 March 1690 and 29 January 1700.⁶⁹ In 1693 he was offered his father's land at Helpringham by their steward John Fleck who gave him first refusal 'but he will not meddle with it, so I am enquireing for other chapmen for it'.⁷⁰

In 1696 one third of the manor of Aunsby, which was owned by William (3) Parkins a clergyman was offered to Jack Newton. Parkins' father and grandfather had been family stewards and friends since the early 1600s. Newton already held one third. Articles of the sale were drawn up and the consideration mentioned was £135, and Newton asked Richardson to 'take care that the Livery and seisin be first done', but the lease not being delivered the transaction does not seem to have completed.⁷¹ In 1720 the lease with the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln was to be

67 GRO, D1844-C26-2, 22 November 1723.

68 Barkston: LRO, MON7-12-47, 2 December 1685, Richard Pett to Jack Newton; Kelby: LRO, MON7-12-52, 10 April 1686, Richard Pett to Jack Newton. See also Robert Smith's farm at Kelby conveyance, to Sir J Newton. GRO, D1844-C26-65.

69 GRO, D1844-C26-2, 22 November 1723.

70 GRO, E24-11, 10 August, Fleck to Sir John Newton.

71 LRO, MON7-11-26, 30 April 1696, articles of agreement between William (3) Parkins and Jack Newton. The sale does not appear to have gone through or there was a re-lease to the seller as in 1730 a rental refers to the three parts of the manor owned by Sir Michael Newton, Mr Perkins and Mr Knype, MON7-14-182. In 1720 further negotiations took place, viz LRO, MON7-14-227, 13 August, Richardson to Newton and MON7-14-228, 25 August, Newton to Richardson; GRO, D1844-C26-5 and D1844-C26-46, 16 March and 18 April 1721, Newton to Richardson.

renewed, Newton instructed Richardson to go with Parkins to arrange the renewal and expected a fine of £100, of which Newton would pay one third and keep the original lease with the copy to the others. Richardson visited Lincoln as instructed with Parkins and 'Mr Knipes Man for his master was not well', and reported that the renewal fine was £180, with Newton's share of the charges of 'drawing, ingrossing, registering and stamps' was £1 5s 7d, Newton was to have the counterpart. How Newton reacted to the huge increase and not having the original is not recorded, but he did renew.⁷² In 1730 there was another proposal to buy one of the other third parts of Aunsby, which came to nothing and in 1743 the lease was renewed again by Sir Michael Newton.⁷³

A year later in around 1696 negotiations for the purchase of more land in Aunsby commenced with James Adamson, who then died before the treaty concluded. Adamson's brother William living in Gislingham in Suffolk, wrote to say that his nephew William Parkins of Boothby as heir to it in right of his wife had continued the treaty for the last year. After various delays, reductions in price through Fleck as Newton's agent, it only awaited Newton's final assent. The transaction was still apparently in progress in March the following year, and does not appear in the list of conveyances in 1723.⁷⁴

Kinsmen reported property for sale. Charles Warton, Sir Jack Newton's brother-in-law, asked for the character of a seller whom Jack was telling him of, who was

72 LRO, MON7-14-219, 11 June 1720, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-220, 21 June, Richardson to Newton.

73 LRO, MON7-12-228, Matthew Lamb to Sir Michael Newton; MON7-12-241, 24 September 1743, same to same.

74 LRO, MON7-12-92, 10 December 1696, William Adamson to Jack Newton; GRO, D1844-C5-17, 27 March 1697, Needham to Jack Newton.

unknown to him, his opinion was that 'deal with a worth Gentleman is the safest way in purchasing'.⁷⁵

Clergymen could be agents for property purchases and inform of its availability. In 1706 Newton manor, a few miles south of Culverthorpe became available. Sir Richard Cust was selling and the rector of the parish Thomas Milles, related to former Grantham corporation men, became heavily involved in the negotiation, he heartily wished 'that we may be so happy as to have Sir John Newton as our Land-lord', and gave Newton a list of all the tenants and their rents, with an assessment of their quality as tenants, only one was doubtful. Newton and Cust met at Wansford and Cust reckoned the estate worth £200 per year, which he wanted twenty-one years purchase (£4,200) plus £100 for the advowson, which Cust said he was 'fixt not to part with it a penny under'. Cust observed that since Newton didn't 'think fitt to come up' he would dispose of it otherwise. Despite this apparent dismissal Milles discussed the purchase with Cust in November with a lower offer and Cust saying he had another offer and did not need the money anyway. Milles met with Cust's steward Mr Brown in December offering £4,000, Brown asking for £4,000 plus £100 for the advowson. Milles reported that one Mr Clarke had viewed the Hall and said he would buy the lordship too, and Milles believed he was acting for Mr Wynne, but he then had reason to believe that he was acting for the Duke of Newcastle, as he was informed that he collected the Duke's rents. By May 1707 Milles reported that Mr Wynne had bought the lordship

75 GRO, D1844-C10-23, 27 August 1705, Charles Warton to Sir Jack Newton.

for £4,250, despite Cust's assertion that he would not take a penny under £4,300.⁷⁶

Stewards kept their masters informed when land had been sold, and to whom, and would venture a view of the price. In 1694 John Fleck informed Sir John Newton in Gloucestershire that Sir Richard Earle had just bought Sapperton manor at a 'smart rate'.⁷⁷ But they were also frequently the first ones to notify the absent landowner of newly available land. In 1708 two farms came up for sale in the locality. John Fleck advised strongly against Mr Rastell's farm in Great Ponton, he 'cannot encourage' Newton to purchase it unless he could purchase the whole of the manor around it. Mr Rastell's farm was neither 'improvable nor tenantable'. Fleck had already negotiated for Mr Archer who 'now thanked him' for dropping it, as he had left it to Fleck's 'management'.⁷⁸ A few months later another farm, which Fleck did not identify by name, became available. It was an 'entire free hold manor' of 200 acres of 'old enclosure' and 500 acres of arable, which could be let for £200 and would cost £3,000. This one caused Fleck to write several letters, but he did not get an answer which caused him to worry that he had 'given occasion for (Newton's) .. displeasure'. His last letter on this subject was sent with a messenger, in case the others had miscarried, and Newton's endorsement 'answered' means he got his reply but no copy remains.⁷⁹

On 20 April 1709 Slater informed Newton that he had been approached by

76 GRO, D1844-C10-5, 18 September 1706, Milles to Newton; D1844-C10-4, 27 October 1706, Sir Richard Cust to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-121, MON7-12-122, MON7-12-123, MON7-12-125, 29 November and 20 December 1706, 8 January and 5 February 1707, Milles to Newton; GRO, D1844-C10-143, 22 February 1707, same to the same; LRO, MON7-12-127, 9 May 1707, same to same.

77 LRO, MON7-12-86, 14 November 1694.

78 GRO, D1844-C10-105, 15 March 1708, Fleck to Newton.

79 GRO, D1844-C10-104 and 91, 24 July and 7 August 1708, Fleck to Newton.

George Fairfax about his farm at Swarby. The tenant John Reynolds had been ordered to 'gitt it cry'd at the markett towns so that he hath a minde to sell it speedily'. In May Slater met Fairfax's agent Mr Torrey at Folkingham fair who offered Newton first refusal, the rents were £15 per year, but he had no purchase price. Slater complained politely that he had sent four letters about this before 'but hath noe answer from any of them', and he longed to 'hear your worships order'. In June Slater visited Fairfax who asked £400, claiming it was let at £18 per year, and Slater said the price was too high, because it was heavily taxed and the neighbours had informed him it would bear only £15 rent. Fairfax tried to sweeten the deal with the offer of his dead son's farm which was to be sold to pay for the portions of his only three daughters, though then under-age. Fairfax wrote directly to Newton after Slater relayed his observation that the price was too high. Fairfax said it was easily rented and 'capable of a dubble improvement' and so didn't doubt that he could sell it for £400 when he 'made the sale of it Pubblick'. Fairfax claimed his friend knew a gentleman who had a friend with £800 to £1000 to 'dispose of in a purchase', but he would not deal with him until Newton had the first refusal, giving the reason that Newton had some land 'in that Towne already'. Fairfax was certain that he would not part with it for less than £400. Slater told him on Newton's orders that they might deal if he would moderate his price. By October Fairfax resorted to sending his son to Slater, saying he would accept twenty years purchase on £18 annual rents, but Slater's local information was that Fairfax had recently raised the rents from £15 which was all that the land would

bear. In February 1710 Slater went to Swarby to complete a terrier taking two or more days. By April the conveyance must have been nearly agreed as Slater was asking Newton if he wanted the £200 he had with him in the country paid to Fairfax, and by May John Calcraft (his steward and the Grantham attorney handling the conveyance) reported that Fairfax was pressing for payment. There was some concern over title of part of the farm purchased from one Mr Jessop which was part of the sale, and Fairfax met Calcraft at Lincoln assizes in August and gave him orders to get a copy of the fine between Jessop and Fairfax. Calcraft seems to have been acting for both Newton and Fairfax, though Newton had his own lawyer in London, Peniston Lamb. Fairfax was by now in dire need of money having agreed to pay a sum of money to repay a mortgage on his late son's farm. Calcraft asked whether Newton wanted to make a part payment, which is what Slater must have been anticipating in April. The conveyance was completed on 26 September 1710 for £340, a considerable discount to the £400 which Fairfax claimed was achievable.⁸⁰

In 1710 land in Barkston was purchased from the widow of Mr Trott worth £25 per year. Mr Trott was the previous incumbent of Heydour, who died in November 1690 having been rector since 1662. The conveyance was from the widow Mrs Trott, her son, Mr and Mrs Aaron and Mr and Mrs Ekins for eighty-one acres in

80 GRO, D1844-C10-101, D1844-C10-100, 20 April and 2 May 1709, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-124, 23 May, Newton to Slater (note on Slater's letter); D1844-C11-46 and D1844-C10-40, 29 May and 4 June, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-56, 22 June, Fairfax to Newton; D1844-C10-125 and D1844-C10-3, 6 August and 15 October, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-18, 26 November, Slater to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-140, 31 December, same to same; MON7-12-158, no date, in John Calcraft's hand, two notes on contract requirements; MON7-12-143, 18 February 1710, Slater to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-9, 8 April, Slater to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-156, 1 May, Calcraft to Newton; MON7-12-159, 10 August 1710, Calcraft to Newton; MON7-12-147, 24 August, Peniston Lamb to Newton; GRO, D1844-C26-2, list of conveyances.

Barkston for £525. The news of its sale 'is not yet Broke' and Mr Edmund Trott could be found in Bow Churchyard in London, who was to tell Newton more.⁸¹ In the same year John Quincey a neighbour in Rippingale in Lincolnshire, near Grantham, offered a piece of land in Aunsby to Jack Newton. He said he badly needed the money. One of the gentry families of Rippingale was Thomas Lister who was a kinsman of Jack Newton and rented land in Aunsby to Jack's father in 1652.⁸² Jack's reply does not survive but Quincey wrote again. The letter was directed to his house in Soho Square, Westminster, but Jack was spending the summer at Mrs Darley's house on the Thames at Richmond. By October the purchase was proceeding and Quincey wrote again. The transaction dragged on and in January the following year Jack's attorney in Grantham said that he had not received the title deeds. In June 1711 Quincey said that he needed to know whether Jack would have Mill Field or not, because he had an urgent need to repay the mortgage moneys borrowed within a fortnight. If he had no word by the next post he would dispose of the land to an honest gentleman 'who will have it'. A final word from Quincey ends the correspondence, with him stating that he never bargains with his tenants to pay tithe for them. In September 1711 John Calcraft wrote to say that he was nearly ready with the conveyance, and soon after to say that Quincey wanted payment. Conveyance was on 22 September 1711 for £300.⁸³

81 LRO, MON7-12-143, 18 February 1710, Slater to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-49, 27 February 1710, Slater to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-21, 14 November 1719, John Troughton to Newton, which notes 'The Hill Side £16pa, The Townsend Close £8pa, The heath, £1pa'.

82 Thomas Lister esquire of Coleby and John Colthurst gentleman of Aunsby rented to John Newton enclosed 240 acres in Aunsby with Dembleby lordship south, Heydour lordship west and Culverthorpe lordship north for £10, see LRO, MON3-31-5.

83 LRO, MON7-12-145, 24 June 1710, Quincey to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-84 and D1844-C11-45, 8 July and 24 July 1710, Slater to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-140, 28 August, Quincey to Newton; D1844-C11-28, 18 September, Slater to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-148, 2 October, same to same;

Between April 1709 and July 1710 overtures were made to purchase Mrs. Lodington's farm at Welby, around 260 acres with a house and cottage and 'horse and beast commons sufficient for the farm and cottage', with a yearly rent of £15, the old rent 'accounted 13s 4d per annum'. After an initial approach there was no activity until in February 1710 Slater reported that Mrs Lodington had died. Joshua Clarke led the negotiations but Mr Brown was 'joyn'd to me in equal power'. Clarke wrote to Slater telling him to get his due diligence information from Thomas Silson 'who has long bee Mrs Lodington's chief Labourer, and ..is an honest man, and will tell you the truth of every thing'. Slater told Clarke that Sir Jack required a precise answer as to the asking price, but Clarke said Mr Brown 'hardly knows his own min, until he hears what Another will give', and asked for Newton's highest price, adding that he should be quick 'for other put in' but that they would wait for his answer. Clarke cut out Slater in the next letter writing to Newton directly, saying the farm was worth twenty years purchase or £300, and he hoped to sort the whole thing out in a few letters. This was a triumph of hope over experience as it still took more than a year to complete. Newton asked Clarke, via his steward Slater, for the details of the farm. The present tenant reported Clarke was on a three year lease parole, with 'formal lease of it under hand and seal, but only a full memorandum under Mr Brown's hand and mind on the one part, and John Hutchinson's on the other, but as Newton knew 'a lease parole is good'. After

GRO, D1844-C11-91, 1 November, Quincey to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-154, 24 January 1711, Calcraft to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-36, 16 June 1711, Quincey to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-289, 30 June 1711, same to same; MON7-12-161 and 162, 8 and 24 September 1711, Calcraft to Newton.

Newton apparently refused to name his highest price Clarke gave in to Newton's demand for Clarke's lowest price, which was £320, £20 more than formerly. This was conditional on Mr Brown agreeing, though Clarke did not doubt that he would, also repairs currently under way were to be at Newton's cost, as they would have done under his ownership if the deal had not been taking so long. Newton offer £280, and Clarke wondered 'that any man' would think that enough, he claimed that the delay whilst they negotiated with Newton had lost them bargains above £300 'for I am assured young Petchil would have bid on ..£300', but seeing so much competition for the farm he bought the farm he was already renting. There is no evidence that the purchase went ahead.⁸⁴

On 9 April 1711 Thomas Slater wrote to say that he had just heard 'and not before' that the lordship of Silk Willoughby was for sale. It was a 'very fine lordship just upon your own estate and let very cheape to the tenants'. He thought it would be sold cheap as the rents were so low, but very improvable. John Calcraft, Newton's manorial steward at Grantham, knew it well as he collected the rents. Newton acquired the rental in London and sent it to Slater who visited the parish to check its accuracy. It was, he found, accurate; and the rents amounted to over £511 per year. Slater did some additional due diligence and wrote to two tenants there – Isaac Nash and Thomas Medley – 'with haste' asking for details of the lordship. Medley, the largest tenant paying £100 per year, wrote to Slater with details of

84 GRO, D1844-C24-21, 16 April 1709, Joshua Clarke to Slater; LRO, MON7-12-143, 18 February 1710, Slater to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-20, D1844-C11-4, D1844-C11-147, and D1844-C11-122, 8 May, 3 June, 3 July, and 24 July 1710, Clarke to Newton.

several rent charges of over £250, and mentioning that one wall of his house was coming down and the carpenters and masons had told him it would cost £60 'a great deal of money'. Newton seems to have asked Calcraft for more information on the rent charges and how it would affect the value, but Calcraft demurred, saying that without them and with clear title it would be an 'extraordinary good bargain' at twenty years purchase. Calcraft had heard rumours that Sir John Thorold is 'about it', but he gave the stories 'no credit' since he had heard nothing from him and Thorold had told him in London that he would 'meddle with noe more purchases'.⁸⁵

Slater informed Sir Jack that a cottage at Swarby was available, with one acre of orchard and three acres of field, producing £3 10s rent and it was 'an improveing thing'. Slater visited the owner Thomas Sandy, a weaver, whose lowest price was £80, but Slater thought this was too much, and according to the neighbours it was worth only £70 based on the rents it would let at. Sandy was prepared to rent the cottage and land back at £5 per year with his brother. There is no evidence that the purchase went ahead.⁸⁶ In the same year a purchase was made in Barkston, which was probably the purchase for £145 from William Ekins and his wife 'of their land in Barkston', with a covenant to levy a fine and suffer a Recovery'.⁸⁷

In October 1712 Sir Jack Newton's former servant Joshua Brooke wrote to give

85 LRO, MON7-12-189, 9 April 1711, Slater to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-119, 14 April, Slater to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-160, 30 April 1711, Calcraft to Newton. Related to this transaction is GRO, D1844-C24-22, no date, Thomas Medley to Slater.

86 LRO, MON7-12-189 and 191, 9 and 28 April 1711, Slater to Newton.

87 LRO, MON28/B/11/2/39, 6 June 1711, Peniston Lamb gave a receipt for the custody of a conveyance of land in Barkston.

more details of an estate at North Witham that was for sale. The yearly value was £400 with a patronage of £120 per year. Brooke had been informed by a 'gentleman' who reckoned there were 'advantaging circumstances', Brooke thought it might be purchased on 'favourable terms'. He promised to give more particulars than a letter would 'admit of'. The purchase does not seem to have proceeded.⁸⁸

In 1720 Sir Jack bought Brooke's farm for £736 6s. In March of that year Newton asked John Richardson, his long serving steward in Lincolnshire, for his advice on the farm in Swarby, near to Culverthorpe, which was available. In this case the steward did not hear first. Although Richardson's advice was sought and given, he was not in this case involved in the purchase, and Newton informed him of his purchase some five months later, in August.⁸⁹

In February 1712 Mr John Watson of Grantham approached Thomas Slater offering first refusal to Sir Jack Newton on five cottages in Swarby, adjacent to Culverthorpe. Watson wanted a quick answer, he was apparently in desperate need of money, however he would have to wait well over a year for the purchase to complete. The conveyance was on 19 May 1713 for £300.⁹⁰

In the middle of the negotiations to purchase the cottages at Swarby Thomas

88 LRO, MON7-12-198, 29 October 1712, Joshua Brook to Newton.

89 LRO, MON7-14-210, 5 March 1720, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-212, 18 March, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-228, 25 August 1720, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-236, 8 December 1720, Michael Oates to Newton.

90 GRO, D1844-C11-19, 11 February 1712, Slater to Newton; D1844-C11-41 and D1844-C11-30 (a rental), 12 and 28 May, John Watson to Newton; D1844-C11-113, 14 June, William Wyche to Newton; D1844-C11-88 and D1844-C11-155, 15 June and 4 October, Watson to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-197, 13 October, Peniston Lamb to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-89, 12 December, Watson to Newton; D1844-C11-94, 1 January 1713, Lamb to Newton; D1844-C11-39, 9 February, Wyche to Newton; D1844-C11-111, 8 April, Wyche to Newton; D1844-C11-58 and D1844-C11-143, 11 and 25 April, Slater to Newton; D1844-C11-145, 4 May, Watson to Newton.

Slater was called to the house of Mr Pell at Dembleby and Newton was offered first refusal of some land there. Slater reported it was worth £17 per year and Pell wanted twenty-one years purchase, it lay next to the land which Newton had purchased from John Quincey. This was probably the purchase noted years later of two fields, in total a little over fifty-two acres, in Dembleby from Henry Pell esquire on 7 September for £300.⁹¹

In July 1720 Sir Jack was informed by Mr Knipe of Grantham that the lease of Croxton manor for twenty-one years was to be available. Knipe was one third owner of Aunsby manor with Newton. Knipe was asked by Newton to act as principal in the negotiation of the purchase, a device which was intended to keep his identity secret as the potential buyer. He instructed his steward Richardson to 'informe .. what you thinke it may be worth a year .. and keep it a secret'. Richardson's ague prevented him initially ⁹²

The accumulation of property continued late into Sir Jack Newton's life, and kinsmen continued to be important. Another estate was to be purchased from one Mr Nottingham in 1730, and Sir Jack Newton's kinsman, Dr Humphrey Newton, in Grantham intervened on their behalf, as the conveyancing had dragged on for over a year and a half, and the children needed the land to be sold for portions.⁹³

Some payments in the London bank accounts were clearly for part of the purchase of land, though the correspondence shows that some of the consideration

91 GRO, D1844-C11-35, 18 October 1712, Slater to Newton.

92 LRO, MON7-14-223, 16 July 1720, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-227, 13 August, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-228, 25 August, Newton to Richardson.

93 LRO, MON7-14-251, 3 January 1730, Humphrey Newton to Sir Jack Newton; MON7-14-113, 10 January, Newton to Humphrey Newton; MON7-14-252, 2 February, Humphrey Newton to Newton.

was satisfied from rents locally, and sent to the vendor by steward or tenant bailiff.⁹⁴

Sales

In keeping with Richard Fox's injunction to gather rather than scatter, sales of land were rare. The few notable exceptions were parcels of land which were detached from the other land. In 1656 two sales were made: the manor of Ropsley (purchased in 1610) was sold to William Harvey, gentleman; and a tenanted house in Swinegate in Grantham was sold for £200 to William Gardener, esquire of Grantham, with its sitting tenant Henry Forman.⁹⁵ In 1659 John Newton sold the Buckminster land with its £40 rents to his cousin Hannah Smith, Isaac Newton's mother.⁹⁶ The land at Balderton in Nottinghamshire purchased from the Bussey family of Heydour and held since the reign of Elizabeth was sold to Mr Mason in 1686.⁹⁷ Southley manor and the Datchett manor house 'and a large estate in land' were sold by Gervase Newton to Edward Lascalles, a London merchant for £6,850, to pay for the obligations which his father had made to his younger children (Penelope, Ellinor and Frances) of over £5,000 but which had not been fulfilled at his death, together with some other unspecified debts.⁹⁸ Gervase Newton toyed with the idea of selling East Harptree in 1710, offering that Jack might buy it from

94 HB, Ledger 14/264, October 1711, 'To John Quincey £100'; Ledger 10/257, 23 Apr 1709 'To Matthew Johnson £1,690' is probably a conveyance payment; Ledger 12/145, 1710, Edmund Trott, £117 10s.

95 For Grantham house see LRO, MON3-31-10, 14 June 1656; Ropsley manor, LRO, MON3-31-50, 20 November 1656.

96 Hampshire RO, 15M84/2/7/7, 20 July 1659.

97 GRO, D1844-C14-39, 8 May 1686, Edward Brown to Newton.

98 See Bristol RO, 5139/411 and 5139/351, two deeds in 1703; another 5139/35, 20 May 1704.

him, evidently Jack did not, which is not surprising when he had expected to inherit it for free in 1699 on the death of their father.⁹⁹ The same letter indicates that Jack Newton was considering selling Barr's Court mansion house, which he also did not.

With these exceptions no land was ever sold, and the Culverthorpe estate was passed to Sir Michael Newton then down female lines with changes of name in every generation until some time after 1910 the Hall was sold and the most of the estate auctioned in July 1918.¹⁰⁰ The Barr's court estate passed from Sir John Newton to Gervase Newton then to his nephew Sir Michael Newton, Jack's son, bypassing Jack himself. It passed from Sir Michael Newton to his nephew Michael (Eyre) Archer, who changed his name to Michael Newton, he died without an heir and his sister Catherine Blundell took it. It finally passed out of the family in 1819 when the estate was sold.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The application of complex and deconstructive precepts produces the implication and expectation that there could be no origins in the early modern English complex network, only representatives, perpetually substituting author for author, sign for sign, name for name, title for title, in a ceaseless chain of mediations. The evidence from the letter-books supports this expectation. It can be seen from the foregoing

99 LRO, MON7-14-157, February 1710, Gervase Newton to Sir Jack Newton. See LRO, MON7-14-155 for Jack's attempts in law to get hold of it.

100 North Kesteven District Council, *A brief history of Culverthorpe Hall* (unpublished pamphlet, 1985), 5. *Country Life* (1923). Kelly (ed.), *Directories of Lincolnshire* (1876, 1889, 1905, 1913, 1922).

101 Lady Alice Archer-Houblon, *The Houblon family, its stories and times* (London, 1907), vol. 2, 279. <https://archive.org/details/houblonfamilyits01houbuoft>

that the social production of real estate was a shared offer to collapse this physical complex network of perpetual substitutions, erasing all the mediations, agents and gaps, and forgetting the playful chain that produced it. In this way the production of land was imagined to spread over a population without intermediation. The activity that was real estate was imagined to be solid, permanent, and stable. Instead of a verb real estate was collapsed into a noun, a noun impossibly held in the hand of a real person.

This was how Sir John Newton possessed land in Lincolnshire and yet lived in London and Gloucestershire. His capital was not in his hands, he did not possess it (not being there). His land was not moveable capital like gold, but this was not the reason he did not hold it. Jack Newton and his father Sir John Newton, were always already absent from the Lincolnshire soil. The landlord's being in London simply exaggerated a gap that was already there. When Sir John lived in Heydour he was still absent from his land, he still only held it metaphorically. Was it trust which closed up and held the gaps together? Was it faith in the crown, God or the church, or confidence in property law, or a civil society of contracts? The systemic gap between the narrative and the physical world was reconciled not by those narratives, but rather by a network of cooperating social individuals, physically, discursively and reflexively producing real estate. Key, but not exclusive, in this network were the men and women who managed their estates for them. The family took into their service stewards, bailiffs, servants, gamekeepers, and attorneys so that they could seek to maintain an economic relationship of lending their capital

for gold with the men and widows who were their tenants, who narratively held the land from them.

The general pattern of the correspondence was one determined by absence. Steward letters exist when the landlord was not resident. Both Sir John Newton and his son Jack Newton were many miles from the land they owned for most of their lives (Figure 5). The correspondents in the letter-books likewise continually drew attention to the distance between the landowner (and manorial lord) and the tenants, stewards and servants in the parish. Richard Jones complained that Sir John was away from his estate, and desire him 'to hasten to yor estate and business in these parts. I doe my best to keep all in quiet and order for you, Butt you may doe better if you were in place'. Tenants and steward alike complained of their master's absence.¹⁰² The Newtons' almost permanent absence meant that servants who remained there in Lincolnshire whilst their master was back in London or at Bitton retained a great deal of autonomy.¹⁰³ Relations in a network must be, and were, always mediated. When a steward asked for orders he or she was mediating between the master and the tenant or between the master and the steward. Some were more confident than others in acting without direct instruction. Richard Pett told Jack Newton 'whatever occurs in your absence I shall do for you as I think you would your self, when I have not directions from you'.¹⁰⁴ The

102 GRO, D1844-C2-7, 23 May 1665, Richard Jones to Sir John Newton. See also LRO, MON7-13-166, Stringer to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-55, Barker to Newton; GRO, D1844-C10-70, 31 January 1709, Mackinder to Newton; D1844-C10-79 and D1844-C11-78, 19 January 1709 and 7 August 1715, Mackinder to Newton.

103 Contrast this with Sir Richard Newdigate who was perpetually resident between 1681 and 1710 at his house (Hindle, 'Below stairs', 71).

104 GRO, D1844-C9-5, 28 August 1685, Pett to Jack Newton.

stewards' letters perpetually begged for further instruction or order, and they worried that they might exceed their authority, particularly when paying money.

The physical and discursive production of real estate is evident from the forgoing. However, the degree to which real estate was reflexively produced is harder to get at. Reflexive copying and reproduction was part of the security that the Newtons enjoyed, it consisted in the ongoing cooperation of conditioned socialised individuals – tacitly and overtly accepting real estate narratives, and physical and metaphorical boundaries without denying or challenging them. These systemic imperatives were profoundly cohesive and stabilising, and were iterated day to day. This left him able to leave his land, unoccupied by himself, and without arms or armed men, using physical power as might have been necessary in the centuries before. It was a habitual activity of farmers, neighbours and clergy who begged to be tenants; of tenants who begged for a manorial court; of the parishioners of Culverthorpe, Barkston, or Aisby for example excluding themselves from John and Jack Newton's land without the hindrance of walls, ditches and hedges.

Chapter 4

Moving and holding money

Precious metal money moved from one place to another to pay for services, rent, goods, energy, horses, land purchases, investment, and as a loan to debtors and to repay creditors. The physical presence of money as a precious metal – both as a means to live and a form of moveable capital – is entirely alien to the modern world. Gold and silver coins could be held, touched, and had a heavy weight which could be felt, and a shiny lustre that is entirely absent from a modern small banknote, metal token, printed number or electronic digit. The physical experience of gold and silver was also a physical experience when it came to collecting, holding, paying or moving it. The weight of the metal was also a measure of its value. The consistency of density of the metal meant that its weight was a reliable index of its quantity – which was the desired measure, but the weight reduced over time.¹ As the English economy expanded during the second half of the sixteenth century and accelerated during the second half of the seventeenth century, it was money's physicality that led to the development of social networks cooperating to move money.² The increasing presence in Restoration London of younger sons of country gentry noted by Earle together with a marked increase in the development and population of the city enforced these money-moving social networks.³ This was amplified by an increase in the number of gentlemen with an estate taking a house

1 The weight of the 240 pennies in a pound fell as the weight of a penny fell from 24 grains in the eighth-century to 7.8 grains in 1601, where it remained stable until 1816, see A. E. Feavearyear, *The pound Sterling. A history of English money* (Oxford, 1963), Appendix 3.2, 43.

2 For a synopsis of this progression see Craig Muldrew, *The economy of obligation: the culture of credit and social relations in early modern England* (New York, 1998), 15-36.

3 Peter Earle, *The making of the English middle class* (London, 1989), 6-7.

in London, whilst retaining their remote real-estate capital. Further to this the credit revolution both in private lending described by Muldrew and in the new innovations in banking, public lending and annuity schemes in the so-called Financial Revolution, increased the velocity of money, making its movement easier, and more fluid than before. A large and diverse network of stewards and bailiffs, attorneys, kinsmen, bankers, tradesmen, drovers and (to a lesser extent) servants, were deeply involved in the physical transmission of money, collecting it, holding it, paying it out, or returning it to their absent master.⁴

Collecting money

Money came to the family in the form of rents, fines, amercements, dividends on stock and interest on government bonds or annuities; from the return of loans, interest on those loans, but also the sale of timber, or commodities including coal and lead. With the widespread real estate interests of the family this currency was collected in spatially disparate places – Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire in the north, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Berkshire in the west, and Norfolk and Suffolk in the east.

A constant refrain throughout the letters from the stewards reporting back to their master was the passing of promises to pay as soon as possible. In one of the earliest letters dated 1661 John Padman told Sir John Newton that he had been with Mr Taylour last Wednesday and 'hee promised mee that hee will pay in what money hee Can and a sewne as possible may be'. This formulation is frequent

4 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, Chapter 5.

and typical of many such promises made to absent masters, practically every letter concerning money collection features it.⁵ John Lenton tried unsuccessfully to get money from three of John Newton's debtors. He was forced to write and confess his failure, but in doing so he illustrated the fact that servants were sometimes debt collectors. The last of these debtors, Mr Blythe, was a kinsman and illustrates that kinsmen were debtors, which could add a layer of complication for the creditor in recovering their debt.⁶

Tenants sometimes offered their rent to a steward but had it refused, or accepted on further conditions.⁷ Servants were ordered to receive money, and were also commanded to collect money on behalf of the wards of their masters.⁸ In the social network of the family everyone was a collector of money, even the head of the family Sir John Newton was appointed as 'attorney to receive money'.⁹ Tenants were appointed to receive rents as bailiffs, or perhaps less formally than that. William Mackinder was employed by Dame Mary Newton to collect her Lincolnshire rents in her absence, she lived mainly in Gloucestershire from about 1681 until after the death of her husband Sir John Newton, then in Derbyshire at Renishaw. She later told her son Jack that she 'found by Dear experience that it was not good two imploy a tennant two receive ones rents'.¹⁰ Bailiffs were sometimes related to other servants in the family, as Dame Mary points out in the same letter, her late

5 GRO, D1844-C2-25, 1661.

6 LRO, MON7-12-15, 15 July 1661, John Lenton to John Newton; See also LRO, MON7-12-35, 1 May 1682, Fleck to Newton; For more on kin credit see Chapter 4 'Informal credit'.

7 GRO, D1844-C4-70, 20 December 1684, William Swift to Sir John Newton.

8 LRO, MON7-12-15; MON7-13-11; GRO, D1844-C11-127.

9 GRO, D1844-X1.

10 LRO, MON7-13-68, undated, Mary Newton to Jack Newton.

husband employed William Mackinder's father as a servant, most likely as a bailiff himself rather than a domestic servant. Bailiffs who were also tenants could cause difficulties for other tenants when they were in dispute with them over other issues within the parish. Widow Isabel West pleaded with Sir Jack Newton to let her pay his steward rather than Goodman Joseph Barron as his dispute over common rights with her and thirteen others was ongoing. She feared that he would be 'vexatious' to her.¹¹ John Blow, who was both a London attorney and a kinsman, was heavily involved in the family's need to move and hold money. In 1694 he had received money in London from tenants and was expecting more from the steward John Fleck.¹²

George Beaver dealt with Bristol exporters of bark on behalf of his master's brother-in-law Anthony Eyre and Mrs Packington in 1668. On 28 March he met the 'bark men' who had written to Eyre weeks before advising that they would pay £45 a ton delivered at Bristol Quay 'free from all charge, (and) marchantable'.¹³ Sir John in London and Beaver in Bristol were acting as intermediaries for others. Mrs Packington, though not a kinswoman was in negotiations with Sir John's son Richard at this time to be his spouse. The export merchants clearly had the stronger hand in these negotiations with landlords selling their bark, offering to take a 'trough of it' or they would 'provide them selves elsewhere'.¹⁴ Beaver also made

11 GRO, D1844-C11-112.

12 GRO, D1844-C5-8, 12 June 1694, John Blow to Sir John Newton. See also GRO, D1844-C4-29, 17 August 1686; LRO, MON7-12-57, 24 September 1687; GRO, D1844-C4-85, 6 December 1688. His exact relationship to Sir John Newton is unclear, but one of his name is mentioned in the will of the Sir John's great uncle Richard Hickson.

13 Bark was used principally for tanning, see L. A. Clarkson, 'The English bark trade, 1660-1830', *Agricultural History Review* 22:2 (1974), pp. 134-152.

14 GRO, D1844-C2-3, 28 March 1668, Beaver to Newton.

enquiries at Bristol on behalf of Sir John of the 'rates lead sells at Bristol'. It is evident that Sir John had a large quantity of lead to sell. Beaver gave his commercial view of the proposed transaction advising that 'it will be better to sell al
yor lead at that rate (£13) then to borrow mony'.¹⁵

When money had been collected at the bank it was withdrawn by a number of people. Over the whole period the accounts show a number of servants regularly withdrawing money. The servants John Scarlet, Henry Everitt, Bartholomew Coates, Robert Gale, and probably one George Dirham all make regular withdrawals. John Scarlet made his first withdrawal on 4 May 1696 and his last on 6 July the following year. He continued to work for Jack Newton as his accounts attest but from that point George Dirham seems to take over and makes seven withdrawals of £20 or £30 until 1 March 1701. Whilst Dirham was still employed and taking money from the account Robert Gale, another servant, started making withdrawals in April 1700 and continued until his last withdrawal on 9 June 1712.¹⁶ Almost all withdrawals for 'himself' or by these servants was for £30, save Scarlett who was allowed to withdraw £50, and occasionally where £20 sufficed. Gale made 126 withdrawals of £30 each over the twelve years of his service, totalling around £3,780. Dirham made nineteen withdrawals totalling around £330, Bartholomew Coats made eighteen withdrawals totalling around £540, and Henry

15 GRO, D1844-C2-2, 6 April 1668, Beaver to Newton. For money agents receiving interest see GRO, D1844-C11-149, 23 November 1713, Rawson Hart to Sir Jack Newton.

16 HB, Ledger 3/34. John Scarlett kept accounts for Jack Newton. For a printed transcript of two manuscript accounts 1693 - 1697, see *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, Vol. 16 (1921), 120; and *Accompt of money disbursed by John Scarlett for ye use of my master Jno Newton beginning Jun ye 5th 1693*, 2 vol., (including 1701-1704); HB, Ledger 3/34 to 14/264.

Everitt five totalling £150, and John Scarlett five worth £250. In total these four servants withdrew around £5,050 over sixteen years between 1696 and 1712. Thomas Headon, who continued to work for the family after Sir Jack's death, was paid £1,450 on the orders of Sir Michael Newton in 1729.¹⁷ The pattern of withdrawals indicates a high degree of cooperation in a group of servants, over a long period of time, and many transactions.

Holding money

In the country stewards were expected to hold money received on behalf of the master themselves. There were no bank accounts in the parishes around Grantham, nor any banks in the town. Safe custody of gold was the responsibility of the steward. There is no evidence of stewards complaining that they held too much money on account of a worry about security. Few stewards' accounts survive, but the steward must have planned ahead to manage the account balance, because if not he would be expected to manage any temporary shortfall himself. Richard Pett in 1686 knew that his master Jack Newton would need £200 in the near future and had planned for the expense, saying 'he would have it ready against the time'.¹⁸

This private account meant that sometimes the steward made greater payments than he had received and held on his master's behalf. The steward therefore acted not only as a short term creditor to the absent master, but by implication as a

17 LRO, MON7-12-224, 25 April 1729, Michael Newton.

18 GRO, D1844-C4-17, 1 March 1686, Pett to Jack Newton.

cash-low buffer for that absent master. There is no evidence that this credit was created by formal agreement, but it arose as a result of the interrelationship of two men acting under an agreement but separated, with the master being absent, at a distance of three days ride. This unintentional extending of credit – was made possible by that arrangement and by the steward's expectation that his master could be trusted, and would honour his informal debt and make good. It was the practical properties of a physical money system that lead to the negotiated need for what was in effect an 'overdraft facility', it was a result of the exigencies of the particular money movement system. The negotiation of the credit was not a formal one, but rather arose organically from the flux of other agreements, and narratives of duty and obligation. It was an agreement formed from customary expectation – an understanding that this credit would be extended if it were needed – proceeding from precedents set by others and noticed and copied over time.

The stewards had occasion to complain or at least ask for a restitution of their deficit. The stewards were only able to fund this customary and ad-hoc arrangement if they had sufficient capital (working capital in modern parlance) of their own. The steward had to have his or her own resources in order to serve his master in London or Gloucestershire. These resources came from the steward's own business interests, which for this family at least were in agricultural leases. When their own business income fell because of the unpredictability of the weather, which could adversely affect their crop yields, this could have a knock-on effect on their ability to finance the credit to their master. In July 1684 John Fleck in

Lincolnshire told his master Sir John Newton in Bitton that he had paid various 'sums of money on his account' and that 'his own affairs are going badly'. The cold last winter and dry summer they were experiencing had reduced his wheat crop to just seed for the next year with no surplus, and his hay crop was 90% lower than the previous year.¹⁹ However, a steward could also be a debtor themselves, if they had collected more money in than they had paid out, and this would have been the normal state of affairs between the steward and master.²⁰

This close relationship of the steward, the financial affairs of the distant and absent master, and the network of people necessarily involved, inevitably led to disputes about money transactions. In 1726 Thomas Headon was accused by Jack Newton of 'deceiving about money', he responded by saying that he was acting in accordance with the views of Jack's attorney Peniston Lamb.²¹ As we saw in chapter one, on top of problems relating to how money was handled, there was the ever present risk that the stewards business affairs would interfere with the smooth running of the master's affairs. The close intermingling of business and money could also lead to problems when one steward took over from another. In the late spring of 1685 Richard Pett evidently took over from one called Wood, whom Pett styled 'a dog in a doublet' and who according to Pett is 'by his own friends.. confessed not to understand or be fit your business'. Wood, by Pett's account, appears to have omitted from his accounts with Jack Newton 10s he took from the Baker 'for trespass' under manorial law and a similar sum from Mr Coy, a tenant,

19 LRO, MON7-12-41, 17 July 1684, Fleck to Newton.

20 LRO, MON7-12-51, Pett to Newton.

21 LRO, MON7-12-218, 20 August 1726, Headon to Newton.

for repairs, which remained 'unaccounted for to you'. Pett hoped Jack would not let Wood 'go away with' it.²²

Storage of physical money in boxes and chests was common, and boxes (often black) were also used to keep 'writings', documents and deeds relating to capital, land or credit. These boxes and chests were entrusted to other cooperating people such as family or their attorney. Matthew Lamb had custody of Sir Jack Newton's box, which he held many years after Sir Jack's death in 1743.²³ The use of a chest could not guarantee the safety of money or documents. A trunk of gold was stolen by Royalist soldiers whilst in the custody of John Newton's mother Elizabeth at Great Gonerby. We have no account of John Newton's schoolboy activity in Grantham at this time, but on 26 March 1643 'Troopes went from Newarke towards Welbecke. and fetcht 5000£ from Mistress Newton of Gunwarby'.²⁴ The sixteen year old schoolboy left his lodgings and travelled to Belvoir and to Newark to find his mother and his gold.²⁵ He found his mother and stayed in Newark. The discovery of the gold by the soldiers was probably not an accident, after all it could easily be hidden – the soldiers travelling from Newark must have known it was there before they travelled. Trustees could be asked to take custody of sums payable at some later date under instructions in a will, and William Welby a kinsman of John Newton later had a trunk containing the gold and in 1646 he had 'the same legacie still in

22 GRO, D1844-C9-28, 13 July 1685, Pett to Newton.

23 LRO, MON28/B/11/2/79, 20 October, no year but after Sir Michael's death - probably 1743.

24 William Hamper (ed.), *The Life, diary and correspondence of Sir William Dugdale Knight* (London, 1827). The editor of Dugdale's diary refuses to believe that so much money was held and thinks Dugdale mistaken.

25 TNA, SP23-187 f.88.

his hands'.²⁶ Sometimes the trustee would trust another person to hold the money, and this could lead to disputes. In 1715 Humphrey Newton a Grantham resident, and a kinsman of Sir Jack Newton, wrote to him in London saying that he was trustee to one Mr Benton's daughter, whose mother had remarried one of Jack's tenants, William Mackinder. The money was held by a third party and not by Humphrey himself. Mackinder knew who held the money, and 'called it in' without Humphrey's knowledge three or four years earlier. Mackinder refused to pay the money 'which he has had in his hands' to Newton who had

'used what methods I could think of to get it into my hands for the Childs Security, but cannot as yet obtain it, neither is there any way to doe it, as the Law advises me, without going into the Chancery ... I have left no stone unturn'd but all in vain'. 'The world' he said 'blesmes me that I do not look after it'.²⁷

Adult kinsmen were often asked to stand as trustees, or supervisors or executors of their kin, and were given responsibility for children in a variety of ways. The letter-books and related documents are full of these relationships. Close family members acted as trustees in marriage settlements and in trusts established in wills for the benefit of children. Jack Newton was asked to be a trustee of Robert Sacheverell his brother in law when he died in October 1691.²⁸ Jack Newton's sister Jane Sacheverell was 'soe full of trouble that she cannot write to you her selfe' and asked her kinsman Mr Mansfield to write on her behalf. Mansfield was careful to

26 TNA, SP19-140 f.34.

27 LRO, MON7-14-249, 7 July 1715, Newton to Newton. Humphrey Newton was secretary to Isaac Newton whilst he prepared his Principia Mathematica in 1686-7.

28 See LRO, MON7-13-179; MON7-13-143; MON7-12-74; MON7-13-181; MON7-13-157; MON7-13-168; GRO, D1844-C5-10; LRO, MON7-13-184; MON7-13-167; MON7-13-185; MON7-13-162; MON7-13-169; MON7-13-169; MON7-13-160; MON7-13-158; GRO, D1844-C5-12; LRO, MON7-13-145; MON7-13-146; MON7-13-217; MON7-13-149; MON7-13-200; MON7-13-156. For another earlier request from Elizabeth Carr to Sir John Newton see LRO, MON7-12-40, 10 February 1685.

point out that the office would not make Jack liable for any debt of his brother-in-law so that 'none of his debts can trouble you'.²⁹ The onerous burden of being trustee did lead to refusal as when Sir Jack, still encumbered with the Sacheverell trust, declined his sister Frances in 1704.³⁰ Trustees for money were more than just titular, they needed to take physical custody of gold and silver, or leave it to the custody of another party. Mary Newton petitioned Jack Newton to intervene as a trustee, about Mr Scrope, and to assist in securing his sister Mall's fortune, she thought that his petition would be 'more effectual' than his younger brother Gervase. There was a real issue if Mr Scrope laid his hands on the money, it could be very difficult to get it back for the sister, even if the law was on your side.³¹

Holding money – banks

Before scriveners and goldsmiths began to take deposits of gold and silver and to lease it out again during the period after the Restoration money had to be stored. The wealthy, and we must count Sir John Newton and his family in this category, had a great deal of moveable wealth to store. This was, along with the motive to 'improve their advantage', a good reason to lend it out. Dispersing it to other people with a legally-binding contract to get it back could be actually safer than holding on to it. Lending it to the new private bankers in London was even safer, and the latter took advantage of the concentration of gold in the streets around the square mile and acted as gold brokers. The banks could draw together deposits of

29 LRO, MON7-12-74, 17 December 1691, R Mansfield to Jack Newton.

30 LRO, MON7-14-99, January 1704, Sir Jack to Frances Wigfall.

31 LRO, MON7-13-51.

between £100,000 and £1,000,000, which meant that a similar sum again was being lent out.³² These early bankers took deposits of gold from customer creditors, becoming debtors of their own, and lent out the gold in return for interest, establishing a new set of creditor and debtor relationships.

The only bank the family dealt with, that I am aware of, was Hoare's bank in Fleet Street, next to Temple Bar.³³ The bank has records which date from its foundation by Richard Hoare in 1672 and accounts relating to the Newton family date from 1681. Letters from Richard Hoare and his son Henry appear from 1697 to 1711, and give us a rare view of their activities, as the context of an account-holder whose letter-books are also available.³⁴ These men were (like stewards and servants) not kinsmen of the family, and they had hundreds of customers. Their relationship was familiar in as far as the family were known to Richard and Henry Hoare but far more of a market relationship than with the estate steward and house steward. The character of the relationship can only be determined by the contracts that they made and the evidence from correspondence. The surviving correspondence is dry and functional, the letters are mainly from the bankers and appear both in the letter-books and in the partners' correspondence at Hoare's bank.

Sir John Newton did not have a bank account with Sir Richard Hoare and it is

32 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 115.

33 Richard Hoare was knighted in 1702 by Queen Anne, his son Henry became partner in 1702, though he transacted business before then as the letters show.

34 HB, Partners' outgoing letter book (1701-06), HB/8/T/1, ff. 5, 19, 302, 304, 305, 307, 309. See also in the letter-books: from Henry Hoare, GRO, D1844-C5-29, 3 September 1697; D1844-C5-41, 22 July 1699; D1844-C10-65, 4 February 1706; D1844-C10-24, 23 December 1708, and D1844-C10-33, 13 January 1709; from Sir Richard Hoare, D1844-C9-27, 3 January 1698; and Jack Newton to his bankers, GRO, D1844-C26-31, 8 August 1709; LRO, MON7-14-259 and 257, 6 December 1707 and 19 May 1710.

likely that he did not have one with any other banker. This was as with many new developments a generational thing, a younger generation tending to take up the new innovation more readily than the older. However, this was not universal and Sir John's contemporary Lady Mary Heveningham, mother of his daughter in law, did have an account, opened in 1681. This was despite the fact that she was born in 1631.³⁵ She was not the only woman to open a bank account. In the next generation his son Sir Jack Newton opened an account in April 1695, and used it regularly for over 25 years until it became dormant in 1721. In the next generation Sir John Newton's two granddaughters opened accounts, 'Madam' Cary Newton, aged only fifteen opened one with Hoare's bank in early 1696, and Susanna Newton aged about seventeen in 1710.³⁶ Sir John's only living grandson Michael Newton opened an account at about the age of about thirty-four in 1725.³⁷ The goldsmith's late seventeenth-century financial innovation was therefore taken up by both genders, but increasingly by the younger generation.

Bank accounts were only useful for those with a London residence or who spent a lot of time in London lodgings. Sir John Newton did not live in London on a regular basis after about 1681, when parliament last sat regularly. Jack Newton took up more or less permanent residence in London from around January 1690, living with Lady Mary Heveningham. The residence was confirmed in April 1692

35 HB, Ledgers B/66, C/60+271, D/133+134+415, A/98 Exor: E/27. Goldsmiths Work Book: f.64a.

36 HB, Cary Newton, Customer ledger 2/121; Debt Book/f.188; Susanna Newton Customer ledger 14/55. See also Anne Laurence, 'The emergence of a private clientele for banks in the early eighteenth century: Hoare's Bank and some women customers', *EHR*, 61:3 (August 2008), pp. 565-586; Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby, and Janette Rutterford, (eds.), *Women and their money 1700-1950: Essays on women and finance* (London, 2008).

37 HB, Customer ledgers: H/301, 55/293, 56/232, 58/22, 60/402, 63/392, 65/266.

with the taking of 37, Soho Square in St. Anne's parish. Despite this it was still three years until the Hoare's bank account was opened.

The purpose of the seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century bank account was not to receive interest but to ease the collection, retention and paying out of physical money. Michael Newton noted that gold at a bank was not an investment.³⁸ The goldsmith's provided a service which obviated the risk of holding gold in the insecure household, where thieves and servants could take it. Thefts of gold and silver money and plate were common, and the letter-books give accounts of it in the country.³⁹ Much of the account value was paid in and paid out as a cash alternative, instead of physical money. It was this particular financial innovation, begun centuries earlier in Italy, that took off in late seventeenth-century London, that took the physical metal and transformed it into a narrative, a metaphor of the physical. The paper money was a claim on the physical money, which by the twentieth-century became an accounting entry only, without even the physical paper. To the modern experience money is almost entirely narrative, paper and metal tokens making less than three per cent of the money supply and with political and institutional moves to phase it out altogether.

The ease of storing and paying money by bank notes was not a necessity for all bank account holders. However, for Jack Newton it was a necessity. His bank account had significant balances from the beginning, rising from around £350 by the end of 1696 rising during the first decade to the enormous sum of over £10,000.

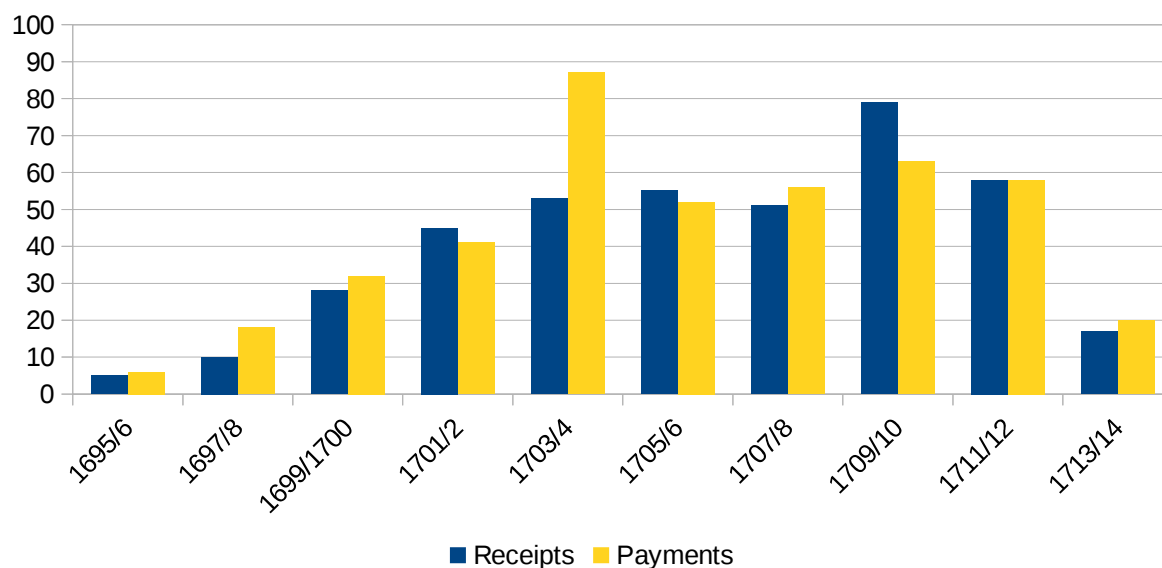
38 LRO, MON7-13-93, 2 December 1735, to William Archer.

39 Great robberies in London, LRO, MON7-12-64; Theft of plate from a house, GRO, D1844-C4-82; Servant absconding with money, LRO, MON7-12-58.

On 6 July 1700 he signed a balance of £5360, and the account never dropped below £2,000 and balances of £3,000, £4,000 and £5,000 were common during the period.⁴⁰ This quantity of precious metal was impossible to deal with without storing it securely or converting it into paper and symbolic representations.

Not only were the balances large, the individual transactions involved substantial sums, and volumes were high. The smallest sums were just a few pounds, but these were rare. The most regular sums paid in and out were £30 to £50. However, larger sums of over £300, £400, £600, £1000, and even £2,000 were paid out, and similar sums paid in. Transaction volumes were low in the initial years. These transactions amounted to sums of between a few hundred pounds in the early and late years of the account, to many thousands of pounds at its peak.

Figure 9: annual transaction volumes, Hoare's bank, 1695-1714



⁴⁰ £5,000 of silver weighed around 1.8 metric tonnes, £10,000 around 3.7 tonnes.

Paying money

The absence of Sir John Newton or Jack Newton in London or Gloucestershire, or in any of the many other places that we know they could travel to, lying far from their Lincolnshire estate, meant that they were absent at the time that money was paid from their purse. In their stead were estate and house stewards or family, who made payments on their behalf. The house stewards George Beaver for Sir John Newton in Gloucestershire and Robert Gale for Sir Jack Newton in London and Lincolnshire were particularly active and present in the archive. They could be found paying on behalf of their master for works to the house. Robert Gale lived at Culverthorpe for some years before joining Jack in London. He was responsible for a number of building and improvement projects at the house. A surviving contract with labourers shows that he was 'put in trust to oversee' works to the fish-pond. Acting as Jack Newton's deputy or intermediary he not only made the decisions about the pond clearance, but he also did 'Covenant promise and agree to pay' the Labourers the sum of £34. Such a sum was a considerable amount in ready money.⁴¹ There is evidence that servants paid money to masons doing walling work, building a chapel, to brick-makers for making a kiln and firing bricks, to sculptors, and paying gardeners. Friends or agents could pay money in London for stewards. Richard Pett had money paid to Mr Tooke, a London bookseller, who he owed £4 8s 6d to, paid on his behalf by Mrs 'Pretty Tate'. By this means the credit was transferred to her, after the silver had been transferred into Mr Tooke's

41 GRO, E17-22-1; D1844-C26-63.

hands.⁴² Paying in London required a presence in London, and being delayed for personal reasons meant not paying in London. In 1700 Joseph Lawson excused himself from paying 6 guineas to Mr Bright on account of his unexpected occasions in the country, probably Huntingdon in Hertfordshire, but he promised by 9 January he would wait on Sir Jack and deliver it. However, by 10 January he said his horse slipped on the ice and fell on his leg, forcing him to stay for the coach the following Monday. If the 'Great Snow' would still keep him from London he would order the 6 guineas to be paid at his 'own House (Soho Square) out of a Sume which I thought not convenient to Break'⁴³ Robert Gale was a trusted servant whom Lady Mary Newton allowed to lend out her money to purchase houses or leases on houses, but she worried that 'they should ensure it', perhaps a reference to insurance, but she left the decision 'two your industrious care to do as you see cause'. She hoped, if she lived long enough, a month or so later to give him more money 'to put into your hands' to invest. She wanted that money to be for her daughter Frances Wigfall who married a few years earlier in 1703. She asked Gale to enquire about 'putting out' yet another sum this time of £100 in her own name.⁴⁴

Stewards might pay workmen for mundane objects to be purchased by another person running an errand and then delivering the item back to the steward. Richard Pett paid 3s 6d to John Smith for the cost and time of acquiring a spade in December 1685.⁴⁵ Servants were asked to make purchases of clothes.⁴⁶

42 LRO, MON7-12-51, 22 March 1686, Pett to Newton.

43 GRO, D1844-C10-142 and D1844-C10-54, 31 December 1700 and 10 January 1701, Lawson to Newton.

44 GRO, D1844-C10-90, 26 September 1709, Newton to Gale.

45 GRO, D1844-C4-5, 14 December 1685, Pett to Newton.

46 LRO, MON7-14-129, 15 November 1684.

Stewards paid money to tenants, as an act of customary charity. In early 1686 Richard Pett made payments to Jack Newton's tenants, and wrote to say he 'will this week distribute your largess among yor tenants'.⁴⁷ Richard Pett distributed money and gloves following the death of Abigail Newton, of which he gave an account by letter to Jack Newton a few weeks after her death.⁴⁸ Stewards could be called on to pay muster fines in the country on behalf of their master. In August 1685 a militia muster was held at Grantham, not long after one was held at Corby in Northampton. Richard Pett attended both of them on behalf of Jack Newton, and at the second muster Newton was fined £5 for his 'Pole-evil Mare' which 'passed very well at Corby'. Pett secured an order from Sir Robert Markham and Mr King, after petitioning Newton's kinsman Robert Fisher, but when he presented it to the 'great Muster full of hopes to take off of yor fyne...it would not be allow'd of, so I have paid it without thanks..'⁴⁹ Stewards were expected to participate in the conveyancing process and the associated money and duties payable to the Crown. In 1692 the Sheriff bailiff demanded a post fine be paid by William Jackson on some unknown land, and Jackson was forced to write to Jack Newton to ask whether he should pay it or not.⁵⁰

We have seen evidence that stewards and servants could personally move gold and silver over small distances in and around the parishes around Grantham, but they could also move money personally over larger distances. Stewards could also

47 GRO, D1844-C4-17, 1 March 1686, Pett to Newton. The reason is unclear, perhaps related to Shrove Tuesday, Easter was 25 April that year.

48 LRO, MON7-12-53, 22 May 1686, Pett to Newton.

49 GRO, D1844-C9-5 and D1844-C4-18, 28 August 1685 and 19 October, Pett to Newton.

50 GRO D1844-C5-40, 8 October 1692,. In English law, a fine due to the king by prerogative, also called the king's silver.

be found moving money by horseback, personally delivering money to tradesmen in towns several days ride from home. Richard Pett needed to confirm the bill outstanding between Jack and Mr Brown a Boston coal-merchant for coal delivered to Culverthorpe. Pett travelled to Boston in person, with gold, in order to establish the bill and pay it. While he was there he also paid Mr Bold a wine merchant for hogsheads of wine purchased for Jack's consumption in London.⁵¹ George Beaver was tasked by Sir John with finding the 'most and best sherries' at Bristol, he (and probably James Leonard) found Mr Burrows who sold them one pipe for £22 10s, 'we could gett it noe cheaper' reported Beaver, and he also bought a teirce of claret for £4 10s and he hoped 'both sorts will please you very well'. He was 'forced to borrow this mony to pay for the wine' and reminded Sir John that they were 'verye much nesessitated for want of mony', indicating that money was flowing slowly from Sir John's tenants and debtors to his servant in Gloucestershire. Further victualling for the house in the form of coal was also in his remit. Whilst purchasing wines and sherries he was responsible for acquiring fuel, but 'cannot gett a good chapman for an quantitye of small coles for my life..though I doe much endeavor it'.⁵² Sometimes both a servant and a steward were involved in the payment of money. Both servants and stewards were highly reluctant to pay money without express orders from their master. Thomas Townley received money from the steward John Fleck and he wrote to Sir John at Barr's Court to ask for

51 GRO, D1844-C9-34, June 1685, Pett to Newton.

52 GRO, D1844-C2-2, 6 April 1668, Beaver to Newton; See also LRO, MON7-14-21, 23 May 1696, Townley to Newton.

instruction where to pay it for him.⁵³ There is evidence that stewards, friends and man-servants took money from Sir John and Jack Newton's purse for the purchase of a horse at a horse fair in Corby and Oundle in Northamptonshire, and Newark in Nottinghamshire.

Menservants could be expected to accompany sons to the university and see them settled in whilst holding their master's money and paying it to the tutor. George Beaver took Sir John Newton's second son Thomas Newton to his tutor Dr. John Fell at Oxford in 1670 when Thomas enrolled there, paying money for fees and furniture.⁵⁴ John Padman took 'Master Jack' to Cambridge to settle him into Trinity college on Wednesday 23 February 1670. His cousin Isaac Newton met him outside Cambridge. Beaver took him to buy cloth for a gown and paid a tailor to make one, paid Master Dove his tutor and asked for Sir John to send his servant Rowley to purchase a morning gown in London, giving the carrier's details.⁵⁵

The bankers Richard and Henry Hoare acted as paying agents. Sir Jack Newton withdrew sums 'for himself' on many occasions, and irregular payments made to his wife Susanna.⁵⁶ Many other members of the family and more distant kin were paid money from the account. Two of Sir Jack Newton's sisters and his children and

53 GRO, D1844-C5-37, 22 November 1694, Townley to Newton.

54 LRO, MON7-14-27, 7 May, Beaver to Dame Mary Newton. Thomas Newton was admitted to Christ Church college, Oxford, matriculated 18 March 1670 aged 17, see Joseph Foster (ed.), *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714* (Oxford, 1891).

55 GRO, D1844-C2-21, 25 February 1670, Padman to Newton.

56 See for example HB, Ledger 3/34, May 1696, 'to himself £100'; Ledger 6/276, six separate withdrawals mainly of £30 in 1704; and Ledger 8/486, eight separate withdrawals of £30 each in 1707. Ledger 16/326, the last withdrawal was for £100 in November 1712; For payments to Lady Susanna Newton, see HB, Ledger 5/11, 20 July 1702, 'to his lady' £30; Ledger 3/370, 16 September 1702, 5 October both 'To Madam Newton, £10'.

some nephews appear, and are paid sums of money.⁵⁷ His son Michael Newton received money at Ostend though if this was some kind of early international payment between banking agents it is not clear from the entry. Only two other sums were paid to him one in 1713, and a lump sum in 1721.⁵⁸ His sister Susanna Newton was paid substantial sums in a series of transactions in 1713 and 1714.⁵⁹ Sir Jack's mother Dame Mary Newton was paid an odd but large sum in 1708, probably representing rent charges from her jointure, which her son was responsible for paying.⁶⁰

Wi-der kin also acted as payment agents. Richard Newton received payments between December 1698 and September 1711 for variable and irregular amounts. Richard Newton was almost certainly a kinsman, but how is unknown. Robert Fisher, Newton's Grantham election agent and kinsman, received £40 on 16 July 1703, and another kinsman and attorney, William Jessop, received several sums.⁶¹ John Blow esquire kinsman, attorney and money agent and Francis Sitwell both feature in the accounts.⁶² Three payments to kinswoman Elizabeth Pelham were made within a short period and not repeated.⁶³ The bankers acted not only as

57 Lucy Scope: HB, Ledger 3/370, 1701, £24 6s; Jane Sacheverell: HB, Ledger 5/11, 16 December 1703 £20. 14 March 1704 £15. 8 May 1704 £10 . 21 June £16-6-4; Francis Stringer: HB, Ledger 5/11, 1703, £100; Colonel John Seymour: HB, Ledger 3/370, 1702, £10; Sir Michael Warton: HB, Ledger 14/264; Nephew Gervase Scope: HB, 12 June 1710, £50, Ledger 12/145; Son-in-law Edward Coke: HB, Ledger 7/436, 1706, £110.

58 HB, Ledger 14/264, 21 August 1712 'to Michael Newton at Ostend, £97 5s 7d'. Ledger 16/326, February 1713, £75. Ledger 20/257, March 1720, 'to Mr Newton Esquire £320'.

59 HB, Ledger 16/326, multiple entries amounting to £750.

60 HB, Ledger 8/486, 4 Nov 1708, 'To Dame Mary Newton £209 3s'.

61 HB, Ledger 3/34, 4 March 1696, £7, it is the very first entry in the ledgers; Ledger 8/486, 13 May 1707, £100.

62 Blow: HB, Ledger 6/54, 7 July 1704, £100 and 1 December, £202-12-10; Sitwell: Ledger 6/276, 9 March 1705, £50; Ledger 7/436, 15 August 1706, £50.

63 HB, Ledger 3/34, 17 April and 21 May 1698, £50 and £10; 15 March 1699, £30.

deposit-takers and lenders but also collectors of money on bills and bonds, and further they could collect interest on government Exchequer notes or collect and pay in money to government debt schemes. Dame Mary Newton, when a widow, used her son Jack in London to make payments to him there for investment in the Lottery scheme. Newton gave it to his banker Richard Hoare to invest in the scheme, but he appears to have had 'so much money two (sic) put out for several persons' that he failed to invest on her behalf. Mary wished that Newton hadn't trusted 'the Goldsmith', advising that it was better to employ Robert Gale in the second lottery scheme which Newton told her about than to 'depend on Hoare any more'.⁶⁴

Remodelling at Culverthorpe probably accounted for payments between 1703 and 1705 amounting to over £700. Robert Barker was paid nine times totalling £430 between 1703 and 1706, Louis Haudroy was paid £147 in seven tranches between 1704 and 1705, and three payments totalling £150 were made to William and Edward Stanton in the same period.⁶⁵ During this time Edward Scarborough, a brick-maker, visited Culverthorpe five times to discuss a contract to make bricks for Sir Jack, and two years later Scarborough wrote asking for compensation for his unfruitful visits.⁶⁶

As a goldsmith Sir Richard Hoare was also in the silver plate and jewellery

64 GRO, D1844-C11-134, 23 March 1711, Newton to Newton.

65 HB, Ledger 5/11, 6/276, 7/436. William Stanton (1639-1705) was at this time 61 years old, working with his ninth recorded son Edward, and was one of the most prolific tomb-makers to the English gentry of his day, (Oxford DNB).

66 GRO, D1844-C10-149, endorsed 1708; LRO, MON7-14-188, 6 October 1707, Newton to Slater.

trade, and payments were made from the account to him for 'silver plate' or plate.⁶⁷ Other cultural expenditure included £43 paid to portrait painter Michael Dahl, and London watchmakers Thomas Tompion and Daniel Quare.⁶⁸ Substantial payments to 'Hale and Schurrman' look much like furniture makers.⁶⁹ However, a bill of £4 10s 6d for fine china on 29 March 1701 was paid with cash or cash alternatives, and does not appear in the accounts.⁷⁰ A payment to Abraham Meure in June 1708 was probably for the education of a son, perhaps Michael or Gervase Scrope.⁷¹ Regular annual payments were paid to Thomas Chambers esquire which may have represented the rent at Soho Square, though they varied by a few shillings either side of £80.⁷² Regular odd amounts to unidentifiable names must have been payments to tradesmen and and for household supplies.⁷³

Two charitable donations were evident. In May 1709 the first 900 of what was to become an influx of over 13,000 German refugees arrived in London. A combination of factors led to this huge and sudden migration, which recalls the present one into the European Union from Syria and Iraq.⁷⁴ Sir Jack Newton made

67 For example HB, Ledger 3/370, 24 May 1699, 'To Richard Hoare in full for plate, £10 9s'; see also Ledger 6/276.

68 HB, Ledger 8/486; Ledger 14/264.

69 HB, Ledger 14/264.

70 Reproduced in Edward F. Rimbault, *Soho and its associations: historical, literary and artistic* (London, 1895), 35.

71 Abraham Meure senior ran a school at 12-13 Greek Street, Soho, from about 1691 to 1714. The subjects taught included Latin, French, accounts, fencing, dancing and drawing. (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols33-4/pp170-190>).

72 HB, 27 June 1699, £123 6s 8d, 16 November two payments of £42 10s and £50, Ledger 3/34; 20 Nov 1700 £88 12s 9d, Ledger 3/370; 19 Nov 1702 £80 10s and 23 Oct 1703, £79 19s Ledger 5/11; 18 Dec 1704 £78 17s 4d, Ledger 6/54; 1705 £80, Ledger 6/276. Then payments to Felix Chamber 14 Nov 1706 £79-19, Ledger 7/436; 8 Nov 1707 £79-6, Ledger 8/486; 26 Oct 1708 £78-16, Ledger 10/257; 10 Dec 1709, £79 16s and 16 January 1711 £79 16s, Ledger 12/145; January 1712, £79 4s 8d, Ledger 14/264.

73 For example HB, Ledger 3/34, January 1700, Thomas Foilder, £24 15s; Ledger 5/11, 1704, Patrick Shore, £18 15s 7d; Ledger 14/264, September 1711, Thomas Broke, £25 12s 7d.

74 Philip Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York* (New York, 2006).

at least two large donations totalling £40 were made 'to the Poor Palatines', he wrote to Hoare directly ordering him to make the £10 deposit for them.⁷⁵

Charity was freely given, but it was also sought out. Petitions for money were relatively uncommon, except from close members of the family. John King begged for £10 in a long and very polite letter.⁷⁶ Anna Palmer, a neighbour at Bitton, and one of the relations of Lady Grace Newton, begged for assistance on behalf of her grandchildren, noting that Sir John had 'been pleased to owne their concerns before'. She desperately needed £10 and it seems to have been tied up with a law suit and Mr Edward Bushell a solicitor in Bristol and London who Sir John needed to pay £20.⁷⁷ John Thomas, a clergyman, sent his 'petitionary lines' to Sir Jack, though Thomas was unknown to him. It was the 'general report I received of your candor and Charity' that made him 'presume' to write, and not expect Jack to be 'offended'. He appealed to Jack's 'natural inclination and innate disposition to do good to all Others'. His 'Rubbs of fortune (both by sea and Land)' since leaving university left him with an 'empty pocket and a threadbare habit', and would be 'deeply engaged' to him if he would consider him in his 'present Circumstances of want'.⁷⁸ Mr South in 1707 was a poor man experiencing a lack of money immediately after the March quarter day hinted that he could not pay his rent. Whilst 'God pleases to Continue to mee, my poore unComfortable life' he was

75 HB, Ledger 10/257, 23 August 1709, £10; GRO, D1844-C26-31, 8 August, Newton to Hoare; Ledger 12/145, 21 December 1709, £30.

76 GRO, D1844-C1-16, 10 May 1660, John King to John Newton. See also Henry Sherburne asking for £300, GRO, D1844-C30-9, 17 January 1663, Sherburne to Sir John Newton.

77 GRO, D1844-C14-33, 27 October 1669, Anna Palmer to Sir John Newton, and D1844-C24-18, 27 November, same to same; GRO, D1844-C24-19, 27 November, Anna Palmer to Wakeman; GRO, D1844-C30-7, 28 November, Edward Bushell to Wakeman.

78 GRO, D1844-C14-11, no date, Thomas to Newton.

forced to give Newton 'this quarterly trouble', clearly suffering he complained that 'a life in soe much misserye as I endure, to one that has knowne better days(.) is worss then death'.⁷⁹ Mrs Heene, probably a distant cousin of the Newton family and related to the Welbys of Denton, begged Newton to consider her badly-indebted husband's 'sad condiskon' resulting from a disputed statute staple and beseeched him to relieve them and their 'poore children' from starving, having sold everything. Mrs Welby 'thinckes we have shich (such) grat frindes' though Mr Heene 'doe not fine it soe'. She begged him to order her cousin to wait on him and collect five or ten pounds, to which she would 'ever owne it for a grat faver at this time'.⁸⁰ A godson of a former steward John Padman (who died in 1670) and who was born locally begged for 'your Charrity', having recently returned from Ireland to Bristol and 'hearing of your Honours name at Bristol (and) being in necessity' he asked for money.⁸¹

Close family members would also need to ask for money. Gervase Newton was forced to ask; Sir Michael needed money for elections and racing.⁸² Healthcare was expensive and life was valuable, causing Cicely Wilkinson to write of necessity having been 'at great charges in fisek (physick) for my sonn georg was neere to a bine killd', he lost a lot of blood was was now well, but she was unable to pay the apothecary's bills, and 'neither have i any freend i can trost to so much as your selfe in need and safgard of my Childs lif(.)' She claimed not to have much

79 GRO, D1844-C10-68, 26 March 1707, J. South to Newton.

80 GRO, D1844-C14-45, 11 April, G. Heene to ?Sir Jack Newton.

81 GRO, D1844-C14-20, undated, William Dickenson to Sir John.

82 LRO, MON7-13-1, undated, Gervase Newton to Francis Yeomans; LRO, MON7-14-178 and 179, 9 August and 6 November 1732, Sir Michael Newton to Matthew Lamb.

confidence 'to desir a peese from you' as her husband had 'bine so much beholding to you'. She asked for a loan, and she would 'remaine yours to command'.⁸³ Martha Bishop told Sir John Newton that he had taken a bond of money some years ago for her daughters.⁸⁴ Ann Page was left without much money, no portion, and no properly executed will after her husband died in 1711 leaving her with children to care for. Not wanting to go on the parish for maintenance she begged for money.⁸⁵

All payments of precious metals involved a movement of that metal, whether the movement was small, say from the purse about the person or a box or trunk or furniture in a room in the house into the hands of a payee – say a supplier or chapman to the household. Larger movements within or between local parishes was common. There is a question of scale involved, because the system is both complex and fractal-like there must have been movements over every scale. The largest scale concerned returns.

Paying money – returns

Collecting, holding and paying money locally was done frequently in relatively small amounts in Lincolnshire or Gloucestershire. We saw that payments to merchants further afield in Boston had to be done in person, with the steward making the long ride themselves. However, where large sums needed to be moved over long

83 GRO, D1844-C14-67, no date, Wilkinson to Jack Newton (squire Nuten).

84 GRO, D1844-C5-53, 28 March 1693, Bishop to Newton.

85 GRO, D1844-C11-22, 23 June 1711, Page to Newton.

distances the risk of loss from theft on the highway or the overnight stops at coaching inns was very high. The necessity to get money into London over distance created the scheme called a return. A large network of people evolved to make matching contracts for money in the country and in the city, using the movement of livestock into London as the core of the transaction. Drivers became very wealthy from this development.⁸⁶ The scheme involved many people each time it was used, and accordingly such arrangements involving many people, most of whom would be strangers to Jack Newton in London, were based on an significant expectation of cooperation, a narrative of trust or faith.

Returns feature in the steward correspondence from the very earliest dates. In 1661 John Padman reported to Sir John about a return he had arranged for £66 receivable from Mr Taylour. The returns arrangement continued unbroken through the whole of the period covered by the letter books.⁸⁷

Returns could be problematic for stewards to arrange. They could easily find that the man they intended to use was unexpectedly and inexplicably unavailable. In order for the return to work verbal instructions had to be given, and if they were not at home, there would be no return. Richard Pett suffered this problem at least once, writing to his master in London that 'I have endeavour'd a return to you ever since I left by Peregrine Buck and others and this very day I sent to Mr Brown, by whom I verrily expected one but he was not at home; I will leave stone unturn'd to

86 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 91.

87 GRO, D1844-C2-25, Padman to Newton, 1661. For a late example asking for speedy returns of rents paid in Lincolnshire see LRO, MON7-14-109, 16 February 1723, Sir Jack Newton to Thomas Headon.

procure it speedily'.⁸⁸

Returns agents needed to have a reputation for punctuality, because the reverse was often true. Pett needed to hand over a large sum of money in the expectation that the same sum would be paid days later hundreds of miles away, in his absence. The return that he was arranging with Peregrine Buck he expected to have happened 'I doubt not but before this (letter) come to your hand the money ... for I know the goods are gone and Mr Buck very punctual which was the great reason I desired it don by him rather than any other.'⁸⁹

Returns were arranged well in advance if they could be, and stewards could include their own stock in the drive. Richard Pett 'engag'd the return of a whole drove (wich will consist of yours and my sheep) to be paid to you about Michaelmas or soon after'.⁹⁰ The experience was widespread and there is evidence that every steward had problems finding a returns agent and getting money to London in a timely way. John Padman experienced difficulties returning £50.⁹¹ Returns were therefore variable and uncertain both in quantum and delivery date. For example William Jackson arranged for Mr Inman to pay either £40 or £50 to Jack Newton in London in one or two weeks time, he could not be certain of the amount or the time.⁹²

Arranging payments in London from Lincolnshire required a great awareness of the people in a long chain, and the ability to adapt to accommodate changes. In

88 GRO, D1844-C9-34, June 1685, Pett to Jack Newton.

89 GRO, D1844-C9-28, 13 July 1685, Pett to Newton.

90 GRO, D1844-C9-8, 31 August 1685, Pett to Newton.

91 GRO, D1844-C2-39, 5 December 1664, Padman to Newton.

92 GRO, D1844-C5-4, 7 February 1691.

1685 Richard Pett knew that Gervase Newton (the 'Major') would not be in London as usual to receive the return, and ordered the money to be paid to Jack's mother-in-law Lady Mary Heveningham. The name of a new receiver (Mr Beckington) was passed to Pett who passed it to Peregrine Buck.⁹³ Sometimes a steward's plans for a return were foiled by changing circumstances in London. In the summer of 1685 Pett made plans to bring sheep to London, but Jack had made plans to go to Tunbridge Wells so that Abigail could take the waters there – Pett 'design'd for London for two or three nights at most and 'hoped to bring with me a drove of sheep but your journey will blast that project'.⁹⁴

The ability of stewards to arrange returns to London were partly dependent on the season. The trade which made them possible was a seasonal thing, produce and livestock did not get taken to the London market (or any other market) on a regular weekly or monthly basis, it was dependent on the life-cycle of the animals and the growing seasons of the year. In 1693 William Jackson made it plain that, although £200 was due to be paid in May in Sutton, Nottinghamshire, 'twill be somewhat difficult to procure returnes for so much so soon of the year'.⁹⁵

The chain of people who the steward interacted with and had to manage was large. Each of them were themselves caught up in extensions of the network to their own servants, family, neighbours, London agents, and tradesmen. In 1668 steward George Beaver trying to get money to John Newton wrote 'I this day received yor letter att Mr Clemens and imediatlye went to Mr Driver who promises

93 GRO, D1844-C9-4, 27 June 1685, Pett to Newton.

94 GRO, D1844-C9-6, 3 August 1685, Pett to Newton.

95 GRO, D1844-C5-30, 4 February 1693, Jackson to Newton.

that as soone as ever his bills for ye 300£ are accepted and paid at London, according to his bills which he will send up to you by this or ye next post, he will upon notice therof by yor letter pay it heare, and it shall be as carefull paid to Mrs Richards and to up yor bond'. All those people and their interconnected agreements were just one tiny part of the large social network.⁹⁶

Tradesmen, of course, were caught up in their own web of credit and would crave a repayment of a trade debt so that they in turn could pay their own debts.⁹⁷ London, Bristol and Grantham tradesmen were heavily involved in the network of moving money around England, and the letter-books provide frequent evidence of their use by the Newton family and their servants and kin. The flow of information about elements of the network and what money they had received and paid, and from who and for who, was partly by letter and partly by bearer message. Money would only be paid, received or moved by written order perhaps a short letter of instruction, and the letter-books demonstrate a meticulous attention to receipts, quitclaims, acquittances, as well as bills, endorsements and accounts.

The money network used by the Newton family featured the extensive use of London merchants and shopkeepers. They feature throughout the correspondence, for example Thomas Barrow at the 'Pestil and Mortar' in Ludgate Hill, and Mr Acklom (or Accler) an apothecary at the Indian Boy in Brooke Street in 1690.⁹⁸ These merchants dealt with the families' kin, attorneys and stewards in moving and

96 GRO, D1844-C2-3, 28 March 1668, Beaver to Sir John Newton. Mr Driver was a linen draper in Hay Street (mentioned in MON7-13-24, Mary Newton to Jack Newton).

97 See for example GRO, D1844-C14-44, undated, Matthew Glinder to John or Jack Newton.

98 GRO, (Barrow), D1844-C4-43; LRO, (Accler), MON7-13-142.

holding money, and they themselves could be found both locally in Lincolnshire and in London. In 1694 John Fleck the steward noted that he was held up by Mr Accler 'was preparing to leave for Barr's Court but was met with a letter from Mr Accler saying he would be in Ponton today, so has deferred his coming'.⁹⁹ Some displayed considerable longevity as agents and Acklom can be found years later on a letter endorsed with sums 'Edwards £471 0 8d., Acklom £100, Hoare £100, Self £300, Coke £58 11 7d'.

In common with many money arrangements these merchant agents frequently encountered failures. In 1708 Peniston Lamb wrote to Jack Newton to say he met with Mr Acklom who 'appointed the payment of several sums of money, but they failed him'.¹⁰⁰ Failures were exacerbated by the shortage of physical money required to satisfy the completion of transactions. In 1662 John Padman complained to Sir John Newton in London that he was sorry that Mr Garrad 'failed you of your money for I never knew money soe hard to Cum by in my life as it is this year'.¹⁰¹ Two years later he apologised again for the failure of a return.

Another example illustrates in a single return the potential risks of giving money to other men; how the steward's own business could be mixed with the returns mechanism; the interrelation of different financial obligations and how they could be mixed with one another; and the extension of the steward-master-returns network to other servants and kinsmen. Padman was 'vary much Trubled' that Sir John was not paid £50 that he expected. Padman had sold the man who was to make the

99 GRO, D1844-C5-34/5, 22 September 1694, Fleck to Newton.

100 GRO, D1844-C14-64, 1708, Lamb to Newton.

101 GRO, D1844-C2-49, 18 May.

payment 30 of his own sheep for £23 and the man was to pay £50 to Mr Bent, a kinsman of Sir John. Padman was to pay the balance of £27 to the man on his return from London. Padman, not hearing from the man, may have lost his sheep and the £23. He still had an obligation to his master £50. Padman was able to get other money into Sir John's hands by an alternative method, asking Sir John to send George Beaver – Sir John's servant – to visit Mr Williams (presumably a tradesman) at Aldgate who was holding £15 for Sir John's kinsman Mr Welby. In addition, Mr Williams had a bill drawn on Padman for £45 of which £30 was due to Mr Williams leaving a balance of £15 which Padman had ordered to be for Sir John's use when Padman ordered him to release it to him.¹⁰² Observing and drawing attention to these failures, difficulties and errors in the course of returns is not a trivial one. They were not accidents, nor chance; they were a manifestation of the inevitable micro-variation, or noise, of a complex system.

Returns were substantial sums of money, otherwise the need for the return was obviated. The returns arranged by stewards to the family were of the order of £100 to £200 per return. The return expected in August 1685 for example was £120, whilst £200 was to be paid in 1686. William Mackinder regularly paid in £100, as well as smaller sums, such as £15.¹⁰³ The size of these sums and their volume required a great deal of cooperation in those who handled, stored and carried the money. William Mackinder referred to this expectation of cooperation when he promised to return his rent soon and that he 'will have as much money in

102 GRO, D1844-C2-39, 5 December 1664, Padman to Newton.

103 GRO, D1844-C9-8, no date, Pett to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-51, 22 March 1686, Pett to Newton; for Mackinder see for example HB, Ledger 7/436 and 16/326.

three good mens hands as will anser youer det'.¹⁰⁴

On completion of the return the steward in Lincolnshire still needed to have information (confirmation) that the return had been successful. Richard Pett did not get his notice, and appeared to be a little worried that the return did not complete. He wrote – 'I have sold your wooll at 17s per todd to ...Markham. I have expected this post or two notice of your receipt of 100lb(.) the goods was sold the 12th and the man (Wragg) order'd to pay it you at your house.'¹⁰⁵ Sometimes a completed return was not agreed upon. Richard Pett acting for Sir John Newton at Barr's Court agreed to sell his master's crop at Kelby in Lincolnshire for £75, but Pett having seen Sir John and spoken to him about it – 'when I was with you' – informed Sir John that Peregrine Buck 'did not give you a faithfull account'.¹⁰⁶

The credit networks which the Newton family enjoyed extended to the women of the family, and they could be found lending large sums of money in their own right on London mortgages, which required a return of their gold there. When Elizabeth Pelham and her sisters lent out £2,000 with her two sisters on a mortgage her experience illustrates that servants and kinswomen were part of the returns network, and that they were more expensive for women. Their money needed to be in London, not in Sutton-cum-Lound in Nottinghamshire, and Pelham ordered their servant Benson that 'any money he can return for the young woemen he shall order it to be paid' to Jack Newton. She noted that 'retournes are very deare to gett hereabouts, especially for us woemen: so wee must doe It as wee can, being

104 GRO, D1844-C10-70, 31 January 1709, Mackinder to Jack Newton.

105 GRO, D1844-C4-18, Pett to Jack Newton.

106 LRO, MON7-12-38, 14 October 1682, Pett to Sir John Newton.

the mony must bee pay'd In London'. It is unlikely that non-gentry women had access to returns on this scale, if at all.¹⁰⁷

Some tenants paid their money directly into the London bank account. Sometimes they made the journey to London themselves with the money about their person, or on other occasions they appointed one or more agents.¹⁰⁸ William Mackinder used John Weldale, the money arriving 'per hands of'. Mackinder also spoke of Mr Yale and Mr Smith.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes there were three individuals involved in the delivery, for example in 1713 William Mackinder ordered Edward Blunt to pay the money, and Blunt used the same John Weldale as his agent. This form of closing both a debt and a loan between three parties was common. Mackinder corresponded frequently with his landlord in the early 1700s from Barkston, where Sir Jack Newton was Lord of the manor. 'I have heare sent you a small bill of which I hope will be pade at the time: and shall pay sum more to Sir Richard Hore shortly and the hole shall be pade to you in a littell time' was typical of his information to his landlord. Sometimes a landlord could be paid whilst they were at home in their own county. Mackinder took advantage of Jack and Susanna's presence at Culverthorpe to deliver some money to him there.¹¹⁰

Some payments were from tenants using drovers as returns agents, William Mackinder at Barkston features a number of times using John Weldale or Aaron

107 GRO, D1844-C11-77, 5 March 1711, Elizabeth Pelham to Jack Newton, see also Chapter 4, 'Informal credit'.

108 For direct payment see GRO, D1844-C10-81, 4 June 1709, Mackinder to Newton; See also GRO, D1844-C11-78, 7 August 1715.

109 GRO, D1844-C10-85, 8 December 1708.

110 GRO, D1844-C10-81 and D1844-C11-78.

Tops, both drovers to deliver sums up to £100 to Sir Richard Hoare in Fleet Street.¹¹¹ As a tenant Mackinder was also a bailiff, and ordered money to be paid in London by other tenants.¹¹²

Most of the money in the country was received in the form of rent from tenants. Some rent though was paid in kind, in the form of produce or wool. In 1668 mistress Stevens supplied a parcel of wool in lieu of her rent which John Padman arranged to sell, after which he made arrangements to return the money to London. This payment in kind presented its own problems for the steward, and the landlord could benefit: the landlord evidently could set a price that he would accept the produce at, which may differ from the price that was obtained. In this case the wool was sold for £1-1s-1d a tod, whilst Sir John had allowed it to mistress Stevens at only £1 a tod. She expected to get the full value against her rent, and Padman as negotiator needed Sir John's orders how to proceed, if Sir John insisted on £1, Padman would 'Reckon' with her at that rate and 'not allow her any more with out it be your worships pleasure'. Emphasising again the difficulties of finding a returns agent (at all, let alone a reliable one) Padman sent Sir John's groom to Coleby to see Mr Collingwood – failing that he intended to try Mr York or someone else.¹¹³

Stewards often ordered money to be paid from tenants into the London bank account. Money was received by the order of the stewards Timothy Kiplin, Thomas

111 See for example HB, Ledger 16/326, 31 October 1713, 'by William Mackinder per hands of John Weldale £100'.

112 See for example HB, Ledger 16/326, 14 December 1713, 'by Edward Blunt, per hands of John Weldale, per order of William Mackinder' £15.

113 GRO, D1844-C2-15, 19 February.

Slater and John Dickson. The stewards John Fleck and Thomas Headon also appear, though far less regularly.¹¹⁴ Thomas Slater the Lincolnshire steward, for example, ordered Mr William Huddleston of Bitchfield to pay money to Sir Richard Hoare.¹¹⁵ Rawson Hart esquire was a regular depositor, and perhaps was the Gloucestershire agent, though Thomas and Mary Dafter were the stewards. Richard Chrisloe was a money agent with Grantham connections.¹¹⁶ Money was paid from the Bright family estate in Yorkshire to satisfy the rent charge that Lady Susanna Newton had on her late husband's land at Badsworth. The money was paid to London by at least three methods. Personally by an agent on the orders of her son John Bright, by the steward Kiplin on the orders of John Bright, or paid by a transfer from his own account with Hoare's bank.¹¹⁷ Payments in were frequently by bill on tradesmen, on kin, and on other bankers.¹¹⁸ There were many tradesmen's bills used to pay in money. There are perhaps as many as 50 different names on whom bills were drawn. Some bills were submitted on the orders of the stewards.¹¹⁹ Money was also simply deposited, or a bank note paid in. The early bank note was simply a receipt for gold deposited at a bank, which could be transferred to another person. It represented a further claim to gold held by the banker, and recorded in their account as such.¹²⁰

114 John Fleck appears only once see HB, Ledger 8/486, Headon appears between October and December 1717 only, see Ledger 20/257.

115 GRO, D1844-C10-124, 23 May 1709, Slater to Newton.

116 He was a school friend of Isaac Newton, and probably therefore Jack Newton.

117 For example HB, Ledger 3/34, 14 July 1699, 'by John Bright esquire by the hands of Seth Powill'; Ledger 5/11, 20 January 1703, 'by Timothy Kiplin by order of John Bright'; Ledger 6/54, 15 May 1704, 'by money brought from John Bright account'.

118 For example John Wigfall, Sir Francis Child.

119 For example HB, Ledger 14/264, 8 September 1711, 'by bill of George Mawer per Kiplin £70'.

120 There are dozens of examples, but see for instance HB, Ledger 3/34, 24 May 1699, 'by note £20', and ledger 5/11, 28 April 1704, 'by note £50'.

When individual money agents travelled to London and delivered smaller sums of money directly, or to a banker, their own movement could still be uncertain. Stewards were forced to be vague about timing, because of the uncertainty of the network. William Jackson for example could not say what or when Mr Inman would pay his money in London.¹²¹

Sometimes returns could not be had when they were needed and stewards resorted to simply disguising the money in an unmarked box and sending it by carrier wagon to London.¹²² This of course was risky, it was the very thing that returns had been developed to avoid. But sometimes the flow of money and narratives elsewhere in the network made the decision seem acceptable, where before it was not. Where a carrier personally carried money he charged a risk premium against loss from robbery on the King's highway. In 1663 it cost £15 to carry £3,000, and in 1677 it cost £4 10s to send £900, both 0.5 per cent. The cost of hiring a coach, horses and guards could cost £25 or more around 1663-1670, suggesting that perhaps £5,000 of gold could be carried that way.¹²³

The social production of currency

It has long been well-understood that any objects can form a currency – from tobacco to feathers, to animals, to metals, to paper. Our modern currency – mostly a digital currency with a materiality described only a binary states of a silicon chip – show that money can be so far removed from our physical experience as to be

121 GRO, D1844-C5-4, 7 February 1691, William Jackson to Jack Newton.

122 LRO, MON7-12-51, 22 March 1686, Pett to Newton.

123 Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 20. Assuming the same risk premium.

simply a narrative, a shared story. Gold and silver, and indeed copper formed currencies and had no survival value, they could not be consumed for energy, nor could they be made into tools or clothes.¹²⁴ This quality has never prevented metals from retaining their longevity as currency, a medium of trade and a store of value, up until the early twentieth-century. The use of these metal tokens has appeared mysterious to economists:

'that every economic unit in a nation should be ready to exchange his goods for little metal disks apparently useless as such, or for documents representing the latter, is a procedure so opposed to the ordinary course of things, that we cannot well wonder if even a distinguished thinker like Savigny finds it downright 'mysterious.'¹²⁵

Precious metal however clearly had value in usage, it had a value when it was used socially, in a complex network of cooperating social individuals, such as that experienced by Sir John Newton and the people around him. This value was a social production, the effect of reflexively behaving as though it had value, talking as though it had value. Its value was socially-produced by the complex network of social individuals and it was unstable in as far as it was contingent on its own production, which is to say that it has value as long as it has value.

It is also well understood that currencies come and go, and although they appear to be permanent fixtures of life, are in fact somewhat transient. The gold and silver currency of England was devalued gradually after the Restoration by the activity of clipping tiny pieces of silver from the edge of the coins, gradually

124 Copper farthings (a quarter of a penny) were minted by gentry men and women under licence until the civil war, then as copper or brass halfpenny and farthings by private traders from around 1648, then by Charles II from 1672, see Ken Elks, *Coinage of Great Britain. Celtic to Decimalisation, Part 9: Provincial Token Coinage* (2003).

125 Carl Menger (trans. C.A. Foley), 'On the Origins of Money' in *Economic Journal*, Volume 2 (1892), pp.239-55.

reducing their weight and thereby their value. The re-coinage scheme of 1696 had terrible consequences in Lincolnshire, stopping most trade and setting off subsistence riots and popular discontent with the government and its policies. The physical aspect of wealth destruction is illustrated by the tragic suicide of a poor pedlar of Ferriby, who did not reckon on that transience, and who destroyed herself when she found that her carefully saved capital had become worthless old money.¹²⁶

Conclusion

The findings from applying complex and deconstructive precepts to the case study material indicates that precious metal, as a currency, was the product of the same social network that produced real estate. The complex social network that made this possible originated in relationships born of activities of lending physical capital, both in the form of real estate and in the form of currency. It was the absence of the landlord and the lending of real estate to tenant farmers and lending gold to borrowers that not only made the return necessary but made it possible.

The early modern economy in which the Newton family and their relations lived within was also a system of material exchanges of money in which the central mediating factor was trust, and which was not only complicated, but complex. This complex social network of social individuals not only exchanged cultural narratives of credit and reputation forming an economy of obligation – as Muldrew set out to show – but also exchanged physical money (the real world counterpart of credit) in an economy of money movement. The holding and moving of currency which

¹²⁶ Holmes, *Seventeenth-century Lincolnshire*, 258.

resulted required the trust and cooperation of servants, attorneys, stewards, kinsmen, tradesmen and others. Closest to the family were servants who Sir John Newton, in recommending his own servant William Alder, said of him 'you cannot be better fitted for I have trusted him with untould Gould'.¹²⁷ The chains in the network were both long and potentially fragile, leading to frequent mishaps, and missed payments.

It was because this structure of money was in an unstable equilibrium but an exclusive network based on capital and kinship that it conditioned a social individuals' life chances. Being already in the network was an exclusive thing and increased your ability to increase your capital, being outside it reduced your chances. The relationships of money movement and credit created additional credit relationships which arose naturally from the relationship between each agent in the network. Those who were well-connected by virtue of their capital could hold and move money by the agency of other cooperating people despite being physically very remote from their gold. This was a social privilege gained from their capital, and it was not available to all.

Currency could be capital, and personal property in common law, but being a socially-produced economy (articulating capital from inert and neutral metals) the evidence from the letter-books shows that it was unstable. Its production depended partly on narratives of ownership and kinship. When memory was erased, so were these narratives, and likewise was capital erased. This was the experience of Henry Jones, a poor tenant at Bitton, who heard that his son Roger with 'betweene

¹²⁷ LRO, MON7-14-26, no date but c1670.

50 ore 60 pound' died suddenly in another parish too far for the ancient father to visit. His son's memory 'wase gone so sudently frome him that hee could give no a countt of Anything'. He begged Sir John's steward Thomas Dafter to ask Sir John to order Dafter to go and ask the parishioners where his son's money was. Narratives connecting the gold, its whereabouts and Roger Jones were not copied and stored by neighbours in the parochial network, and with his death sealing the erasure, Henry Jones probably lost his son's money.¹²⁸

Stewards receiving and paying away money or returning it inevitably created an imbalance. The imbalance tended to be on the receipts side and accordingly stewards and servants were required to store money. This money formed an inadvertent credit and the subsequent working capital tended to increase the money supply, as the money represented a debt of the steward or servant to their master. This, and other forms of credit, are examined in the next chapter.

128 GRO, D1844-C10-6, 24 February, Thomas Dafter to Sir Jack Newton.

Chapter 5

Lending money

Credit was ubiquitous and complex, but also largely for very small amounts and oral. Bookkeeping and numeracy were poor. Credit was a public affair, few transactions were private, and being a witness for credit agreements was a part of life, part of neighbourliness, and 'social' security. Written bonds were more secure and were evidence in court of a debt, and their use increased during the seventeenth century. Bonds were asked for and given for relatively large sums to publicly demonstrate creditworthiness for other daily purchases.¹

Lending took many forms and included work done, wages, arrears of rent, bonds and bills, and mortgages. Informal credit was most common, but bills of exchange, bonds, bond obligatory, and mortgages became increasingly prevalent.² However, this was not all. Balances could be found with attorneys, stewards, house stewards, bailiffs, returns agents, drovers, gentry neighbours, and London tradesmen. Everyone borrowed, including students who owed money to their tutors and bedmakers, and colleges for board (commons).³

Debt drove economic expansion in the early Stuart years, increased the money supply and made trade and the exchange of goods and services easier. Real estate networks contributed not only to ease of moving and storing money, but also to lending it. Credit expanded capital, lending at interest with the compounding effect at seven per cent could double lent capital in ten years. A strong social

1 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 61-64, 90, 100, 103, 109-110.

2 Muldrew, *Ibid.*, 105, based on Hampshire inventories c1620.

3 GRO, D1844-C26-1, 14 December 1671, Isaac Newton to Jack Newton.

network of capital relationships and kinship made access to lending and borrowing easier, and promoted capital accumulation and economic mobility.

Part I – Informal credit

Credit from returns

We saw that physical money was scarce, and hard to move around, and landlords increasingly absent. The returns culture which developed as an adaptation to this problem created more credit. The returns network was also a credit network. As J.H. Bettey showed, stewards had so much money in their hands that they too were lenders, both to gentry figures, local people, their kindred and their own masters. Their use of money temporarily in their possession could only be lent out if a standing balance was with them, in other words if demands for money from their master was roughly equally met by money coming in to the steward for his master. Stewards could be lenders of very large sums of money, such as £1,000 to Lord Arundell in 1665.⁴

The financial affairs of stewards and their masters were naturally (because it was a network) embroiled in the affairs of the tenants. In one example John Fleck owed money to Sir John Newton, and Zachary Rollinson, a tenant, owed money to John Fleck. Fleck wanted to set off the money owed to him against the money owed to Jack, thus reducing the money he paid to Jack, but another steward Richard Pett intervened to tell Jack that what Rollinson owed was not for rent due to his father Sir John but 'a private concern betwixt them two, so that you are no

4 Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 21.

way oblig'd to allow of it'.⁵ Tenants themselves were in that same web of credit. Steward Thomas Headon received Jack Newton's command as to his indebted tenant Widow Shaw, and gave directions to have her arrested, but Headon replied that she had a bond and moneys against her, and she was embroiled with one Pickworth, who was 'a cunning knave who even Attorneys don't meddle with'.⁶

There was sometimes anxiety about the balance a steward held with his master. If he died in credit, owing money to his master it may not have been recoverable from the executors or administrators, or indeed even be quantifiable in the absence of recent accounts. This led to a keenness to have regular accounts.⁷ The steward was at the heart of the gentry network in the locality; and his own business dealings, and those of his master, both implicated his business with his master's and was a source of credit to him. A letter of 1685 from Richard Pett contains over twenty-five local names with whom he interacted on his own and Jack Newton's behalf.⁸

Credit networks and the issues and solutions around moving gold when large sums were involved could come together in some transactions. In 1668 George Beaver at Bristol was making arrangements to lend £300 of money to Mrs Richards with a bond. Sir John Newton had £300 in London but not in Bristol, and through the mediation of his servant and another tradesman in Bristol and another intermediary in London, he was able to complete the transaction at a distance of

5 GRO, D1844-C9-7, 3 August 1685, Pett to Jack Newton.

6 GRO, D1844-C2-33, 22 June 1722.

7 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 262.

8 GRO, D1844-C9-5, Pett to Newton.

over 200 miles. The postal messages between Sir John and Beaver were sent through Mr Clemens who acted as a third party correspondent. A tradesman, Mr Driver, was the financial intermediary in Bristol who sent bills for £300 to Sir John in London by post, who was expected to pay £300 to Driver's agent in London. The London agent would then notify Mr Driver (using the postal service again, or perhaps carrying the receipt or quittance or endorsed bill) who was going to then pay Mrs Richards the £300 in gold locally, and Mrs Richards would give Beaver the bond to Sir John Newton setting out the term and interest payment. Beaver, having arranged all of this, was to note the fact in his almanack 'when the bond was sealed and therefore have the better knowledge what interest is due which shall be paid accordingly'.⁹ Sir John's wife also became part of the information network as Sir John prompted her to hurry Beaver along when he wrote to her, and Beaver received 'a Command from my Ladye' to do so. A week later the bills had not been delivered to London and two more people became involved in this mini-network. Mr Driver's 'man' was met in his absence and James Leonard, a bailiff, servant or under-steward, was sent by Beaver to see Driver, but again absent dealt with 'his man'.¹⁰

Arrears of rent

Arrears of rent were another form of informal credit. It extended the Newton's credit network to include their tenants, relations which were founded on capital.

9 For more on using diaries as an ad hoc form of credit record-keeping see Muldrew, *Obligation*, 64.

10 GRO, D1844-C2-3, D1844-C2-1 and D1844-C2-2, 28 March, 1 April and 6 April 1668, Beaver to Newton.

The statement of Cary Newton's capital that began this discussion of capital listed £500 due in arrears of rent. Rent arrears were a common feature of life in Lincolnshire, the evidence from Gloucestershire is less strong. Rents were collected by stewards, and sometimes by bailiffs who were also tenants. Lady Mary Newton used a tenant as a bailiff and expressed her dissatisfaction with the arrangement 'found by Dear experience'.¹¹ Stewards were expected to chase late-paying tenants, and if necessary take legal action to recover the debt. The few studies that have been carried out on stewards do not explore the difficulties encountered by tenants in paying, nor the way that arrears were dealt with and the effects on the lord, steward, tenant and other people in the local trading area. Rent arrears formed a credit relationship between the tenant, steward and lord; as an unfilled obligation to pay money it was a form of working capital. The tenants and lords were intermeshed in a money economy in which each had obligations to the other to pay or receive money, which formed an organic and informal credit economy, one which tied the parishes around Grantham and Bristol to London, and to each other. In this economy the lending of precious metal money and the lending of land, both capital and representing the bulk of wealth in England, were also tied together.

The failure to pay rent arrears had serious life consequences for tenants, whose livelihood – borrowed from their landlord – could be removed. Stock could be and was distrained, physically seized and sold to pay the debt, however, this would have been destructive to the tenants' business, and probably reduce his or her ability to pay the next rent. Debtors' prison was a possible outcome of this failure

11 LRO, MON97-13-68, 28 January 1709, Lady Mary Newton to Sir Jack Newton.

to meet an obligation.

The social individuals of England in the late 1600s and early 1700s frequently encountered problems with these obligations on account of a severe shortage of physical money. This was partly eased by the rise in money substitutes and credit, but rent was payable in money, and the shortage was almost always a substantial difficulty for the tenant, the steward and the absent lord. The steward had ongoing problems getting money to return and a returns agent. The negotiation of these cashflow problems were exacerbated by a series of factors: local trade conditions; the currency crisis caused by coin-clipping which reached its peak in the mid-1690s and culminated in the re-coinage measures of William's government; poor weather and harvests; national trade distortions caused by the South Sea project and its collapse in 1720; the rise in public debts which took money out of circulation; family ill-health and death; and disputes with neighbouring tenants which could damage their own trade.

Tenants were always trying to delay payment of rent. Delaying payments whilst collecting income leads to a natural form of working capital for a tenant farmer. Tenants always argued that they had no working capital and could only pay rent when they received income from their stock sales, whether that was livestock or crops. We cannot say whether they were really living hand to mouth, with cash inflows matching cash outflows, and their experience of trade being a delicate balancing act of cashflow – or whether it was an excuse for late payment, resulting

in working capital for themselves. John Fleck whilst a steward for Sir John Newton and sometime steward for Jack Newton complained in 1685 that Jack's steward Richard Pett 'had been too much pressing for the money, beside severall particular messages he sent me a very sharpe note by Mr Thomas Buck attorney so that I am affraid he will sue me for it. .. I have never been yet sued'. Fleck had met Jack at Culverthorpe and explained to him that he could 'not possibly pay till I sold wool or grass when Faires cam in' which was to be Michaelmas.¹² Actions to recover arrears suggest that they did not suffer cashflow problems, and that unsold stock was available to the stewards when they arrived to distraint. We can be sure that there were real and very widespread difficulties in cashflow, which arose in the last years of the seventeenth century and became acute in the 1690s. The difficulties with clipping the currency (taking tiny slivers from the edge of coins until they began to weigh significantly less than their face value implied) was such a problem that John Fleck complained in 1696 that the 'country noise and news writers have made such a confusion about money that all trade and business are at a stop'. Wool however continued to sell well.¹³

Even if they had capital of their own tenant farmers expected to pay their rent out of their farming income, and this tended to lead to bottlenecks in the flow of cash. Landlords were aware of this, not least because their stewards told them so, and when trade was good there is evidence that they encouraged their stewards to get rents in quickly. Jack Newton ordered John Richardson to get in the rents from

12 GRO, D1844-C9-10, 28 July.

13 LRO, MON7-12-89, 20 January, Fleck to Sir John Newton.

the farms that had just had a good season 'now that threshing begins'.¹⁴ Stewards could also make the case that tenants were paying as fast as they 'make money of their own goods', the sale of these goods – wool, crops – could be held up by slow trade elsewhere, the scarcity of money making all trade troublesome.¹⁵ The matching of sales to rent extended from cereal crops to livestock and William Jackson said it was impossible to send any money before the clipping.¹⁶ The trading difficulties extended throughout the period covered by the letter-books, and into the eighteenth-century, for example John Richardson was still explaining to Jack Newton in 1719 that the tenants were paying their rent as quickly 'as they make money of their goods'.¹⁷

The harvest could on occasion be substituted for rents, which was probably a way for the landlord to circumvent the need for cash. It formed a kind of barter, with the landlord taking payment in kind for part of the rent. This was particularly useful to the landlord in times of extreme financial stress. During the immediate aftermath of the South Sea bubble Jack Newton ordered John Richardson to take thirty quarters of oats, six quarters of wheat and six quarters of beans from all the tenants and 'allow them for it in their rents'.¹⁸ The chasing and payment of arrears was sometimes slower than the landlord wished. In 1721 Jack Newton upbraided John Richardson for not being swift enough in chasing the arrears on a number of

14 LRO, MON7-14-243, 19 November 1720.

15 LRO, MON7-14-193, 18 December 1719, Richardson to Newton; GRO, D1844-C4-18, 19 October 1685, Pett to Jack Newton.

16 LRO, MON7-12-68, 9 June 1690.

17 LRO, MON7-12-69, date 1690, Jackson to Newton; LRO, MON7-14-160, 18 December 1719, Richardson to Newton.

18 LRO, MON7-14-237, 6 December 1720.

tenants.¹⁹ The 1720s seems to mark a high-tide for rental arrears. This may be related to the financial turbulence occasioned by the South Sea bubble, John Richardson complained that the South Sea Trade had spoiled the wool prices.²⁰ Sometimes a tenant could be in debt to two members of the same family. Mackinder owed money to Lady Mary Newton and her son, and her response (once she knew) was that he should pay her son first, and noted that giving too much leniency in collecting rents from bailiffs was not good policy.²¹ Cashflow difficulties were universal. If tenant farmers suffered so did the gentry families whose land they farmed. Dame Mary Newton when offered a farm to purchase replied that she would buy the farm if money came in, which she doubted.²²

Gentry were tenants and could be up to two years in arrears. Landlords of a lower degree were unable to collect, and had to vainly threaten to use the law. Countess Margaret Coningsby was years behind in paying her rent, her landlord after writing twice before for his £16 'clear money' sent her a messenger with his letter hoped not to distrain or use other legal remedy the law provided.²³

Stewards recognised the cashflow problems of the tenants and sometimes made the case for the tenants to their London or Bitton master, and sometimes tenants anticipated the difficulties caused by local trading conditions, and asked to give up their tenancy before they got into arrears. Richard Pett reported that the markets

19 GRO, D1844-C26-46, 18 April.

20 LRO, MON7-14-232.

21 LRO, MON7-13-68, 28 January 1709.

22 GRO, D1844-C14-56, no date.

23 GRO, D1844-C24-8, 9 June 1743, Edward Dawes to Lady Coningsby.

were poor and that the miller was anxious to give up the mill because of that and because 'the neighbours grind from him'.²⁴ Business was disrupted by rumours of war, as in November 1688 a month before James II left England, farms could not be let and the uncertainty was holding up business according to John Fleck. By 1690 prices were still very low and tenants were finding the times very hard, and farms were still not letting. Fleck advised that rents would need to be abated.²⁵

Stewards were expected to collect rents from tenants, whatever the financial affairs of the tenant were. Stewards frequently took legal action against tenants when they were very late in paying. When John Hides wrote to Sir John from Wigtoft, south west of Boston and about ten miles from Culverthorpe, in 1688 he had been his tenant 'ever since you bought this land'.²⁶ John Fleck the steward was 'about to sue me', but he pleaded that he was 'now grown decrepit and old', and hoped that he could have more time and Sir John would 'consider my Poverty and not make me in my old age a Captive', for then I shall be Rendered altogether incapable of paying any thing' and be made 'utterly miserable'.²⁷ Sometimes the steward pursued his own master's business too closely and did not find the balance required between landlord and tenant, Jack Newton was upset with John Fleck for pursuing a tenant too vigorously, which led to his dismissal a few months later.²⁸

On occasion rent was not paid because it was in dispute. Proving that gentry were as much tenants as middling sort tenant farmers, Mr Foljamb was a tenant of

24 LRO, MON7-12-46, 3 October 1685.

25 LRO, MON7-12-61, 24 November 1688, John Fleck to Sir John Newton; also MON7-12-69, 29 November 1690, and MON7-12-68, 18 February 1691.

26 There is no evidence for the purchase of this land, or any further tenants.

27 GRO, D1844-C4-81, John Hides to Sir John Newton, 12 February 1688.

28 LRO, MON7-12-38, 14 October 1682.

Thomas Coke, Sir Jack Newton's ward and grandson, at Coningsborough. Sir Jack insisted on a thirty shilling rent which Foljamb resisted, and Jack began proceedings against him in Chancery. Foljamb's father-in-law Thomas Worsley tried to intervene on behalf of his son-in-law Mr Foljamb, in a land dispute between his son and Sir Jack Newton in 1710. According to Worsley the suit would cost £100 to prosecute 'vigourously' and not worth the rents involved. Having already waited on Sir Jack once and 'met with soe much Civilities on this Account' that he felt able to 'intermeddle' again having accidentally seen the Chancery Bill and Answers. He asked for an 'Amicable composure... by way of Reference to Gentleman in the Neighbourhood to Preserve Amitie and save Expençe'.²⁹ From the landlord's perspective the best mitigation for rent arrears was simply not to take on tenants who lacked capital. They were assessed for their ability to pay, and they put themselves forward on the basis that they had (and would) carefully pay their rent, and that they were good farmers who could turn a profit.³⁰

Landlords were not averse ordering their stewards to pursue tenants through legal action if they thought it necessary. Stewards were normally the main functionary in these cases but the landlord themselves could be and were involved in some detail from time to time. Sir John Newton was informed that his attorney Miles Long had received an order regarding a tenant called Goodman Walcott from Sir John's steward in Lincolnshire John Padman.³¹ Tenants Mabbison and Coy were both on

29 GRO, D1844-C11-154, 30 May 1710, Thomas Worsley to Newton.

30 See Chapter 5 'Making a tenant'.

31 GRO, D1844-C2-17, 14 April 1669, Miles Long to Sir John Newton.

the wrong end of Richard Pett's collection skills in 1685, the former had his goods marked for sale and Coy was forced to concede the crop in his field for his unpaid rent, which Pett had seized and for which he complained that he 'had been made a Joseph at Thorpe'.³²

Sir Jack Newton took a very much more active role in his tenants lives in the early 1720s, albeit from London, and his attitude to tenants became noticeably less lenient and more hostile. He ordered that Widow Shaw be arrested by Thomas Headon for her arrears, which he acknowledged, saying he would give directions to have her arrested.³³

Stewards were responsible for paying rent on behalf of the absent landlord, and could be caught up in disagreements and non-payment of rent, and arrested or threatened with it. The lands in Barkston manor owned by Corpus Christi college, Oxford were rented from them, as they stood right in the middle of the manor; in 1694 the rent was two and a half years in arrears. The bursar of the college threatened to arrest Edward Dearle as steward of Datchett manor. Dearle was unable to pay the rent without Sir John's order, and he prayed for it earnestly.³⁴

Distraint (or distresses) was a last resort for stewards, but was drawn on fairly regularly, even for very long term tenants. Its use can be found in all the estates in which the family had interests. William Swift at Pontefract was successfully taken to court by John Fleck who got money paid into court on behalf of Sir

32 GRO, D1844-C4-10, 6 June 1685, Pett to Newton; D1844-C9-37, 20 June; D1844-C4-12, June 1685.

33 GRO, D1844-C2-33.

34 GRO, D1844-C5-51, 7 November.

John.³⁵ John Dickson reported in 1709 that he had made several distresses on the Totlely farm, and taken a note from the ablest of them for the rest in respect of their arrears.³⁶ William Mackinder was a very long term tenant, but was in 1728 distrained for rent. He made a proposition to a very ancient Sir Jack, that Mackinder borrow from him to stock his farm again, and to hold it for another year, which Jack refused. Jack though reserved the final judgement on what action to take to his attorney Peniston Lamb. Mackinder had suffered from sheep rot which had caused great losses also at Culverthorpe, and Thomas Headon who put the distraint in motion, but he was held up in the process by an absence of instruction from London from either his master or Peniston Lamb who had been ill.³⁷ This illustrates not only that the variations of the weather could undo the business of a long-experienced tenant, but also that the actions to begin proceedings to recover the unpaid rent involved a number of decision makers and deputies in disparate places. Not only this but the actual process of distraining itself was one which involved a chain of cooperating social individuals, and there were costs involved. The accounts for the distraint of William Nelson's oats seized by Sir John Monson in 1673 shows that the oats were sold to a Hull merchant, and that charges were made: for rent to Lord Bellasis for the storage in a barn; payments to Mr Darwin's man and Lord Bellasis's steward; nine weeks of a man's board; charges for various men for leadings, harrowing, steading and stacking; for men to protect the oats

35 GRO, D1844-C4-70, 20 December 1684, William Swift to Newton.

36 GRO, D1844-C10-31, 12 March 1709, Dickson to Newton.

37 LRO, MON7-12-219, 17 February 1728, Thomas Headon to Lady Susanna Newton; GRO, D1844-C26-61, same date, Newton to Peniston Lamb; D1844-C26-71, 20 February 1728, Newton to Thomas Headon.

from snow melt water on two occasions; and for turning and thrashing.³⁸

Sometimes tenants, especially when they were poor, could find themselves coercively removed from their home when they did not pay their rent. This had the effect of making them not only poor and without capital and income but also without shelter. John Fleck, apparently by the 'persuasion' of William Mackinder had 'thrown him out of a cottage that (did) ..not belong to him' and gave it to his Mackinder's brother. Racking the poor, as Mackinder was charged with, caused expense to other parishes nearby, and in this case Grantham town would have to support him, as result of which 'the Country condemns' him.³⁹

Credit from returns and rent arrears were informal in the sense of being un-agreed, and can be seen as a dynamic product of tension between the landlord's need for ready cash and the tenant's need to delay it, for both cashflow and working capital purposes. This meant that both were unstructured and organic in nature, and were part of the social production of currency. They were created by a social dynamic of competing needs, a fluid process of reflexively accepting non-payment and the physical enforcement with cooperating social individuals by capturing resources in the form of goods and stock, and the body by way of civil arrest. Goods and stock in the form of harvested crops stored in barns was taken in lieu of money rents, and the acceptance of this equation of goods and money was a social restatement of the exchange value of money. Mediation by stewards, neighbours

38 LRO, 1674, MON19-6-11.

39 GRO, D1844-C10-152, 16 April 1709, John Jackson and Thomas Shaw to Newton.

and family was part of this social dynamic. The negotiation of arrears was one interpreted and understood through narratives of patronage, but also more economic narratives of commercial bargaining and contract, which were not compatible and therefore competed.

Informal credit of this kind was at the same time part of the social process of producing land as property. The acceptance of arrears was part of the acceptance of borrowing land in return for money rents. The recognition by all participants that money was due to an absent landlord not in physical possession in return for using fields and buildings in the Lincolnshire or Gloucestershire countryside recognised as his, and that such money could be late, was an important factor in producing real estate.

Part II – Formal credit

Public credit

Financial innovations in the second half of the seventeenth century gave those with moveable capital other ways of lending it, further increasing the scope for accumulating capital. The government of William and Mary came up with a number of money-raising schemes to finance the war with France following the flight of James II and the crowning of his cousin Mary and William of Orange in early 1689. In 1692 the Million Act was passed to raise £1m for the government. It was an annuity at ten per cent for seven years, then seven per cent for life, with an option to convert into a life annuity at fourteen per cent. These three interest rates were

all above the legal cap of six per cent, though this does not seem to have concerned Harley's government. The scheme (also called a Tontine) raised only about ten per cent of the target, and 1,012 individuals were nominated.⁴⁰ Published lists gives names, ages, habitation, and father's occupation for children.⁴¹ The list shows that the investors were mainly London residents, but there were also some provincial investors. Overseas cities and large towns are well represented, including Geneva, Versailles, Amsterdam, Harlem, Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Brussels. There are about as many overseas towns as there are towns outside of London. The English names feature many tradesmen, and also doctors, surgeons, clerics, dons, but the largest group and most frequent appellation was esquire or gentleman. A handful of yeoman are named – John Cole, James Foster, William Harker, Clement Haydon, John Lott, Thomas Nicholls, Nathaniel Pyle, Edward Pryor. These new forms of public debt could provide access to investment for a woman and for children, as there was no bar on a woman owning bonds or holding annuities. Women further participated in the annuity schemes of the later 1690s, and in the Lottery schemes of the first decades of the 1700s. About fifteen spinsters and many widows are included in the Tontine subscription. All the provincial names are gentry families identified as gentleman or esquire, almost certainly having London connections, and most counties are represented with one or two from each. All overseas subscribers were listed as 'merchant'.

40 Moche A. Milevsky, *King William's Tontine, Why the retirement annuity of the future should resemble its past* (Cambridge, 2015).

41 *A particular accompt of the moneys paid into the receipt of the exchequer upon the late Million Act, for the benefit of survivorship containing the names of the several nominees, their ages, places of abode, the sums paid on each nominees life* (London, 1694).

The two children of Sir Jack Newton were nominated. Cary Newton and Michael Newton, aged thirteen and one respectively, were included, as well as his mother-in-law Lady Mary Heveningham. A number of names are recognisable as kindred or friends of the family, for example William Marwood, Baptist Noel, John Blow, Thomas Wade, Daniel Wigfall, George and Edward Montague, Paul Foley, Sir Cyril Wyche, John Wickens, and Sir Richard Hoare, mostly subscribing on behalf of their children.

Further schemes included the Bank of England which raised £1.2m in twenty-five per cent part-paid equity capital stock from subscribers in the summer of 1694. Jack Newton was a subscriber for £1,200, of which he paid his quarter in June or July of that year. On the list of subscribers are a significant number of names associated in Jack Newton's peer-group and kin, including neighbours from Lincolnshire. The list is populated by 1,520 names including many widows and plenty of tradesmen. There was only a small number of the nobility.⁴² Three years later a further subscription was made to raise over a million pounds 'for making good the deficiencies of several Funds, and for enlarging the capital stock'. Jack Newton again contributed, this time for £375 on 15 June 1697. The list again includes a significant number of names well-known to Jack Newton.⁴³

In late 1695 the government's insatiable demand for gold led to a proposal for a

42 BOE, ledger AC27/382, 21 June -2 July 1694, 'subscribers to shares 12 hundred thousand pounds paid up 25% initially'. The list includes a portrait painter and a watchmaker.

43 BOE, Book A, B and C, 26 Apr - 24 June 1697, 'Subscription list', it is a summary of 3 books of subscriptions.

land bank. The earlier schemes were tax-free and had such generous terms that projectors like Briscoe argued that money was being taken out of circulation and into the government's coffers, recent work has shown this was an astonishing fifty per cent of all circulating currency in 1690.⁴⁴ The landowners had paid for the wars and 'the monied men had paid little or nothing' but in fact 'enrich'd themselves by it'.⁴⁵ The Newtons were again well informed and interested, but not necessarily in favour, despite being landowners. In November Jack Newton told his father 'I do not yet very well understand Mr Briscoe's project, nor am I an admirer of any, I wish the consiquence of them be not fatall to England. My brother Stringer and all the moneyed men are very much against it'.⁴⁶

The Hoare's bank accounts show further evidence that investments were made in public loans, and sums of £1,000 and more were paid out for Low Wines, Malt and Tonnage and for £100 per annum government annuities. Two purchases of lottery tickets were also made for £100 each.⁴⁷ Their attorney Peniston Lamb was asked to note the 'numbers of the blanks drawn on your tickets' and he noted five numbers for them.⁴⁸ These government debts paid out 6.45 per cent.⁴⁹ The interest was received bi-annually and outlasted the use of the account. Further

44 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 90, 102.

45 *A discourse on the late funds*, Vol. 3 (1694), 264, cited in A. Murphy (ed.), *Monetary theory: 1601-1758* (London, 1997), 26.

46 LRO, MON7-14-81, 21 November.

47 See HB, Ledger 3/370, 19 May 1702, 'to money paid on the Low etc £1000'; Ledger 5/11, 26 January 1704, 'to money paid into the Exchequer for the Malt 2000£'; Ledger 7/436, 19 February 1706, 'to the Exchequer for the 1st and 2nd payments for 100£ p.a £775'; 28 August and 17 October 1706, 'to the Exchequer for 3d payment of 100 per annum' £387 10s'; Ledger 13/404, 15 June 1711, 'to the Exchequer for one ticket'; and Ledger 12/145, 1710 'to the Lottery' £100. For Dame Mary Newton's involvement see LRO, MON7-13-74/75.

48 LRO, MON7-12-147, 24 August 1710, Lamb to Sir Jack Newton.

49 The £100 annuity in 4 instalments cost £1550 and paid out £100, the yield was therefore 100/1550 or 6.45 per cent.

public funds were raised in the first decade of the eighteenth century and Jack Newton, then raised to the dignity of Baronet after his father's death, invested over £300 in the five per cent Lottery in 1717.⁵⁰

The same kind of people were at the heart of the new public debts as were lenders and capital rich. They were early adopters of the new schemes. But this was not because they were smarter, more savvy, or had the money where others did not, but rather because they had the connections to invest. Capital on the scale required was available throughout the country. Very few tradesmen in Newcastle invested in the early schemes, nor any from Manchester. The Crown had always been a debtor, but only to a small number of people; these new schemes opened up the number of people with whom the Crown had a debtor relationship.

Private credit

Before 1571 lending gold was usury, and this form of taking a fee for lending money was illegal under statutes of Henry VII and Edward VI. The Newton family were evidently involved in lending as soon as it became legal. The will of one of the younger sons of the Westby husbandman who started our story indicates a range of debtors within a day's ride, and fifteen debtors in eleven parishes are

50 BOE, AC27/332 f658 and AC27/332 f658, 14 September 1717, Sir John Newton of 'St Annes Soho', subscribed £334 19s and sold all to Thomas Snow on 7 August 1718; , AC27/332 f603, September 1717, 'Gervis Newton, "merchant London' subscribed £624 4s 6d. They also invested in the South Sea scheme of 1720 and continued to be investors in the following decades.

listed, including 40s to the lord of the manor Mr Cony. A total of 300s or £15 was lent, an average of 20s each. That chattels and cattle have the same origin is still evident at this time, and George had eighteen cows out on loan to fourteen people.⁵¹ The husbandman died in 1562 and could not have legally lent money, but George's brother William did so, and so did his step-son Richard Hickson. John Newton was the largest beneficiary of Hickson's personal estate which included a sum to be paid from an enormous statute staple of £18,000. The interest charged was seven per cent, yielding perhaps £1,260 which goes a long way to explaining how Hickson became so rich. John would ultimately receive only £4,700 of this, in a trunk, because the rest was lost on account of the troubles which were brewing in the country.⁵²

John Newton was a prolific lender too, and his money was used to finance the war. He was accused of financing his uncle Anthony Eyre (Major General in the Royalist army) furnishing him with 'money, horses and arms' all of which were very expensive. Much lending was to gentry kinsmen. John Newton was said to have had over £3,000 lent out in addition to what he had already declared to Parliament, including a loan to Sir Roger Cooper of Thurgarton in Nottinghamshire who borrowed £1,000, representing about twelve per cent of his total personal capital.⁵³

Sir Roger was ordered to pay it to the Committee for Advancement of Money if John Newton did not pay his debt to the Committee. The default of one debtor,

51 LRO, LCC 1601, ii, f16, George Newton will.

52 LRO, MON7/11/24. Settlement probably 16 Dec 1640, date is unknown, and appears on a later list of settlements of these properties. The Monson catalogue states 1618 but this is not possible, and have been between the deaths of Thomas Newton and Hickson's own; TNA, PROB 11/188, (1640 will); LRO, MON3/31/61, Quitclaim for £4,700.

53 Kin through the Stanhope and Harpur family.

John Newton, could cause very great difficulties to his debtor, Sir Roger Cooper, who would have already passed the money borrowed to another party. He would have needed to find another creditor to replace John Newton. The consequence could have been a forced sale of his real estate, at a time when there was little money.

John Newton lent money to John Newton alias Cradock at Barr's Court, and although we do not know why Newton was desperate for money, we do know that in early 1661 he needed £500 in a hurry, or £300 immediately in bills of exchange with the balance later. John Newton (whilst in Grantham for the election) was holding out for some further concession from the other Newton but was reluctant as 'granteing your desires' would be 'doinge my selfe a greate inconvenience'.⁵⁴ This or other loans were made in part to assist the former in paying the sum of £1,095 to the Crown for his baronetcy. John Newton alias Cradock was thought to have mortgaged his estate and borrowed from his Lincolnshire namesake and the special remainder in the baronetcy patent, by which John Newton became baronet a few years later, was probably part of the agreement. John Newton maintained that he acquired the estates by purchase.⁵⁵

Not only did Sir John Newton alias Cradock borrow so much he lost his estate by it, his widow Lady Grace Newton borrowed, to finance legal actions, and for other undisclosed purposes. She had a mortgage of £100 to one William Buchard in December 1660 which was paid off by John Newton. She had the use of

54 LRO, MON7-14-4, 23 February 1661, John Cradock alias Newton at Bristol to John Newton.

55 See Chapter 2, 'Accumulations'.

£2,000 from the same, the nature of the loan was unknown but was related to the purchase of her husband's estate.⁵⁶ Sir Isaac Newton's mother Hannah Smyth was a lender in the local area of Grantham to a significant degree. Her inventory shows that she had outstanding debts due to her of £1,400. Her son is well known to be a lender at university and his note books a full of small loans.⁵⁷ Gervase Newton lent money to his kinsman Robert Fisher secured against some part of his estate, which was still outstanding when Newton died in 1728.⁵⁸

Everyone could be a lender and a borrower. Despite his significant loans out Sir John Newton also borrowed from his clergy kinsman Henry Pight and £500 for his cousin Rigby. When his own son Gervase needed money to purchase a place in London, his 'afflicted' mother was not able to help, as Rigby was calling in his money because he was getting married. Sir John would have to refinance the loan or find money from elsewhere.⁵⁹

In the early eighteenth century Sir Jack Newton continued to lend, including to gentry kinsmen. Sir Brian Staplyton borrowed £200 toward the purchase of his house in St. James and repaid it in 1709.⁶⁰ Two entries in the bank account, together with evidence from the letter-books, suggest that sums were lent and he was still borrowing a decade later.⁶¹ Sir Jack lent £4,200 to Lord James Cavendish at four per cent in 1718, £1,500 to Mr Burton at five per cent with security against

56 LRO, MON7-14-3, 25 December 1660, unsigned note in a scruffy hand.

57 LRO, LCC, ii. ff.406-7, 1679; Trinity College, Cambridge, MS add. 3996.

58 LRO, MON28/B/11/2/23.

59 GRO, D1844-C10-36.

60 GRO, D1844-C10-60, 31 January.

61 HB, Ledger 7/436, 4 April 1707, £200; Ledger 12/145, 10 November 1709, £850; Ledger 5/11, possibly £100 to Lord Harvey is another, 1703; GRO, D1844-C11-153, 4 February 1716, Stapylton to Newton.

his estate at Arnold in Nottinghamshire in 1721, and £1,000 to Mr Dixon at five per cent with a mortgage from his son in law William Archer securing it. He also lent money to a woman, Mrs Charlton, owner of the manor of Carlton Scroop, who borrowed £2,000 on a mortgage against the manor, and then in 1716 borrowed a further £900 at five per cent.⁶² In 1731 he still had an outstanding mortgage with Sir Robert Sutton of £2,000 against the manor of Brent Boughton which was described as 'old', together with another mortgage for £4,000. It was part of over £38,700 Sutton owed on mortgages.⁶³

Gentry women could be part of the credit network. In 1711 Elizabeth Pelham wrote to her uncle Jack Newton telling him that his kinsman Mr Jessop, the attorney, had approached her daughter Stringer with a possible £1,000 mortgage. The circumstances illustrate that gentry women had access to credit markets through their kinsmen, especially those involved in money transactions themselves, and that they could club together to lend the money if the desired loan was too large. The facility of clubbing together and sharing the information about the loan was added to a network of other kinsmen in London, and their servants and bankers, all of whom made the loan possible.⁶⁴ Mr Jessop sent word to Mistress Stringer that 'he could help her to get a mortgage of £2,000'. Stringer had £1,000 to lend so Pelham and two of her sisters were to put in another £1,000. She ordered 'Benson' to return as much money to Sir Jack as he could and order it to be

62 GRO, D1844-C26-2, after 1723, list of conveyances.

63 *The particular and inventory of all and singular the lands, tenements, and hereditaments, goods, chattels, debts, and personal estate whatsoever of the Right Honorable Sir Robert Sutton* (London, 1732). See GRO, D1844-E24-1/12, a collection of bonds to Sir Jack and Sir Michael Newton.

64 GRO, D1844-C11-77, 5 March 1711, Elizabeth Pelham to Sir Jack Newton.

paid to him, and asked Sir Jack to order his servant Robert Gale 'to put it where you think convenient'. Pelham also ordered that if money could be paid to Sir Richard Hoare then bills should be taken afterwards to Sir Jack. Pelham resigned herself to the higher cost of returns to women, saying 'wee must doe it as wee can, being the mony must bee pay'd in London'. She called Jack's help in the matter a charitable act to assist her. Elizabeth Stringer was a lender in 1717 and wrote to her creditor calling in her money in a language of deference, 'when it seutes your Convenience to pay your money I desiour you will pleas to lett me know and I shall be ready to receive it'.⁶⁵

Attorneys were part of the network of credit, and were known to make credit easy in return for a fee from the lender, this could put the borrower into difficulties and the fee could be large, leading to a feeling of being used. Mrs Carter's husband was, according to her, 'drawn in' by Hugh Bateson, an attorney, to take on debt which he was unable to repay, and he would not own up to the whole extent of it. Mrs Carter, a kinswoman of Jack Newton's, believed the attorney took a ten per cent fee on the loan from Thomas Guisborne, to whom he was then 'deeply in debt'. This implies that Guisborne was taking far more than ten per cent in interest to cover his own costs.⁶⁶

The fee charged in usury was reflected in the difference between the price the gold was sold to the borrower and the price paid by them when it was returned. This

65 GRO, D1844-C11-92, 28 September.

66 LRO, MON7-13-228, 14 April 1716, M. Carter to Newton.

fee for use was widely disliked and considered anti-social and anti-Christian. Loans were made anyway and, as demand outstripped illegal supply, effective borrowing costs were high at twenty-five per cent to 180 per cent. This and the 1571 Elizabethan statute allowed a new charge, 'interest', to be paid at less than ten per cent. Rates fell rapidly and by 1600 ten per cent was the expected rate, by the 1630s it was six to seven per cent, and the maximum legal rate became six per cent after 1651, with the market rate roughly following the statutory maximum.⁶⁷ Freehold land was often valued at five per cent, and this rate broadly reflected the purchase price of freehold land at twenty years purchase.⁶⁸ Richard Hickson demanded that interest be paid on a statute staple at seven per cent.⁶⁹ John Bennett steward to Lord Arundell charged six per cent per annum, whilst Henry Sherfield a Salisbury attorney charged eight per cent.⁷⁰ Lady Mary Newton accepted her son's advice and took six per cent 'as it is allowed by the Councill and therefore no extortion'.⁷¹

Interest was conceptually differentiated from usury as a compensation for potential loss of a debt. It was reasoned that the borrower could invest the money for profit and it was equitable for the lender to share in that gain if he made it possible. The use of the term interest for both lending and to describe interpersonal relationships was not in the sense of self-interest but one of mutual

67 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 113; Sidney Homer and Richard Sylla, *A History of Interest Rates* (Hoboken, New Jersey, 2011); see also Tim Keim and Frank T. Melton, 'Thomas Manley and the rate of interest debate 1667-1672', *JBS* 29:2 (April 1990), pp. 147-173.

68 C. G. Lewin, 'Compound interest in the seventeenth-century', *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries*, 108 (1981), pp. 423-442; Robert C. Allen, 'The price of freehold land and the interest rate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *EcHR* 41:1 (Feb. 1988), pp. 33-50.

69 See above, Hickson will.

70 Bettey, 'Eyes and ears', 21.

71 GRO, D1844-C9-15, 24 November 1709, Mary Newton to Jack Newton.

advantage, a benefit or profit to two or more people.⁷² We will see that it extended in this sense to the political 'interest' of gentry elites in electoral boroughs as well.

When the promise to repay was broken the lender lost their gold. The Newton family certainly faced its share of losses. In 1650 John Newton was forced to concede that most of the cash portion (£8,400) of his inheritance from his uncle was lost, almost certainly in the civil war, as it was intact at the time of his uncle's death.⁷³ He released 'all claim to a statute staple of £18,000 at seven percent for the payment of a legacy of £8,400 under the will, which cannot be paid because a large part of the principal has been lost'.⁷⁴ John Newton made a further petition for mitigation or discharge of the remainder of his assessment to the Committee for Advancement of Money in January 1652 arguing that many of the debts which had counted toward his compounded worth were irrecoverable and should be discounted.⁷⁵ These losses came despite the harsh terms of the English law in relation to debt default.

The effect of credit default was a random and unpredictable redistribution of wealth from creditors to debtors, and was considered to be unjust if it resulted from profligacy rather than uncontrollable misfortune.⁷⁶ The experience of wealth was based on the maintenance of credit, it was 'fortune' in the sense of fortunate in the

72 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 140.

73 TNA, SP19-140 f.34, 17 March 1646, his personal estate £8,400; SP23-187 f.85, 10 September 1646.

74 LRO, MON3-31-61.

75 TNA, SP19-140 f44.

76 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 4.

face of insecure social and economic conditions which could take a wealthy person with credit to a debtor in the courts, or prison, losing their estate and livelihood. For some their estate was a gift by the grace of God and could as easily be taken away. This sentiment, stated by many including Ralph Josselin, was echoed in 1640 by Richard Hickson when he disposed of 'that portion of worldly goods wherewith it hath pleased God to blesse mee in this life'. By the end of the sixteenth century there were few households that had not been sued, sued, or experienced arrest or attachment of goods, seen or experienced bailiffs distraining or known someone in prison or been there.⁷⁷ This credit insecurity and related downward social mobility was matched by other worries about pain, sickness, death, crop failure, accidents, fire and epidemics. Keith Thomas found a preoccupation with human misfortune because the physical environment was hazardous and insecure. As a result there was more anxiety about maintaining what was held (not dropping through the trap door), than optimism about accumulating more (rising to the next level).⁷⁸

In 1701 Thomas Gleave petitioned from the Fleet debtors' prison in Latin for help with his debts, and to secure his release.⁷⁹ An unnamed "most unfortunate woman liveing' whose husband had had been committed to gaol for a crime she couldn't 'think on without the utmost detestation' pleaded for his liberty or at least mercy on him. Mr Scrope had assisted her with her 'six helpless children', and she begged

77 See above Hickson will; Muldrew, *Obligation*, 272-3

78 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 5-24, cit in Muldrew, *Obligation*, 273.

79 LRO, MON7-13-237, 26 February 1701, Gleave to Newton.

for his compassion. In return she offered all in her 'power to contribute to your ease and safety' and it would 'lays us under the greatest obligation imaginable'.

Stewards and servants could find themselves in prison and petitioning their masters for freedom. Stewards' sons borrowed money and got into financial difficulties with their creditors leading them into the debtors' prison on more than one occasion. John (2) Fleck, probably the son of John Fleck the steward to Jack Newton between 1682 and 1697 petitioned him from King's Bench prison where he was held for the non-payment of a debt of £50. He asked for employment, to help him repay his creditors.⁸⁰ John Dafter the son of Thomas Dafter, Sir Jack's steward at Bitton and in Kingswood chase, wrote to him from goal in October 1734, having returned from Guinea he had become sick and could not pay his debts as they fell due, and had been put in Bristol Newgate prison by an impatient creditor. The petition echoed the petitions made in chancery and other formal petitions with him including in the forward 'humbley sheweth'. Dafter was not aware that Sir Jack had died several months earlier in London.⁸¹

One Mr Burton, a steward of Sir Jack's son-in-law William Archer, became entangled in the debt default of his uncle Sir John Statham, and news reached the ears of Archer's sister-in-law who informed him of 'a fault in Mr Burton'. Burton gave a bond of £30 for his uncle and it was thought that no one would have taken the bond if Burton had not been Archer's steward. Burton's position as steward to a wealthy gentleman was 'a great advantage to him and a charitable respite to a

80 LRO, MON7-12-210, 21 February 1722, John (2) Fleck to Newton.

81 GRO, D1844-C19-1, 21 October 1734, Dafter from Bristol Newgate prison to Newton. Sir Jack Newton died on 12 February 1734 (Memorial at St. Michael's, Heydour, Lincolnshire).

reduced family'. It was hinted that Statham's steward may have had the same kind of help from Statham himself in the past, highlighting the close reciprocal relationships that master and steward could have. Like other informers, such as John Jackson the Barkston tenant, she asked if Archer would 'conceall me in the affair'.⁸² Sometimes a steward was threatened with gaol and they needed to seek the protection of their absent master. In 1694 Edward Dearle at Datchet manor wrote asking Sir John to pay the college rent, which was two and a half years in arrears as the bursar had been with him several times and had now threatened to arrest him for it.⁸³

Others were less hasty in sending someone to a debtors' prison and positively considered the implications for that person, leading them to avoid the action. In 1739 a young woman was dismissed from an unnamed hospital for being a cheat, Lady Margaret Newton had taken her side in the case, but seemed unaware of the cheating, 'they were unwilling to send her to Bridewell because it might have hindered her Preferment'.⁸⁴ Mary Newton lost her cook to the debtors' prison, after he went to Bristol and was imprisoned on her account.⁸⁵ Kindred relationships were important not only for obtaining new employment, but also for obtaining release from prison. On at least three occasions the family employers were asked to help out with a spouse of a servant or a servant who had been imprisoned. In 1677 Elizabeth Peacock no doubt related to Sir John Newton's old servant Richard

82 LRO, MON7-13-230, 11 February 1736, M. Carter to William Archer.

83 GRO, D1844-C5-51, 7 November 1694, Edward Dearle to Sir John Newton.

84 LRO, MON7-12-239, 30 October 1739, P. Shaw to Margaret, Lady Coningsby.

85 LRO, MON7-13-36, no date, Dame Mary Newton to Sir John Newton.

Peacock begged him to intervene to free her from gaol, and to restore her 'libberty'.⁸⁶

Gentry were no less implicated in debtors' prisons than anyone else. Lady Grace Newton, widow of the first Baronet, was said in 1666 to be 'in a verie lowe Condition, and wilbe in a worse shortly, which will make her sell parte of her joynture, or else lye in a Prison'. She was in such extreme need of money to stop her attorney Innys doing somthing to harm her legally that she sold all of her books, 'and the Ritch sadle and Furniture att Barscourt for 20£'. Richard Jones her neighbour and Sir John Newton's correspondent was unwilling to see the stuff gone from the house and so lent her the £20, with the items as security 'to preserve all for you, soe nowe she hath nothings to Pawne more, but her selfe'.⁸⁷ Even knights could find themselves followed by debt-collectors partially occasioned by the non-payment of their friends and neighbours. Sir Thomas Bridges wrote to Sir John Newton that he was 'still followed by the sollicitors' for money towards the 'defence of the Bath navigation'. Mr Langton had not paid, and neither had Sir John, and Bridges sent a messenger to him to pay £10 immediately, so that he could return to London quietly.⁸⁸ It was probably this venture which Joseph Langton referred when he thanked Sir Jack Newton for 'that generous assistance you gave to our Common ... before the Committee'. The bill being opposed with Jack's help related to the Water Works in Bristol, and the 'proprietors' would help next time if it ever

86 GRO, D1844-C3-9, 4 October 1677, Elizabeth Peacock to Sir John Newton.

87 GRO, D1844-C2-5, 15 November 1666; LRO, MON7-14-7, 3 November, the bill of sale: a trunk with books, a chest with books, and a rich riding saddle for £20.

88 GRO, D1844-C14-18, no date, Bridges to Newton.

came back.⁸⁹

Sir John Statham's arrest for non-payment of a debt was not atypical.⁹⁰ Debtors' prison was a reality for many people, but it could be survived with careful estate planning. Sir John Newton's warring neighbour in Bitton, Francis Creswick, was twenty years in prison for debt, yet his ancestors continued to prosper.⁹¹ Though livelihoods were not always lost, civic office was forfeit in such cases, and Gilbert Chantler was dismissed the Grantham corporation as a comburgess for being in gaol for debt.⁹²

A strong network meant access to strong borrowers, which reduced the risk of default. Better networks of kin and friends, with their own networks and access to capital, reduced the risk of prison. Money called in could be replaced by other borrowing. Knowledge of the law and the means and will to prosecute further reduced financial risk. These factors were important to the prosperity of a family, and the Newton family had a strong culture of credit and the law.

Conclusion

Credit was another aspect of the social production of currency, transforming the inert and neutral silver and gold metals into a store of value and wealth. The early modern economy was 'a system of cultural, as well as material, exchanges in which the central mediating factor was credit or trust'. This trust was interpersonal and

89 GRO, D1844-C10-112, 29 September 1700, Langton to Newton.

90 See above LRO, MON7-13-230.

91 Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 139.

92 John B. Manterfield (ed.), *Newton's Grantham - the Hall Book and life in a puritan town* (Grantham, 2014), Appendix 2, 38.

'underpinned by emotional relations between individuals communicated in the form of reputation. This personalised social trust had a human face and was exchanged through the same early modern market by which material goods were exchanged.⁹³

Credit was, when multiplied up by the iterative dynamic processes of the human complex social system, an infinite series of substitutions, such that the gold (being a kind of origin) is forever lost in the chains of re-lending through the local and national population. Credit in the forms of bills of exchange, bonds, bank notes, promissory notes, and other forms of money substitutes were the innovations which became the precursors of modern paper fiat money, at first exchangeable for gold and finally backed only by faith in the narrative, and exchangeable for another paper token. This is not to say this was new. These innovations occurred in China thousands of years before seventeenth-century England, and in Italy centuries before, but their development was extremely fast in England. We saw that physical money was a token representing some 'value' and so credit in the form of paper receipts was itself another kind of token, a paper token, representing the delivery of physical money, itself a token. Paper money was in this sense a token of a token, but this second derivative quality did not mean that it was any less socially real.

The aim to apply complexity to the case study letter-books has led to a finding that credit was an economy produced socially in the same way that real estate and currency was produced – reflexively, physically and discursively – by the Newtons' social network. The generalised ongoing consent to credit as a currency, or a deputy or proxy to it, by its habitual, normal, customary, practical and social usage

93 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 4-5.

was an acquiescence in which social individuals reflexively 'did it to themselves'. Credit was unstable, and in times of stress such as war or the threat of it, (or when the coins themselves were being questioned and challenged as good currency) credit and trade broke down. The socially-shared nature of credit and its breakdown are illustrated by the steward John Fleck, who noted that 'the country noise and newes writers have made such confusion about money that all trade and business are at a full stop'.⁹⁴ Credit was produced physically as well as reflexively. When the credit relationship broke down and the temporal gap was not closed, as it invariably did, the borrower did not return the gold to the lender, they could call for an attachment of the borrower's body or their goods, or have them arrested. This physical power with respect to the body underpinned the social production of both currency and credit. It represented the ultimate sanction against a defaulting debtor. The effect on the imprisoned debtor was at least twofold. First he or she was unable to sell anything, or conduct their ongoing trade so that they could repay the debt, and secondly their reputation would suffer, making it harder for them to obtain further credit, or to borrow money to refinance the debt that had put them in goal. The physical intervention had an effect on the narratives exchanged and stored in the social network, leading to a poor reputation, disgrace, and bad credit.

The risk of abduction and incarceration was one which was lesser for a well-connected and or capital-rich social individual, and therefore the experience of anxiety was accordingly attenuated. A good understanding of the law and knowledge and intimacy with good attorneys reduced the risk. A good knowledge

94 LRO, MON7-12-89, 20 January 1696, Fleck to Newton.

of the law, and comfort in using it, was essential to successful lending, and borrowing. Narratives of the credit agreement (as a discursive production) were set out and recorded on paper and vellum, as a mortgage, statute staple, bond or other written agreement. The lending arrangement was stored in the memory of people (there was a social knowledge of wealth and agreements, witnesses were essential to contracts) but also stored symbolically with ink. These documents, as evidence of an agreement, were guarded physically, in boxes, chests and houses, just as gold and titles to land were.

But what is 'trust', 'credit', or 'reputation'? Muldrew's persuasive conceptualisation of credit – arguing that trade and money are as cultural as courtship, sex and patronage – nevertheless tends to reify the concepts. He argues that the 'link between the material and cultural can be reconstructed ... if we think of reputation or credit as a currency within a linguistic or rhetorical system of circulation which considers wants and needs in terms of social relations of exchange and negotiation' (my emphasis).⁹⁵ It is true that these words were reified by contemporaries, and although Muldrew recognises the dynamic and social nature of credit, he describes it (as Defoe does) as though credit itself is circulated, which of course is impossible. His emphasis on dynamic instability is apt. Credit, he notes, was 'based on words' so it was communicated rapidly, meaning that doubt could spread rapidly and be damaging to good credit. It was 'far less secure because it was based on the emotional status of one's neighbourly relations and the mutability of

95 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 150.

reputation. The anxiety around credit flowed from 'their material well-being' depending 'on this unstable language'. Though he does not seem to say so, it must also have flowed from anxiety about the instability of those personal relations as well. Indeed the new financial products of the eighteenth century were described with metaphors of a woman's sexual reputation because of its perceived instability.⁹⁶

It was the exchange of narratives of trust and confidence, an expectation of future cooperation, that made inert gold and silver currency and capital. Credit was a narrative about the expectation that a social individual who is lent a principal sum of gold will cooperate in the future to return it with more gold, as interest. Narratives of trust and trustworthiness were traits of a man's character circulated socially like a currency. They had repercussions for life chances; a good reputation was vital to access credit networks and credit, a necessity when money was scarce. It meant obtaining and keeping wealth, at a time when 'material security was a constant concern'.⁹⁷ Paying on time came before personal material satisfaction. In his old age Sir Jack Newton neatly expressed this view to his steward Thomas Headon, telling him that 'it was always my maxim to deny my self any thing, that I might be just in my payments to every body'.⁹⁸

It is possible to re-frame Muldrew's idea in terms of a complex system and understand that credit and reputation were not 'based on words', they were activities, economies of identity. An individual's credit and reputation (some part of

96 Muldrew, *Ibid*, 154-5, 157, 149 n4.

97 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 148-9.

98 LRO, MON7-14-108, 16 February 1723.

their personal identity) was the sum of all the narratives about that person (an element of the social network) held in the memory of all other elements of that network, and exchanged socially between them. They were the fabrications of other social individuals, activities and not things.

The early modern economy was a complex material space, one full of temporal and geographical (spacial) gaps, not one of presence. Credit represented a temporal gap between the lender sending away gold to the borrower and the return of the gold. This temporal gap was also a geographical gap as the gold moved away from the lender to the borrower. However, like real estate there was always already a breach between the gold and the lender, the act of lending it simply exaggerated what was already there and makes it more plain to see. This deferral was both a complex and a deconstructive one; telling of a materiality in the latter. It was the gaps, chains of substitutions, variation and play in the social network that made it possible for gold to be accumulated, just as real estate was, without physical limit. The lack of limits made it possible to gather up (to use Fox's metaphor) unconstrained quantities of currency, or paper alternatives. This in turn made economic mobility possible. These systemic processes have the same topology whether producing capital or producing names.

Chapter 6

Making parish names

Tenants, almsmen and women, and rectors were nominated within a complicated social network which was dominated by kinship, but mediated also by diverse narratives including continuity, patronage, and credit. Stewards were also a vital component of the nomination process, but they did not dominate it, tenants, clergy, neighbours and kin intervened as a matter of course in the process, which was it seems a relatively public affair, and not one merely between the nominator and the nominee.

Each nomination was caught up in an endless chain of prior nominations, and this characterised the making of parish identities.

Part I - Making a tenant

The making or confirming of a tenant was the making of a name, and a relationship. Every steward was responsible for finding new tenants and renewing existing leases. In 1668 John Padman was looking for tenants for Sir John Newton's farm at Gonerby. Padman could 'get but 40£ a year for it'. The previous Saturday Padman had two potential new tenants call on him, but neither would pay more than £40. Padman needed further instruction and asked for confirmation of that rent.¹ Finding a new tenant included the difficulties of mitigating losses from the old tenant. In 1682 John Fleck let the Heydour parsonage to John Telling and

1 GRO, D1844-C2-15, 19 February.

William Yates. The old tenant had to be negotiated with for the £200 arrears he had at the time of his leaving.² Stewards were expected to give financial and character references. William Jackson gave a character reference about a new tenant at Bitchfield, and John Richardson assured him some years later that he would be diligent about finding good new tenants, reporting on them soon after.³ John Fleck said his new tenant for the Lordship at Kelby was 'a substantiall man and a good tennantt'.⁴ Tenants who were not careful with their money were not valued. Richard Pett described Mr Coltson in unfavourable terms saying that he lived 'very high', and on that basis could not recommend him to stay on. Pett's judgement was partly based on Coltson's history, as he had been 'before the bailiffs' the previous autumn.⁵

Renewals were also handled by the stewards. The tenants at Swarby mediated by Richardson were allowed at £32 per annum.⁶ Renewals could also be negotiated on terms beneficial to the tenants in terms of lives mentioned in the lease. In 1724 Jack Newton allowed a Gloucestershire tenant, Thomas Saunders, to put in another life 'out of kindness' as the previous life ended so soon.⁷

Tenants could find themselves on the wrong side of manorial stewards and a dead landlord. After the death of the countess of Dover in February 1696 Thomas Waterhouse found his land forfeited at Coningsborough. Waterhouse complained of

2 LRO, MON7-12-35, 1 May 1682, Fleck to Newton.

3 GRO, D1844-C5-6, 12 February 1690; MON7-14-201 and MON7-14-211, 26 January and 7 March 1720, Richardson to Newton. Other examples include GRO, D1844-C9-25, William Jackson to Jack Newton 17 December 1692 re Thompson's farm.

4 LRO, MON7-12-82.

5 GRO, D1844-C4-17, 1 March 1686, Pett to Newton; D1844-C4-18, 19 October 1685, same to same.

6 LRO, MON7-14-229, MON7-14-230, and MON7-14-231.

7 LRO, MON7-12-215, 16 August, Jack Newton to Mary Dafter.

'hard usage' by Gill the 'late steward' and had already lost £500 by him after he took a £100 bribe to destroy a document. The countess agreed to deal with Gill but then died. He had petitioned the Duke of Leeds in person to no avail and begged Jack Newton to intervene with him.⁸

Tenants could be found making direct approaches to the landlord by letter after opening negotiations with the steward. Thomas Rawlinson at Heydour wrote to Sir John in July 1660 asking to be tenant of the warren there 'if you please to let it to me'. John Padman the steward had asked £26 a years and 100 'couple of rabbett which is a rent Impossible to be made', Rawlinson offered £20 and no rabbits, plus two loads of hay 'as has useally bene for winters'. The impasse in Lincolnshire prompted Rawlinson to try a direct approach to his landlord in London.⁹ In 1695 Jack Newton promised to look over dilapidations to John Sherman's barn at Oseby when he was 'last in the Country', however Jack did not see the barn and left without leaving orders, requiring a direct approach from the tenant. Sherman also wrote to say that Fleck 'would have me to have Orelings Farm'. Without both farms in the hamlet 'I am so stratned (straightend) that Truly with out sum thing else I cannot' stay in business. If he couldn't enlarge his farm he would have to unwillingly leave Oseby, and he asked Jack to 'do for me as you would do for another'.¹⁰

8 GRO, D1844-C10-8, no date, Waterhouse to Jack Newton. The countess of Dover was Jack's mother in law.

9 LRO, MON7-12-5, 7 July 1660.

10 GRO, D1844-C9-36, 26 January 1695.

Succession of tenancy would often go to children or nephews and nieces. However, if there were no relations the tenancy could go to anyone. Other tenants would tend to ask for the tenancy and, it seems, were often given it. In 1720 John Gibson asked John Richardson for George Timberland's farm. However, after background information on him was passed to Jack Newton he refused him, and Timberland himself was petitioning to stay in the farm. Further enquiries were made by Richardson as to Timberland's ability to pay his rent, which hinged on his purported marriage to a woman with a fortune of £250. Richardson found that Timberland was excommunicated ('axt from church') and his proposed bride had £50 not £250, and that the bride's mother intended her portion to go into land and not into a husband's lease. Despite this poor answer to Timberland's claims he was allowed to keep the farm 'if his rent is paid'. Not long after Jack decided that Timberland had to go.¹¹ There was a local knowledge of a tenant's financial affairs, which could be drawn on to secure a tenancy. In 1710 Henry Sherman, whose father 'whilst living' was a tenant of the family, excused his 'Boldness' and begged the favour of the close called the Ridings in Heydour on the same terms of £14 per year that the deceased Mistress Lodington had it, she 'being dead and leaving no Relation to continue Tenant in it'. His circumstances, though obviously well known to the steward, Thomas Slater, were also well known to Jack's tenants, and

11 LRO, MON7-14-198, 10 January 1720, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-199, 19 January, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-201, 26 January, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-203, 25 January, George Timberland to Newton; MON7-14-204, 2 February, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-207, 18 February, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-208, 22 February, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-209, 27 February, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-214, 8 April, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-215, 12 April, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-218, 11 June, Richardson to Newton; MON7-14-234, 21 November, Newton to Richardson.

Sherman offered that any of them could 'give .. an account of my Circumstances and that I am able to manage it besides what I now rent of you'.¹²

Widows could also be found petitioning in a pleading way for renewal of their tenancies. Isabel West had been turned out of her former tenancy after being 'at Grate charges at Osby', and 'must wholly Rely on your mercy two me and my poor Children'. She, like many others, asked him to pardon her boldness and begged him the favour at his pleasure of letting her 'continue in your honnors farme', emphasising her financial prudence saying she would carefully pay his rent and – using the language of patronage – be 'obliged' to him. Her difficult position was evident as she was soon begging not to be turned out again. Rivalry between tenants was clearly strong and she appears to have suffered at the hands of both William Mackinder formerly (at Oseby) and now at the hands of Goodman Joseph Barron who appears to be acting as a bailiff. Relations between Barron and Thomas Slater the steward, also appear rough, and widow West related that 'Goodman Barron told Mr Slater that hi cared not A ___ for Sir John or him'. She appealed to Justice, financial prudence again being 'resolved to pay your Rent honestly', and prayed for the long life and everlasting happiness of Jack and his 'noble' family.¹³

Petitions on behalf of new or renewing tenants could come from a network of local people, including kinsmen of the landlord, kinsmen of the tenants, neighbours and

12 GRO, D1844-C11-99, 25 February 1710, Henry Sherman to Newton.

13 GRO, D1844-C11-85, 29 March 1712, Isabel West to Newton; GRO, 16 February 1713, same to same, D1844-C11-112.

the clergy. Petitions on behalf of tenants were made on occasion by kinsmen. John Welby, a distant cousin through John Newton's grandfather William Newton, wrote to him asking for him to let 'the house in Butcher Row' in Grantham to the widow and children of Bryan Godley. It was one of Welby's relations who petitioned Sir John's son for the living of Aunsby in 1711.¹⁴ Another kinsman of Jack's, Humphrey Newton of Grantham, had heard 'it reported that you are about turning Thomas Shaw out of his Farm' and letting it to the son of his gardener, Gervase Barker. Humphrey Newton hoped he would confirm the renewal to Shaw who was 'near 60 years old (and) ... not fit for labouring work and therefore must of necessity fall to the Charity of the Town, which will much reflect upon your family'. Shaw had been the victim of 'some malicious Persons' who had represented his circumstances to be bad, but Humphrey maintained that 'his Farm is full Stock'd' and his debts would be met by his own lands, or his brother, or Humphrey himself and Shaw's brother. Humphrey Newton reminded Jack that Shaw and his ancestors had been tenants sixty years, and wondered 'what will the world say' if he were turned out in his old age 'without giving any offence?'. Humphrey had gone to the trouble of visiting Jack's gardener and his wife who were persuaded their son should not take the farm unless Shaw was voluntarily vacating it. Humphrey offered a personal meeting so that 'the Poor Creature' could stay.¹⁵

Sometimes kinsmen asked for patronage favours for the family of tenants. In 1705 Robert Fisher wrote on behalf of a tenant's son at Oseby. The son, a young

14 LRO, MON7-12-34, 13 February 1682. See Chapter 5, 'Making a rector'.

15 GRO, MON7-14-250, 2 July 1716, Humphrey Newton to Newton. See Chapter 5, Thomas Shaw nominated to the bead-house.

tailor, took the letter to London and 'begges you will favour him with your protection permitting him to say he is one of your servants'. Grantham, Fisher advised, wanted an 'allamode' tailor very much, helped by seeing 'the way of workeing in London'. Fisher would take pains to get him customers if he was so trained. Fisher was asking for a favour to a tenant's son which would also benefit the gentry of the town of Grantham.¹⁶

The rector of Barkston John Troughton petitioned Sir Jack on behalf of John Wright and his father William Wright, the son wanting to be a joint tenant with his father who was a tenant in a cottage at Barkston, after they approached him.¹⁷ Both were carpenters and William had 'pretty near built the house he lives in from the ground since he came to it', but 'it wil be some cost to put it into an handsome condition, which the son is very inclinable to do'. Troughton said the son was a very good workman, diligent and industrious, and the most sober of any in the town. Newton replied by Richardson saying he would 'never admitt two Tenants to one Cottage', but offering an incentive, 'if the sone behave himself well he need not doubt of succeeding his father when he dyes'. The chain of communication was flawed and Newton complained of not hearing of the resolution.¹⁸

16 GRO, D1844-C10-118, 23 July 1705. Thomas Timberland was probably George Timberland, unless there were two related families.

17 Troughton was rector of Barkston from 15 October 1713 to 21 April 1736 following the death of John Vincent. The patronage of the living was in the prebendary of North Grantham. He was previously curate at Isaac Newton's home parish of Colsterworth from 21 September 1696 until 1703 while the son of the Newton family steward William (2) Parkins - William (3) Parkins - was rector there. He was apparently unemployed between 1709 and 1713 during which time the rector of Aunsby became available, see Chapter 5 (Making a rector).

18 LRO, MON7-14-205, 3 February 1720, Troughton to Newton; MON7-14-206, 9 February, Newton to Richardson; MON7-14-207, 18 February, same to same; MON7-14-208, 22 February, Richardson to Newton.

Petitions could be made by neighbours on behalf of tenants who wanted to negotiate an unusual but practical arrangement. James Thompson wrote to Sir Jack Newton in 1708 asking on behalf of a tenant and his brother-in-law, who was once a servant of Thompson's. John Roole had a sister and brother-in-law John Jackson who both wanted to 'be admitted' tenants to Roole's farm on the grounds that 'if a stranger should have it John Roole will be wholly destitute' and that the proposal would mean 'they might be assistance(,) one to the other', a stranger however would be the ruin of Jack's tenant. They would share a room and be bound together for the whole rent. Jackson, said Thompson, was 'a true and honest man and hath paid his rent well(.) he is a verry endustirous Man and Knows his businesse and will mind itt'. Thompson's proposal would be mutually beneficial, and his petition was made on the basis of economic cooperation and practical concerns to both landlord and tenant.¹⁹

There is evidence of great competition for farms in the early eighteenth century. Tenant farmers from the locality (and from some distance away) used their own networks to try and increase their own holding or retain what they had. In 1710 a tenant at Coningsborough Park died and at least three local farmers wanted to be tenants of the dead man's land. John Townend wrote to say that he and his father had been long-term tenants, and aware that one Mr Eyre was after the same farm he pointed out that Eyre did not farm in the same parish, and Newton would benefit more from his own tenancy. Also aware of the others' letters ten days later

¹⁹ GRO, D1844-C10-83, 12 August 1708. One John Jackson was a tenant at Barkston from 1709.

James Sheppard wrote to say that he and his family too had been 'anshunt tennantes' and that he too was already adjacent and that his tenancy would be 'more convenient for manigment of yor honores gronde.' His tenancy would be 'a great advantage to me and no detriment to you'.²⁰

Networks of tenant nomination could be large. In late 1719 Mrs Draper died at Barkston where she had a house. The news reached Newton in London that one of his tenants had died, and he sent a curt letter to Richardson, annoyed that the steward had not already told him. Richardson went to Barkston, consulted his rentals, and confirmed that she was not a tenant, but was the mother of Rhoda Thompson who was a tenant. Newton's wife, the rector of Barkston, John Jackson a tenant, Richardson the steward and Newton himself then got involved in the matter. Susanna Newton wrote to John Jackson asking for details, who indicated that Rhoda Thompson's husband wanted to put his brother into the farm. According to the rector 'some forward person had taken an handle from her death to inform you that a Tenant is dead in order to turn the reall Tenant out of what he had under you'. Troughton went to tell Thompson he would like to succeed him in the farm he had if he left on account of his mother-in-law's death, but Thompson said they were staying. Troughton, knowing that Jack did not like absent tenants, told him that Thompson lived 'at some distance' from Barkston, which Jackson said was about sixteen miles, and gave Newton details of the rents from his tithe book.

20 GRO, D1844-C11-27, 10 February 1710, John Townend; D1844-C10-157, 20 February, James Sheppard. Related to this is Francis Gill (see Waterhouse complaint above) who wrote asking for undisturbed possession of a close in Coningsborough for the remainder of his life is probably related to the same vacancy (LRO, MON7-12-144, 8 March 1710). See another direct approach to the landlord see also GRO, D1844-C11-62, 12 September 1713, Daniel Lees to Newton.

Troughton had already asked for and missed another tenant's farm, and was again unlucky as Jack was 'preingag'd to an other before I understood your mind'.²¹

William Mackinder's lease was up for renewal on 25 March 1720. Some four months earlier his neighbour and rent collector or bailiff at Barkston John Jackson began petitioning Sir Jack and Lady Susanna to replace him with an alternative tenant. Mackinder had been a tenant for a long time. His own account of his tenure varied between twenty and forty years (since 1680).²² Jackson had tried unsuccessfully over a decade earlier with Thomas Shaw to have Mackinder removed. In November 1719 he wrote to Lady Susanna to say that Mackinder was underpaying rents and sublet his worst land at too high a rate to other poor people in the parish, and that he had secured a replacement in the form of Mr Christopher, a 'gentel man which is worth 120 pounds a year of free a state'. Jackson, acting as intermediary and calling himself 'dutyful', was cautious to ask that she did not tell Mackinder as he 'will do me all the mischeafe he can if he knows I have geven your Ladyship this a count'. By the time that Jackson was making these approaches to remove Mackinder, Thomas Shaw – his brother-in-arms of a decade earlier – was drunken and ruined and had taken a place in the bead-houses at Barkston. He petitioned again a few weeks later, this time on behalf of Mr Wright 'a gentelman of a great substans and very wrich', who had courted Mrs Ann Stevens when she was alive. Wright, said Jackson, would come to London

21 LRO, MON7-14-190, 13 October 1719, Newton to Richardson; LRO, MON7-14-191, 21 October, Richardson to Newton; GRO, D1844-C21-1, 3 November, John Jackson to Lady Susanna Newton; LRO, MON7-12-207, 7 November, John Troughton to Newton; GRO, D1844-C6-57, 10 November, Newton to Richardson; GRO, D1844-C11-21, 14 November, Troughton to Newton.

22 GRO, D1844-C10-79; D1844-C11-79.

and 'descours with Sir John his worship about it'. Wright was 'very well be loved In his cuntery', though he lived at Orston in Nottinghamshire, and Jackson promised that Wright would 'not a bues hedges nor fell trees as he hears mackinder ha don.'²³ Jackson went as far as to offer £10 to Lady Susanna to petition her husband on his behalf. Mackinder got wind of the actions against him and wrote directly to Newton defending his cutting of wood, saying that the steward had ordered him to do it, and allowed him to use it to build a house 'from the Ground'. Newton's absence was decried and Mackinder told him that he 'shall be Glad to scee you heare that you mite scee what I have dun to the farme'. Jackson wrote again on 16 January on behalf of Wright reminding Lady Susanna that Wright, a 'worthy Honest Gentleman and a man of a good Estate', would pay £25 a year more than Mackinder. He again attempted to disguise himself from Mackinder, making someone else write the letter, ('now I have Altered my hand four my hand is knowne'). By 19 January a friend of Wright's had visited Newton in London. The offer from Wright seems to have increased to £50 a year more than Mackinder, or Jack had misunderstood – he was about seventy years old by this time. According to the friend John Richardson had been seen by Mr Wright and promised to write about it, and had come to see if it arrived, but Jack had received no letter.²⁴ However, it is apparent that his wife did not speak to him about Jackson's earlier petitions on behalf of Mr. Wright. Sir Jack offered first refusal to Mackinder at the higher rent, 'for I will let the Farme to the best advantage'. Richardson

23 Orston lies about 12 miles from Barkston towards Nottingham, just north of the modern A52.

24 The letter-books bear this out.

replied that Mr Wright had been brought to him by Jackson's old friend Thomas Shaw about 12 January. Wright wanted a farm, not for himself as Jackson claimed, but for his son. Richardson 'thought Best to Inquier after Mr Wrights sircomstances', not least because his patron in the matter Thomas Shaw was now of 'No Repeute and Goase about the Country like a vagabon'. Richardson confirmed that Wright offered to pay £50 to the £26 that Mackinder paid to Stevens' creditors, and that his enquiries into Wright's creditworthiness 'if I am not wrong Informed are Good'. Richardson went to Barkston from Aslackby and noted Mackinder's land, rents and 'what Advance may be maid on the two farms'.

Jackson did not let go, and on 24 January he wrote againt to Lady Susanna, saying that Mr Wright was 'a man of great understanding and veary expsert in all a fares and a veary knowing man in most a fares', and as to his credit 'it is Reported that he can courmmand two thouand pounds in a weekes time', Newton he said 'couldn't mistake his person nor his discours' if he were to meet him. Jackson complained that Mackinder had taken two pieces of land from him 'by his subel (subtle) acshons' and that Mackinder had too many grounds 'for he had goten three peoples grounds into his hands by craft', Jackson offered to pay even more money than he paid before for the land he lost to Mackinder. A confused passage of letters between master and steward ending with an order to Mackinder, via Richardson, to send Steven's lease to London so he could see it is the last we hear on the matter. Mackinder remained a tenant until his stock was distrained by the next steward, Thomas Headon, in 1728.²⁵

25 GRO, D1844-C21-1, 3 November 1719, John Jackson to Lady Susanna Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-87,

Part II - Making an almsman and almswoman

In his will of 1640 Richard Hickson, half uncle of Sir John Newton, instructed his executor and cousin William Welby of Denton in Lincolnshire to build an almshouse for six poor people in Barkston with a rent charge of £43 from lands in Greetham, in Rutland. Each man was to have £6.13.4 pay per year with the remaining £3 left aside for repairs. He gave a right of nomination to the almshouses to his executor William Welby during his life and then the 'perpetual nomination' to John Newton and his heirs for ever or whoever held his Barkston lands. He imposed three qualifications.²⁶ They should be chosen from the inhabitants of Barkston, Heydour, Aisby, Oseby or Culverthorpe, that they were 'three score' years old or older and had received collection from the town where they lived for one year. He also set out that if no-one qualified on that basis and there was a vacancy then some other person living within those towns 'most aged and poor shall bee elected into the sayd place'.²⁷ The right to nominate six men was one which put John Newton in a relationship with all the old men of those parishes and manors. Without a welfare

23 November, Jackson to Lady Susanna; GRO, D1844-C11-79, 4 January 1720, Mackinder to Sir Jack Newton; GRO, D1844-C21-16, 16 January, Jackson to Lady Susanna; LRO, MON7-14-199 and 200, 19 and 21 January, Newton to Richardson; GRO, D1844-C11-76, 24 January, Jackson to Lady Susanna; LRO, MON7-14-201, MON7-14-202, MON7-14-204, MON7-14-207, MON7-14-209, 26 and 30 January, Richardson to Newton (see above). For Mackinder's distraint see GRO, D1844-C26-71, 20 February 1728, Newton to Thomas Headon.

26 The Barkston almshouse was built in a non-classical style and is not therefore a product of the social processes at the local level identified by Paul Hunneyball, where classical design caught on at this time in England because well-connected and wealthy elites used it as a social badge of status and social ambition, rather than because of its aesthetic appeal, see Paul M. Hunneyball, *Architecture and image building in seventeenth-century Hertfordshire* (Oxford, 2004). For an overview of the development of almshouses see Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood, 'Introduction and historical context to the archaeology of seventeenth and eighteenth century almshouses', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 5:2 (June 2001), pp. 115- 122. For a discussion of the architecture and the practices of almshouses up see Brian Bailey, *Almshouses* (London, 1988), esp. chapter four.

27 TNA, PROB11/188. They were rebuilt in 1839, Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, *The buildings of England, Lincolnshire* (London, 1964), 116. The charity remains today with similar qualifications.

state or a state pension the elderly relied wholly on their income from land or credit, or for the greater part of them, on the charity of their family, the help of neighbours, or the 'better sort' through activities of informal relief, and failing that the charity of the parish.²⁸ The result was a small network of nominators established in two competing parishes.²⁹ Gentry neighbours, incumbent clergymen, and stewards in each parish discussed, persuaded, and nominated to the absent nominator in London, Jack Newton.

Whilst John Newton held the right to the nomination but was absent in Gloucestershire or London his son Jack at Culverthorpe handled the vacancies as they arose. However, he still required his father's word each time, and in 1682 their steward John Fleck wrote to Sir John noting that 'my young master also writt to know your mind and order Concerning the place in the Beadhouse fallen vacant by John Wassoners death and wonders you send him no answer'.³⁰ By 1691 Jack is dealing with the changes at the bead-house without his father's word.

In March 1691 vacancies came up but it was unclear to many whether there were one or two places at liberty.³¹ Joseph Weld the Heydour rector believed there

28 Linda Crust, *Lincolnshire Almshouses - Nine Centuries of Charitable Housing*, (Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, 2002). A Bede House was a type of almshouse run to a set of strict rules, typically run by a church.

29 For a similar suggestion that dualistic models of donor and receiver do not capture the complexity of these charitable relations see Alannah Tomkins, E. McGrath, I. Atherton, 'Pressed down by want and afflicted with poverty, wounded and maimed in war, or worn down with age? Cathedral almsmen in England 1538-1914', in A. Borsay and P. Shapely (eds.), *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: the consumption of health and welfare in Britain, 1550-1950* (Aldershot, 2007). For the historiography of the 'makeshift' see Alannah E. Tomkins and Steven King, *The poor in England, 1700-1850: an economy of makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 1-13. For the historiography of the poor from the 1980s see Steve Hindle, *On the parish? The micro-politics of poor relief in rural England c.1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), Introduction, fn. 3.

30 LRO, MON7-12-35, 1 May 1682, John Fleck to Sir John Newton.

31 LRO, MON7-12-71, 14 March 1691, William Jackson to Jack Newton; GRO, D1844-C9-18, 8 April

were two places and recommended John Robson a 'very poor' seventy-two year old and Elizabeth Fulbeck a fifty-seven year old widow. Weld wrote to Jack Newton to this effect, though Newton seems to have forgotten, as his steward William Jackson reminds him.³² Weld had searched for their names in the register but could find neither listed there. Newton ordered Jackson to find out more and he 'waited on Mr Buck (who presents his service to you)' and then visited the bead-houses.³³ Buck said there were two places, as had Weld, but 'by better information I find but one, for one William Edwards aged fifty years, being tenant to Sir John is now in one of 'em and hath rec'd of Mr Fleck one Months pay'. Edwards was of course far younger than the sixty years and upwards that the founder Richard Hickson wanted. It would appear that John Fleck, steward to both Sir John and Jack, had already filled one of the places, with or without the knowledge and consent of Sir John, the only person who had the right. Mr Fleck moved Edwards in after his house 'fell down', and Fleck 'to make a better end of that fitted it up and put another tennat therein and place this man where he is now in the Bead-house'. Roger Stevens the rector of Barkston does not appear to have made any nominations of his own at this time.

When Hickson established the bead-houses one of his basic qualifications for incumbents was that they were living in one of five towns or hamlets. Gentry neighbours and clergy in each place (principally Heydour and Barkston, as Oasby,

1691, same to the same.

32 Rector of Heydour appointed 17 April 1688 until his death in 1728.

33 Peregrine Buck, gentleman of Barkston, died 28 Feb 1694, see William Marratt, *The History of Lincolnshire, topographical, historical and descriptive*, Vol. III (Boston, 1816), 282.

Aisby and Culverthorpe were hamlets in the first) recommended names from their own place. In 1691 it was the same. Mr Buck 'pleaded' for two from Barkston and it was reported that 'his will is that the places may be supplied by Barkston poor', whilst Mr Weld nominated two from Heydour. Jackson, based at Heydour thought that the Barkston steward, John Fleck, could 'give you better information concerning Barkston poor'. But his own recommendation was John Robson from Heydour, the seventy-two year old, as 'most fit'. Robson was apparently named to the void place and a year later he is named as one of the three from Heydour in the six houses. At least at this time the places were evenly divided between the poor of the two towns.

Jackson was concerned to know whether Robson, Fulbeck, or widow Musson were tenants to Sir John, however Hickson's will was simply that the beneficiaries were inhabitants who had received alms for a year. Widow Musson was 'never tennat to Sir John Newton', but as Jackson noted 'Mr Buck's design is to get her in being no tennat'. John Weld was concerned to find them in his parish register, but the only records that could relate to Robson or Fulbeck in that register would have been their own baptism, or marriage or the baptism of their children – none of which were qualifications for the founder. The age qualification set by Hickson just fifty years earlier was sixty years or more, but several nominations were under this. Elizabeth Fulbeck was fifty-seven, and Edwards was just fifty, with a wife and 'Small Children'. Jackson noted that he would 'not question but you'll let him be the other' on account of this family, which implies that the number of Edwards' dependants

was an factor overriding age in considering the merits of each case. Over a few decades the qualifications demanded of beadsmen changed from inhabitant to tenant, a feature which moved the benefit of the charity from the town generally to tenants – the dependants of the Newton family. In this case it appears that John Robson was successful and was one of the three Heydour poor in February 1692, and when widow Garland died about that time widow Fulbeck of Heydour tried again, and asked Jackson to ask Newton on her behalf for a place. She was probably then fifty-eight years old, but with three already in from her parish she may not have succeeded.³⁴

In April 1709 widow Musson died, probably the same one, who must have reached her nineties, and Sir Jack Newton was to received multiple recommendations to replace her. On the same day in early April John Kelham petitioned on his own behalf, and on that of his wife who was 'very crasy and full of trubles', and William Mackinder, either overseer or churchwarden at Barkston, wrote to recommend him as well. Kelham, writing with an excellently neat hand and phonetic spelling, set out that he was the 'ouldst tenat that doth be longe to your honerable famaly' was eighty, in a 'very low condishon' and 'low astate', and was surviving on 'the charity of sum good neibers'. Mackinder said he was 'in great wants at this time', and that it would be a great act of charity to name him. A few days later Jack's steward, Thomas (2) Slater, wrote to nominate John Andrews, a cripple at Heydour, who was not able to stand or maintain himself 'but by the help of the Town of

34 GRO, D1844-C5-32, 7 February 1692, Jackson to Newton.

Hather'. The town, stated Slater, wanted Andrews in the bead-house, whilst the 'Barkston people' wanted Kelham in. Slater asked for Jack's decision between Barkston and Heydour 'this time'.³⁵ Slater was forced to write again on 18 April and 23 May and restated the two cases, 'pray be pleased to lett me know wither John Andrew or oulde John Cellam must have the Hospitall pay at Barkston'. By June Slater had been told that Kelham should have the place, but Slater had 'in my hands' seven weeks pay since the vacancy arose, which Slater asked to give to John Andrews 'for he is in great distress by his lege and not able to doe any thing at all'.³⁶

Just after Newton left Culverthorpe for London the rector of Barkston wanted to see him about Thomas Shaw, one-time overseer or churchwarden and tenant at Barkston, who had been in a constant struggle with William Mackinder in the parish over decades. He fell on hard times and took to the bottle. His name was put forward by unknown hands or voices to Sir Jack for a place in the Barkston bead-house. Troughton feigned that he 'didn't pretent to direct Sir John what he's to do about him' but offered his thoughts against the proposal anyway. He referred back to Sir Jack's great uncle Richard Hickson 'your Founder'. Shaw it seems 'goes on after the Idel, Slothful, raking and drunken way ... and never comes to his Parish Church (if to any other tis more than I hear of)'. 'Continuing such a wretch' in the

35 GRO, D1844-C10-94, 2 April 1709, John Kelham to Newton; GRO, D1844-C11-7, same day, William Mackinder to Newton; GRO, D1844-C10-62, 6 April Slater to Newton.

36 GRO, D1844-C10-150, 18 April 1709, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-124, 23 May 1709, Slater to Newton; D1844-C10-40, 4 June, Slater to Newton.

bead-houses would not be 'agreeable to the trust repos'd in you' by Hickson. Troughton believed that not going to church was the greatest problem, as he would lose 'the hank I had upon the rest' if Shaw's example spread to the others. Troughton wanted him 'brought to better manners, both for the sake of others as well of him self'. Sir Jack replied that Troughton had named Shaw himself, and though 'tis impossible to make him sober' Shaw had been nominated and he accepted 'very thankfully and promised to become a new man'. Troughton retorted in his reply that he couldn't have nominated Shaw because he had given Sir Jack 'the trouble of a recommendation in behalf of a poor inoffensive old Woman, whom al that know her will allow to have been a true object of Charity.'³⁷

In August 1720 widow Armstrong died at one of the bead-houses, and Richardson wrote to inform Newton and to recommend William Bullimore of Oasby, who was eighty years old and almost blind, and past his work. It would, said Richardson, 'be a good Deed of charete'. Newton named Bullimore to the vacancy saying he had 'a regard ... considering his great age'. He named his son to his place as Woodward.³⁸ In 1722 a place came up again and it seems that Thomas Headon put forward Goody Timberland for it, she was presumably widow of George Timberland whose negotiation for renewal of his lease caused a good deal of correspondence in January 1720.³⁹ Newton agreed that she should have the place but on condition that she 'gives up to her son whatever writing or security he has

37 LRO, MON7-12-207, 7 November 1719, John Troughton to Newton; GRO, D1844-C26-57, 10 November 1719, Newton to Troughton; GRO, D1844-C11-21, 14 November 1719, Troughton to Newton.

38 LRO, MON7-14-227, 13 August 1720, Richardson to Newton; LRO, MON7-14-228, 25 August 1720, Newton to Richardson.

39 GRO, D1844-C26-53, 3 May 1722, Newton to Headon.

given her for payment of money or any thing else(,) because it will disable him from paying his rent. for I wont have the money due to me for rent be given away to her daughter or any body else'. Newton was in a position to cause their renegotiation of family financial arrangements because Goody Timberland was putting herself in a position of dependence on Newton. He was concerned that if he provided her with income (by nominating her to the hospital) that she should not retain an income from the farm that her son rented, thereby reducing her son's ability to pay Newton's rent.

Part III - Making a rector

Bishops nominated rectors. However, the right to propose a name to a bishop for nomination was held by a patron. Bishops had limited scope to refuse the proposal, the weight of the nomination therefore lying with the patron. Patrons could either be clerical officeholders such as a prebend within a cathedral, or they were lay people. The earliest of these lay rectors were given monastic benefices after the Dissolution.⁴⁰ These patrons' right to nominate was a property right, and could be passed from one person to another, settled, gifted, sold or passed by will, and was therefore inheritable. The benefice carried with it spiritual responsibilities and temporalities – the latter being income rights and maintenance responsibilities regarding the fabric of the church building. This simple formulation of nomination

40 W. M. Jacob, *The clerical profession in the long eighteenth century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007). For the argument that the the medium of ordination examination offered bishops a means to control clergy recruitment see Rosemary O'Day, *The English clergy: the emergence and consolidation of a profession 1558-1642* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 49-65.

however does not comprehend the actual complexity of the naming process. A network of individuals across the country could participate in the nomination (naming) of a rector, including kinsmen, other clergymen, stewards, and friends.

One particular nomination is captured in great detail and provides an insightful case study. The advowson of Aunsby was passed to Sir John Newton by his half-uncle Richard Hickson. The manor lay next to Culverthorpe. William Colthurst, a kinsman of Sir John Newton, was appointed to the living by him and he held it from 18 August 1671 until his death on 13 February 1680. The right was sold to Jack Newton and his brother-in-law William Marwood who appointed Colthurst's replacement Richard Calcraft in 1680.⁴¹ Calcraft was a relation of the various Calcrafts in the corporation of Grantham, and the father and son attorneys in Grantham and London used by Sir Jack Newton in the 1720s. Calcraft was already usher at the King's school in Grantham where he was appointed by the Grantham corporation in 1678, two years earlier. Two further rectors were installed – Montague Wood in 1685 and Robert Fish in 1694. The latter resigned and Henry Williamson was installed on 4 October 1694.⁴² Two days before the fifteenth anniversary of his installation he hanged himself. The steward Thomas Slater reported the 'sad accident' noting 'I thought it fit to let your worship know speedily because I think it is your worships turn to dispose of the living this time'. He added a postscript to say that 'the neighbour at Aunsby desire that Mr Tigh the

41 His inventory, as 'clerk', LRO, 1679/60, LCC Administrations; LRO, MON3-31-6, 1678.

42 Clergy Database, Aunsby parish, <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp?locKey=7949>.

schoolmaster at Haver (Heydour) might be received if you please to accepts of him'.⁴³ This petition was the first noticed in the correspondence and one of very many. Jack Newton had the nomination and he appointed William Bass. Bass fell ill in February 1711, and died on 27 February.⁴⁴ Days before he died John Troughton wrote to ask for 'his consideration in the living', as he was aware that Bass was 'very ill'. Bass was sent to Grantham where he lay ill 'deep in a consumption and in a weake condition', he was not expected to live. Two days later, and still a week before Bass was actually dead, a kinswoman of Newton's, Mary Burstem, wrote to recommend her kinsman Benjamin Stokes who lived at Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire. In her turn she was 'much importun'd' by Mrs Poole 'the hatters widow' and her son to write to Newton. Stokes, she said, was 'a friend of' Mrs Poole. In fact, she was also his relative. The brother of Benjamin Stokes was Mrs Poole's son-in-law, and both Benjamin and his brother were grandsons of 'Mr Pight'. Mr Henry Pight was Vicar of Heydour from 1644 and Prebendary of Heydour from 1660 both until his death in 1675, and he was also Jack's kinsman – exactly how is not known. Mrs Burstem did not claim to know Benjamin Stokes personally and could not give a character reference, but she had the view of her cousin Fisher, who said that he 'hath an extrordinary carriceter (sic) for a fine preacher and a man of a good Life; which I know will be your cheefe motive; and greatest satisfaction when you present; to chuse such a man'.⁴⁵ Fisher

43 LRO, MON7-12-138, 8 October 1709, Thomas Slater. He was formerly a preacher at Stroxtton near Grantham and Rector of Hungarton 25 Sep 1693, Clergy Database. The Clergy Database erroneously gives 26 October as death. He is probably the John Tighe with Anne Tighe, and others mentioned in a 1658 chancery case on money matters, TNA, C6/142/108.

44 LRO, MON7-12-186, 28 February 1711, Thomas Milles to Jack Newton.

45 GRO, D1844-C11-132, 21 February 1711, Mary Burstem to Newton.

was probably Newton's cousin Robert Fisher.⁴⁶ It is likely that Benjamin Stokes already had an association with the Grantham area and the Newton family. He was probably the grandson of Henry Stokes (1619-1673) who was the Master at the King's school at Grantham, appointed by the Grantham Corporation in January 1650. He came from Melton before teaching at Grantham and returned there to teach at the grammar school until his death there in 1673.⁴⁷

The day after William Bass finally died Thomas Milles, the rector of Newton in Lincolnshire, wrote to Newton to say that he had been encouraged to hope for the nomination to Aunsby living by Mr Fisher. Milles is not known to be related to Newton, his surname suggests a relationship with long-serving members of the Grantham corporation. Stewards, though a conduit for information, could get it wrong. Newton's steward was slow to inform him, writing a week after, and he had the wrong date of death. Newton had already received three letters petitioning on behalf of three candidates, though Slater himself was unaware of them. Slater informed Newton that the living was at his 'mothers disposing this time' and thought it 'fitt to let yor worship know of it', he was wrong about that too – it was at Jack's disposal.⁴⁸ Two days later, yet another petition, from another kinsman, 'cousin Welby', was sent on behalf of a fourth candidate, William Lodge. Richard Welby was related to Jack Newton by the latter's great grandfather William Newton. Lodge 'and some of his well-wishing friends' had approached Welby to ask him to

46 See Chapter 6 for his role in making a burgess.

47 J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (Cambridge, 1922). His son Samuel Stokes could be Benjamin Stokes's father.

48 LRO, MON7-12-186; LRO, MON7-12-187, 8 March 1711, Slater to Newton.

solicit on his behalf and 'recommend him to your Thoughts, if you are not Engaged to any particular Person'. Welby could not refuse the request though he thought it was a presumption, and was 'Well satisfy'd He (Lodge) is a Gentleman of very Exemplary life, and One I hope you wou'd be well pleas'd with his Conversation'. Lodge however was already the minister of Sapperton, another local parish outside of Grantham, since 1692.⁴⁹ Lodge's living was worth £24 a year, a small living at that time, and he proposed to hold two livings. Clergy were appointed to parishes where they were never or rarely to be seen in the pulpit preaching, preferring to leave it to their curate. Some clergy collected multiple livings and treated them as sinecures or even annuities. Holding more than one living had been and still was a point of contention in England, and at least one person got wind of his nomination and objected. On 21 May an anonymous writer complained that 'Pluralitys and Non-Residence are the Greatest Scandalls and Mischeifs in our church. Many Patrons are to Blame for not considering that matter. But I Think nay I know that You, Sir, are None of these', the writer was (diplomatically) sure that 'You need not (Sir) be advis'd to choose A worthy clark and One that shall be Resident'. They ended cryptically referring to the secrecy of their identity saying 'But I conceale my Name Because You may not know how to chide Me for My Boldnes.'⁵⁰

Two days later Stokes was again recommended to Newton, this time by another mutual kinswomen, Ursula Carter. She was 'emboldned .. to request that kindness

49 When he died he was replaced by William Welby's son Richard (1700-1774).

50 GRO, D1844-C11-131, with a large black fleur-de-lys seal which may have identified the sender.

for a Person of very great Piety and Character', she was sure that he 'will allways have a very gratefull Sense of so great an obligation, and will repay his thanks in a consciensious discharge of his duty ... (and that) he will merit that esteem with which you was pleased to Honour Mr Carter.'⁵¹ Jack Newton did not make the appointment during the following months, and in July his steward Thomas Slater had consulted Joseph Weld the vicar of Heydour, who said the Queen could not appoint a successor if Jack did not in time.⁵² During this period yet another petition was received in London, from even further afield. Edward Charingburn a tutor from Coningsborough, the Yorkshire estate, had been approached by Newton's steward, John Dickson, who wrote to him twice 17 and 26 July.⁵³ He politely turned down the offer, saying that he had seven or eight 'gentlemens sons to table with me' to learn French and Latin, and being 'a perfect stranger and have no acquaintance' in 'Ainby', and having a good reputation in Coningsby, and the salary being so low, and the costs of moving 'my goods nigh forty-five miles and other unavoidable charges' all persuaded him against it.'

By August the nomination network had expanded. Ursula Carter's cousin and kinsman John Rogers was the archdeacon of Leicester and Stokes' 'very good friend' who had 'prevailed' with William Wake the bishop of Lincoln, persuading him to assure Jack Newton that he would 'take no advantage' of the vacancy in the

51 GRO, 7 March 1711, Carter to Newton, D1844-C11-121. The most obvious formulation of the relationships of Mary Burstem and Ursula Carter is that Henry Pight was father of Ursula and her sister, married to Mr Carter and Mr Stokes respectively. One Isaac Carter was vicar of Heydour after Henry Pight died until his own death in 1687, it is possible Mr Carter is Isaac Carter's son and the vicarage passed to Pight's son-in-law.

52 GRO, 25 July, Slater to Newton, D1844-C11-80.

53 GRO, 1 August, Charingburn to Newton, D1844-C11-38.

living. She enclosed some evidence that the right to the presentation had lapsed, which meant that Jack Newton had lost the right of nomination. This 'inclosed' was probably the letter from the bishop to Rogers dated 3 August which survives in the letter-books.⁵⁴ The bishop admitted himself a 'stranger' to Rogers, but said Rogers should be secure in the bishop's word; namely, that the bishop would not take 'advantage of any lapse that accrue' to him if Stokes was too ill to be instituted before the six month deadline was past.⁵⁵ Correspondence at this time could be exceedingly efficient. The bishop wrote on the 3 August, and by the following day it was not only delivered to Leicester but had been enclosed with another letter and sent the next day to London. If Rogers was a stranger to the bishop Newton was probably not, his father's advice years before was to become 'well aquanted' with the bishop as 'he is a very good man and may be very useful to you'.⁵⁶

Stokes was in fact very ill, and he was not able to see the bishop to be instituted, nor was the bishop sure that he would survive. The time limit for Jack to present a nominee to the bishop expired on 28 August, six months after Bass's death. Stokes was too weak to travel and personally thank Newton for the 'grate favour', though he expected to be well. The bishop 'has been pleased to promise that my present incapacity of travelling shall not in any ways prejudice your presentation, though the living should be lapsed'. In Stokes' view it was 'throw the interest of the Archdeacon of Leicester who has always been my very kind friend'.

54 GRO, D1844-C11-53, 4 August 1711, Carter to Newton. For John Rogers see CCEd Person ID: 102142; Joseph Foster (ed.), *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714* (Oxford, 1891); *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/alumni-oxon/1500-1714> (accessed 30 May 2015).

55 GRO, D1844-C24-17, 3 August, Wake to Rogers.

56 LRO, MON7-13-27, 25 January, Dame Mary Newton to Jack Newton. The bishop was either Thomas Barlow 1675-1691, Thomas Tenison 1691-1695, or James Gardiner 1695-1705.

Stokes expressed his great thanks saying 'it is the duty and ever shall be the business of my life to be thankful for this extraordinary favour, and I shall use my sincere endeavors to do my duty to yourself and the parish, and by striving to imitate my grandfather (Pight) hope for the continuance of that kindness which for his sake you please to confer on (me)'.⁵⁷ Slater wrote again to Newton hoping 'your worship doth not for git to dispose of Ornsby living being your worship hath the turn this time for the six months is almost out and the clergy about us tells me that the bishop will cease upon it and dispose of it at his please at the six month end', which Slater pointed out was just three weeks away. Newton 'must have his presentation signed for ..before ye six months is out which will be speedily'.⁵⁸ As the deadline for nomination drew near, the bishop wrote directly to Newton indicating he would not intervene if Stokes was presented to him.⁵⁹ Stokes was installed as rector on 8 September, and a few days later Joseph Weld, wondered whether the new rector would honour the debt of Stokes' nephew Thomas Newton of £20, which Weld claimed Newton owed to the Prebendary.⁶⁰ Thomas Newton also appears to be a kinsman of Jack's but how is unclear.

Other benefices demonstrated similar networks of nomination. In early 1701 Richard Bradford rector of Hawksworth in Nottinghamshire ten miles south of

57 GRO, D1844-C11-157, 4 August, Stokes to Newton.

58 GRO, D1844-C11-102, 6 August, Slater to Newton.

59 LRO, MON7-12-193, 9 August, Wake to Newton.

60 LRO, MON7-12-194, Weld to Newton, 12 September. Thomas Newton, nephew of Benjamin Stokes, was by deduction also a kinsman of Jack Newton, he was probably the one mentioned in a dispute over the lease of the rectory at Heydour.

Newark and about the same north west of Grantham, died.⁶¹ In March 1701 Robert Fisher and Mary Burstem, both writing from Grantham, wrote to Dame Susanna to ask her to intervene with her husband in persuading their Lincoln attorney, Mr Butler to nominate Mr Charles Burnet to the recently vacated living at Hawksworth, near Leeds. The father and father-in-law of Charles Burnet asked Mary Burstem for her help, to which her letter was her answer. She said the two fathers would be 'very gratefull for such a kind gift to their son'. Robert Fisher wrote the same day to Dame Susanna, and mentioned that Sir William Ellys and 'others' had been written to asking for favourable words to Mr Butler to appoint Mr Burnet. The two fathers told Fisher that they would be much obliged and the favour acknowledged by Fisher himself to Sir John if he 'should succeed in it for him'.⁶² The father of Charles Burnet was Samuel Burnet who had been the vicar of Grantham South since 1670, and was shortly to be appointed vicar of Grantham North, in May 1701. He had also been the schoolmaster since 1684.⁶³ The petition by this Grantham network was not as strong as the local network in Hawksworth and in the event Francis Chappell was appointed by Butler who held the patronage of the living appointed him on 7 June. Francis Chappell was probably related to the Henry Chappell who was rector there in 1680.⁶⁴ Burnet was rewarded with the post of schoolmaster at Grantham in 1702, a post which his father had held. The remainder of his church

61 CCEd Person ID:123294. He did not die on 7 July 1701 per the database, which was the day his successor was appointed. He was the son of Richard Bradford gentleman of South Collingham, Nottinghamshire, see Nottingham University, Ne D.2883.

62 GRO, D1844-C21-6, 15 March 1701, Mary Burstem to Susanna Newton; and Robert Fisher to Susanna Newton, (appended to Burstem letter).

63 Samuel Burnet, CCEd Person ID: 86653. He was usher of the Grantham King's school 1702, and died in 1711.

64 CCEd Person ID: 87042. He died 7 years later.

career was outside of Grantham.⁶⁵

In late 1703 Peter Clarke the rector of Pickworth in Lincolnshire a few miles south of Culverthorpe and Aunsby, died. The patronage was with Evers Armine, whose ancestor Bartholomew Armine had been called 'his master' by Sir Jack Newton's great grandfather William Newton. Benjamin Farron was appointed the curate at Morton in Lincolnshire a few months earlier and was a 'very good Freind' of Clarke's.⁶⁶ The living was about to lapse into the hands of the bishop of Lincoln, as Aunsby nearly did. Farron was 'persuad'd by some of the Parish and others to sollicit' the bishop for it, but he had too little 'Interest in my Lord as to obtain such a suit, without the Mediation of Others'. It was a person of Newton's 'Merit and Condition' that might have 'a great Influence' on the bishop and being 'so much a Gentleman' he would not refuse Jack the request. Farron was honest enough to admit that he had made 'use of the Interest of other persons' with the bishop before, but he felt it was better for the bishop to see that there 'are Other Persons of Quality who are pleased to Favor me with their good Opionion of me'. The issue with the curacy at Morton was that the 'Times are now so bad, and the people are grown so poor' that he doubted whether he could make £30 a year, which was, he said, 'mean subsistence' for his family. The petition failed probably because he was too late and John Thompson was appointed ten days later, and Farron would have to wait two years to be appointed to another vacant living.⁶⁷

65 CCEd Person ID: 86651. B.A. from Queen's college, Cambridge 1697, made a priest May 1700, died March 1718.

66 CCEd Person ID: 88248.

67 LRO, MON7-12-113, 1 November 1703, Farron to Newton. John Thompson: CCEd Person ID 104210. Farron was appointed to Conisholme in October 1705. Farron may be related to Thomas Fearon a Grantham schoolmaster appointed 1684.

In early 1705 Lady Mary Newton heard that her son's minister was dead after she was visited by a gentleman who lived a few miles south of Sutton in Nottinghamshire where she was living or staying at her son-in-law Stringers' house. Nathaniel Noble asked her to ask Sir Jack permission to visit him about the vacant living. A gentlewoman who had stayed with them recently, who was 'wise and discreet' gave him a good character reference, and Lady Mary added that his living was only £40 a years. He was sober and a good scholar, and curate under the Dean of Lincoln, his wife was also sober and good. They were prudent and 'delights to do good with that little they have', they had put their only son into an apprenticeship in a 'good trade'. Lady Mary was at pains to know, using the familiar language of Interest which was so common in elections, whether her son was 'not already ingagd to another'. However, he and Lady Mary seem to have been misinformed as the only living to which Sir Jack had the patronage, Aunsby, was not free, and the minister had not died. The Prebendary of Heydour, which Sir Jack did not control, was vacant in December 1704, some months earlier, but had already been filled. He appears to have been appointed vicar at Orston in Nottinghamshire three months later in June by the patron and his then employer, the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln.⁶⁸

Another kinswoman who had already intervened in the Aunsby nomination Mary Burstem asked again for Jack's help with the clergy, and begged for his 'interest' for the bearer of her letter, Mr James Stafford, which 'will do him great servis'. He

68 LRO, MON7-13-55, 6 March 1705, Mary Newton to Sir Jack Newton; CCEd Person ID: 203726.

was, she said, the 'curet to our minester of our town' of Grantham. She reported that Mr Aston who preached 'our Lecter sermon' was dead. The will of Lady Campden in the 1640s established an endowment to fund a lecturer at Grantham every Wednesday. Burstern proffered that Stafford's qualifications were that he was very sober and deserving. Stafford was, according to other records not curate of Grantham at the time, but curate of Gonerby (in the soke) two years later, and was named to the living of Newton, replacing Sir Jack's friend Thomas Milles, who was himself also once a Grantham schoolteacher.⁶⁹

After this last intercession Sir Jack Newton was no longer to be involved in any clergy network of nomination, though his son Michael would take over that role. There is evidence in the correspondence of a sense that, as men of quality and substance, the Newton patriarchs were expected to command at least one living. In 1734 Sir Michael Newton's aunt Ellinor Wade asked him to remember her friend Mr Willisford and 'bestow a small Living on him if you have it in your power' or if not then when a 'Living might fall in'. His qualifications were that he married an acquaintance of Ellinor's at Filton in Gloucestershire, a few miles north of Barr's Court, where she lived and died. He had asked her to 'interceed with your goodness', and came from a good family, and was well recommended.⁷⁰

69 GRO, D1844-C11-5, 29 December 1716, Burstern to Newton; CCEd Person ID: 76862. See LRO, MON7-14-103 and MON7-12-126 for Milles' request to be nominated by Newton to the trustees of Dr Richard Busby's charity.

70 LRO, MON7-13-218, 19 February 1734, Ellinor Wade to Sir Michael Newton.

Conclusion

The letter-books of the Newton family show clearly that the making of tenants, almsmen and women, and rectors was a social activity of naming in a social network. It was dominated by kinship and friendship, but also by relationships built on capital. Petitions were at its heart, and they drew on a variety of narratives. Appeals were made to sobriety, wisdom, discretion, charity, conversation, prudence, learning, good family, gentle status, kinship or friendship or both, the recommendation of others, appeals to goodness, quality, 'merit and condition', influence, and a desire for the 'interest' of the one being petitioned.⁷¹

From the landlord's perspective economic pressure led to a hardening of attitudes towards tenants, though this was softened by appeals from others in the network. New tenancies were competed for, and interpersonal conflict and rivalry were features of this competition. Almsmen and women were proposed by the same network, as were clergy. Almost all clergy petitions came from kindred of the nominee, in only a few cases were they related by acquaintance. The actual clergy of south Lincolnshire were a very close community of kinship, and from these few examples in the letter-books it is evident that they moved from one parish to another into the dead shoes of their friends and kin, even if they did not there were evident attempts to try it. Those in the network were themselves always already bound up in a perpetual chain of prior nominations, in they themselves

71 See chapter seven for the appeals to interest in the context of elections. For much the same language nearly a century later see Alannah Tomkins, 'Men's paupers letters', in Steven King, Thomas Nutt, Alannah Tomkins (eds.), *Narratives of the poor in eighteenth-century Britain, vol. 1., Voices of the poor: poor law depositions and letters* (London, 2006), pp. 205-297.

were nominated. These findings and evidence serve to illuminate not only the social production of the Newton's gentility but extend it to other identities. We will see that these kindred and capital networks dominated the making of a burgess.

Chapter 7

Making a burgess

An elaborate Augustan memorial to Sir Michael Newton stands in Heydour church recording his representation of Beverley and Grantham in four parliaments, and his steady and uniform regard to the 'real interests of his country'. Michael successfully sat once for Beverley in Yorkshire in March 1722 and then in his grandfather's stead at Grantham as Sir Michael, Knight of the Bath, between 1727 and his death in 1743. Though politically appointed a Knight of Bath he voted against the government in every division.¹ The memorial to his grandfather Sir John Newton is more cautious, describing him as 'thrice Burgess of Parliament', though he was in fact five times burgess.² Sir John Newton was elected each time he stood and continuously represented Grantham between 1660 until 1681, when the last Parliament under Charles II was dissolved. Sir Michael's father Jack Newton stood three times at Grantham between 1685 and November 1701, but failed each time. He was asked to stand in 1700, but he declined.³

Elections in boroughs represent an excellent opportunity to study the social interactions of disparate people during a discrete and short-lived period of time. Elections in Grantham, with one or two exceptions, may only have taken a few weeks. Elections were notable for the wide range of characters involved in the process of nominating new representatives, and we find nobles, gentry,

1 Author's visit. B. D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1660-1690* (London, 1983); D. Hayton, E. Cruickshanks, S. Handley (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715* (Cambridge, 2002).

2 Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 209.

3 In 1685, 1697 and 1701.

conventionally middling sort such as Grantham tradesmen and low-status paupers all involved in the affair. There is no extended micro-study of the Grantham constituency, and the Newton correspondence helps to provide more colour and detail. There were 19 elections between 1660 and 1713. In six the Newton correspondence adds detail. They were the general elections of 1660, 1685, January and November 1701, and by-elections in 1678 and 1697.

The procedure for electing the two burgesses who would represent the borough of Grantham was, on the face of it, a very simple one. A writ was issued summoning two Parliamentary representatives to a new parliament on an appointed date. Two or more freemen of the borough were presented in the town as candidates for election by the alderman and court of the corporation. Any freeman could gather with any other freeman at the King's school opposite the church on the day of the election and choose two candidates. An indenture recording the result was drawn up by the corporation clerk, and the alderman (acting as the returning officer) passed it to the sheriff who returned the indenture to the parliamentary clerks. This procedure was little changed since medieval times.⁴

The object of this study is not to add to the general debate about whether there was an ideological and social rift across the seventeenth century occasioned by the unrest of the civil war, or whether the period saw the beginnings of an age of party, the growth of political stability, or witnessed the birth-pangs of a liberal

⁴ Josiah C. Wedgwood and Ann Holt, *History of Parliament, biographies of the members of the commons house 1439-1509* (London, 1936), xlvi.

democracy and the birth of a political nation; all of which have detained other political historians.⁵ The Newton archive is not sufficient on its own to answer those questions, and the interpretive drive of this thesis is to study the micro-dynamics of social relations. The focus will be to consider those micro-dynamics in Grantham elections. I will argue that the election process in boroughs like Grantham was highly convoluted, involving a large and complex network of social individuals. The apparently simple process of election was punctuated by very many intervening possible steps, each of which involved a network of social individuals which was complex in nature, and whose outcomes were unpredictable. This network was highly diffuse and characterised by large numbers of people were directly and indirectly involved, even when they had no vote. I will argue that the identity of any given social individual selected as burgess for Grantham was an economy of identity, produced through iterated social interactions, which occurred discursively, physically and reflexively. As a result this economy was an unstable

5 For conventional political studies see for example J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725* (London, 1967) defending Sir Keith Feiling, *A history of the Tory party, 1640-1714* (Oxford, 1924), itself an attack on R. R. Walcott, *English politics of the early eighteenth-century* (Oxford, 1956); W. A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: The struggle in the constituencies 1701-1715* (London, 1970); Geoffrey Holmes, *British politics in the age of Anne* (London, 1967); Clyve Jones, *Britain in the first age of party, 1687-1750: Essays presented to Geoffrey Holmes* (London, 1986). For studies of elections themselves see John Gruenfelder, *Influence in early Stuart elections, 1604-1640* (Columbus, 1981); Catherine F. Patterson, *Urban patronage in early modern England: corporate boroughs, the landed elite, and the crown, 1580-1640* (Stanford, 1999); Mark A. Kishlansky, *Parliamentary selection: Social and political choice in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1986); Derek Hirst, *Representative of the people?*; John Miller, *After the civil wars: English politics and government in the reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000). For studies of campaigning see J.R. Jones, 'Restoration election petitions', *Durham University Journal*, 53 (1961), pp. 49-57; E. Lipson, 'The elections to the Exclusion Parliaments, 1679-81', *EHR*, 28 (1913), pp. 59-85; J.H. Plumb, 'The growth of the electorate in England from 1600 to 1715', *Past and Present*, 45 (1969), pp. 90-116; Godfrey Davies, 'The by-election at Grantham, 1678', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 7:2 (1944), pp. 179-182; M. Dorothy George, 'Elections and electioneering 1679-81', *EHR*, 45 (1930), pp. 552-578. For franchise changes see J.H. Sacret, 'The restoration government and the municipal corporations.', *EHR*, 45 (1930), pp. 232-259; S. Bond and N. Evans, 'The process of granting charters to English boroughs', *EHR*, 91 (January 1976), pp. 102-120; John Miller, 'The crown and the borough charters in the reign of Charles II.', *EHR*, 100 (1985), pp. 53-84; Richard Bushman, 'English franchise reformation in the seventeenth century', *JBS*, 3 (November 1963), pp. 35-56.

social production and it was unstable before, during, and even after the election. This economy of identity depended on prior and ongoing networks of nominations – of freemen, comburgesses, aldermen, recorders, town clerks, attorneys, stewards, and spouses. These nominations were part of an endless chain of prior nominations. It was dominated by kinship, but also by relationships brought about by the social production of capital.

The town and manor

Grantham was a market and postal town on the Great North Road and the river Witham, whose exit to the sea was at Boston, via Lincoln. It was a centre for trade and traffic since the Roman era (Map 5).⁶ In the county of Lincolnshire there were two knights for the shire and two burgesses for each of the five boroughs – Grantham, Boston, Lincoln, Great Grimsby and Stamford. Lincolnshire displayed considerable continuity in its members between 1660 and 1689, being the only shire for which one member sat continuously, and the two knights of the shire were only ever taken from Saunderson, Hussey or Carr families. From the early seventeenth century to the civil war period the town's religious tone was mostly Church of England but with a strong dissenting or Puritan contingent and a very small number of recusants. The population's attitude to the crown was broadly divided into monarchists and republicans and the polarities of the war and its geographical location at a central communication and distribution point was in evidence as it changed hands as first a Parliamentary garrison, then Royalist, then Parliamentary

6 G. H. Martin (ed.), *The royal charters of Grantham 1463-1688* (Leicester, 1963), 9.

again. As a Royal manor, and on the London road, this was not a town with a 'county community' but one with very close ties with London and the court. Grantham had been a royal manor since late Saxon times, when it belonged to Edith, queen of Edward the confessor. The manor passed out of royal hands but escheated in 1420, after which it was successively in either the queen or queen mother's hands until 21 May 1696 when king William gave the manor to his attendant William Bentinck, created earl of Portland in 1689. It was later purchased by the duke of Rutland in 1767.⁷ Manorial courts were held twice a year at Lady Day and Michaelmas and the office of steward was held by the successive earls of Rutland in the Stuart era.⁸ The manor had a steward and a deputy steward. The stewards in the period were the earls of Rutland – the Manners family, seated at Belvoir Castle a few miles west of the town, in Leicestershire. The deputy steward or bailiff was Robert Parkins in 1650 and 1665, who was also kinsman and steward of John Newton.⁹

Part I – The social production of a voter

Making a voter

The chain of nominations which preceded the election of a burgess included the court, the alderman and the freemen. We will explore these first. The town in 1086 included 111 'burgesses' probably paying rents from trade profits rather than

7 Martin, *Ibid.*, 10; Benjamin Street, *Historical notes on Grantham and Grantham church* (Grantham, 1857), 27; Edmund Turnor, *Collections for the history of the town and soke of Grantham* (London, 1806), 61.

8 Street, *Notes*, 20-29; Nottinghamshire RO, DD/4P/33/1.

9 Borough records exist from 1633. The minute-book ('GHB') from 1633 to 1704 is LRO, Grantham borough/5/1; TNA, E320/K19, April 1650; TNA, SP46/135/3.

agricultural feudal dues, and by 1125 they enjoyed 'liberties and free customs' which derived from ancient usage.¹⁰ Its business was conducted through a court consisting of an alderman, as head of the corporation, and twelve further comburgesses (the 'first twelve') plus a further twelve comburgesses (the 'second twelve'). Elections to the first twelve was from the second twelve, elections to the second twelve from the freemen. The town had an attorney, who was Robert Parkins following the Restoration, also deputy steward of the manor. There was a recordership which was held by the Thorold family during much of Elizabeth's reign, but by 1613 the post was held by the Manners family, earls (later dukes) of Rutland. The family, being noble, did not carry out their duties in person, but employed a deputy in their place. In the early 1600s it was Thomas Ellys (d.1627), an attorney. In 1641 William Ellys, his son and a Grantham attorney, was appointed recorder and he served until his resignation in January 1662.¹¹ The recorder was the earl of Rutland in 1685. The recorder was a source of influence as we will see later.

The crown and Parliament both tried to influence the politics of the borough directly and indirectly, through alterations to the charter or the threat of it, and through ordering the removal or reinstatement of comburgesses via Parliamentary orders or the Privy Council. In 1649 Parliament issued ordinances disallowing men who had been in arms for the crown from holding office, and accordingly sixteen

¹⁰ Street, *Notes*, 105.

¹¹ LRO, *GBQS*, 5,13, 24; Manterfield, *Newton's Grantham*, 17.

comburgesses and commoners were removed, whilst others may have simply stopped attending. The purge did not go unchallenged. At the election of the next alderman in St. Wulfram's they cried out 'no vote, no charter', arguing that the charter had been forfeited by a betrayal of the town's rights by the corporation's submission to Parliamentary interference.¹² This purging of Royalists was matched by a purging of Parliament men following the Restoration. A number of factors led to the restoration of nine men by November of that year; the requirement to sign the oath of Supremacy and Allegiance; a writ of Mandamus in March 1661 ordering the corporation to restore those removed by the late Parliament 'for their good affeccion to Us and our Royall Father' and to remove those who had taken their place; and finally, a Privy Council order to the Parliamentary representatives Sir William Thorold and John Newton to certify the names of the 'disaffected' in Grantham. The Act for Well Governing and Regulating of Corporations in 1662 led to a commission of six local gentry dismissing a further seven men from the corporation and commons.¹³

The crown also interfered with the town through changes to its charter. The burgesses had their own government since before 1312 when John fifth earl Warenne gave the townsmen a charter confirming and extending their privileges. At this time they already appointed an alderman as chief officer.¹⁴ The charter which incorporated the corporation in 1463 was modified over the centuries on changes in

12 Manterfield, *Newton's Grantham*, 17; Street, *Notes*, 104.

13 LRO, GHB, ff.345r and 345v; 14 June 1661; f348v; 31 October 1661, ff.353r, 355r; Manterfield, *Newton's Grantham*, 18.

14 Martin, *Charters*, 11.

monarch, though the modifications made post-Restoration were linked to the Exclusion crisis and James' Catholicism. The charter was under negotiation in 1661 but was not finally changed until 1664.¹⁵ When the change came following a quo warranto investigation in April of that year the interference in the town's affairs was taken in good spirits by both sides, and it was concluded in two months. The new charter reserved the power to the king to 'setle and confirme all Recorders and Town Clarkes .. but the town may elect and nominate and the Kynge confirm'.¹⁶ In 1684 another quo warranto came and the new charter for the borough was issued by James's ministry.¹⁷ The resulting new charter allowed the the king the power to appoint the recorder and deputy, and to remove any member of the corporation by order under the privy seal, and soon after thirteen of its twenty-five officers were replaced.¹⁸ In 1688 yet another quo warranto was served but the corporation decided to resist. In June the king removed six aldermen including the first mayor Robert Calcraft, and nominated four new aldermen. The king's power to remove men from the court was extended to all officers.¹⁹ Edward Coddington was named new mayor in the 1688 charter, but the corporation ignored it, and Coddington never acted. The court chose Edward Secker in August 1688, and despite being acceptable to the crown, he acted contrary to it. In November James II gave up and on 6 November a special assembly convened under Coddington elected Secker

15 See below. LRO, MON7-11-51, 5 June 1661, Thomas Grant to Newton and Thorold.

16 LRO, GHB, f.384v; Martin, *Charters*, 21; Sacret, 'Restoration government and the municipal corporation', pp. 232-259.

17 LRO, MON7-12-41, 17 July 1684, John Fleck to Jack Newton.

18 Martin, *Charters*, 21.

19 Martin, *Charters*, 221; LRO, GHB, f.771v, f.712r.

as alderman under the old constitution.²⁰

The alderman was elected annually from the court and was head of the corporation.

Between 1685 and 1690 the office was styled 'mayor'.²¹ The election of the

Alderman took place on the Friday after St Luke's feast (18 October), in the Corpus

Christi choir of the Prebendary church of St. Wulfram's in Grantham town centre.

The election process was an arcane medieval ritual involving three of the

comburgesses and a cushion ('the Quishion, or place of Elleccion'). At the

conclusion of the election the selected comburgess was 'espied to be Alderman'.²²

In common with other titles the alderman was socially produced not by writing but

by physical means – by ceremony, discursively produced in the corporation minutes

at a later time. In the eighteenth century there is evidence of elite interests

attempting to influence the election for political purposes. In 1710 the emergence

of a Tory challenger to the second-seat burgess John Manners, Marquess of

Granby, elicited manoeuvrings in private within the corporation. Members of the

corporation attempted to manipulate the court to help Sir John Thorold; Manners'

friends advised that 'his supporters could not put off a court of aldermen for more

than ten or twelve days and that he should make sure of the loyalty of the man

nominated as the next alderman. Thorold, won the vote, but the result was

overturned by Parliament.²³

20 Martin, *Charters*, 23.

21 Street, *Grantham*, 121-126.

22 Street, *Grantham*, 121. For the procedure see for example LRO, GHB, f.337r.

23 HMC, *Rutland manuscripts*, Twelfth report, Appendix IV (London, 1888), James Garner to Granby, 15 September 1710.

More backstage discussions are evident in September 1733 before the alderman's election. A contest for the office broke out with Thomas Langley, a supporter of the two burgesses – Sir Michael Newton and John Brownlow (Viscount Tyrconnel) – standing against Isaac Garner who was standing again and who was vehemently opposed to them. Sir Michael's wife, Margaret, Lady Coningsby, petitioned on his behalf, both with Richard Ellys (the one-time burgess whose father vigorously help him to 'cheat' Sir Michael's father of the burgessship in November 1701) and William Bentinck, the Duke of Portland, and lord of Grantham manor. Ellys declined in favour of his 'friends', but Bentinck agreed to instruct his tenants to vote in Langley's favour. Bentinck's steward was blamed for frustrating Lady Coningsby's efforts, and had 'behaved himself very unhandsomely in regard to him (Sir Michael)'. Her intervention with the Duke's aunt Henrietta Hamilton (Lady Limerick) did not prevent the Duke ordering his tenants via his steward to vote for Garner, not Langley, and he explained later that

"he has been engaged to the Duke of Rutland a good while for his interest, to the Person whom I fear is he that Sir Michael wishes against."

Lady Coningsby's campaigning did not end there. Kinswomen could also be appealed to for help, and Margaret expressed herself in very direct terms as she petitioned her cousin Mistress Welby. It was her kinship and her professions of friendship which encouraged Margaret to 'hope that you'l Grant my following request which is to lay your Commands on _____ who is now in the work House at _____ to Vote for Mr Langley's being Alderman.' The pauper expressed total compliance occasioned by his position in the work house, and 'he has promis'd to be entirely

Govern'd by You in this affair.' Margaret appealed to her friendship and kinship expecting Welby's cooperation 'as you are Related to Sir Michael and I dare say very much his friend'.²⁴ Thomas Langley was elected in any event, despite the orders from the lord of the manor and the previous steward.

The alderman was nominated from the court and the court from the freemen. Freemen were made in three ways. They could be confirmed by the corporation if they were entitled to be made free by being 'freeborn' in the town.²⁵ Men could present themselves for admission if they had served a seven year apprenticeship with a freeman.²⁶ Any other man could be made free by the corporation court by presenting themselves to the court and after paying a fine to them. The form of making a freeman was one of self-presentation, an offer of themselves to the corporation for nomination, and the consent of the corporation. This two part exchange is central to all nominations. Like gentlemen freemen could be made by birth, by apprenticeship, or by transferring currency. These methods were customary and no mention is made of them in any charter.

The population of Grantham was around 2,100 to 2,400 between 1660 and 1701 having grown from around 1,350 in 1588. There were 450 families recorded in 1706, rising to 617 families in 1800.²⁷ The corporation influenced the size and

24 LRO, MON7-11-30, 13 September 1733, Richard Ellys to Grantham corporation; MON7-12-231, 15 September 1733, Brownlow Cecil to Sir Michael Newton; MON7-12-232, 2 October 1733, William Bentinck; MON7-12-233, no date but evidently October, annotated 'copy of my letters to Lady Limerick', Lady Coningsby to Lady Limerick; MON7-12-235, 4 October, same to same; MON7-12-234, 9 October, Lady Limerick to Lady Coningsby; MON7-12-233, no date, annotated '2 letter and 3d letter'; GRO, D1844-C26-51, Lady Coningsby to Mrs Welby.

25 For example LRO, GHB, f.331v.

26 For example LRO, GHB, f.336v.

27 Street, *Notes*, 162; John Manterfield, *The topological development of the pre-industrial town of*

composition of the franchise. The electorate grew significantly in the period and beyond, and was at least 160 in 1660, rising to 215 by 1678, 225 by 1701, 278 in 1710, and 322 in 1715, and 1,000 by 1831. If the number of households is compared to the number of freemen it can be seen that possibly half of them had a freemen elector. The situation in Grantham is entirely consistent with the findings of Derek Hirst who, looking at elections in the early seventeenth century, discovered that the electorate was larger than had been previously proposed, a feature driven by the combination of a fixed-sum forty shilling freeholding qualification and inflation. As many as forty per cent of adult males, including some very ordinary and even impoverished individuals indeed, are shown to have been enfranchised by 1640.²⁸ The size of the franchise and its growth significantly increased the complexity of the network involved in producing not only burgesses, but also the court and other freemen.

This complexity was further extended by developments influenced by politics at the national level. New freemen were made in times of national political crisis, following local attempts to influence election outcomes. This occurred against a backdrop of an expanding shire electorate in the sixteenth century, newly-created and revitalised boroughs; together with patchy initiatives in the commons to open the qualification.²⁹ The crown and its ministers sought to influence the composition of Parliament by influencing not only the composition of the corporation court but

Grantham, Lincolnshire, c1535-c1835 (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Exeter, 1981), 141-142; Turnor, *Grantham*, xvi; Henning, *Commons*, Grantham constituency; Manterfield, *Newton's Grantham*, 13.

28 Hirst, *Representative?*.

29 Plumb, 'Growth of the electorate'.

also the composition of the franchise. This practice existed but was rare before 1640.³⁰ The boroughs were of interest to political activists in London as it was easier to influence the outcome of an election with so few electors. For example in 1660 only 160 men could return two members to Parliament, whilst the whole of Lincolnshire with over 600 parishes and at least 4,000 40s freeholders in 1705 (rising to 5,000 in the following years) could only return the same number.

In 1685 the corporation made large numbers of new freemen who supported James II, and eighty new freemen were made in total, including twenty-nine local gentlemen and esquires, and twenty clergymen. Unsurprisingly they got the result they wanted. Isaac Newton and Humphrey Newton his kinsman and servant at Cambridge became involved, and Humphrey was made a freeman on 3 April.³¹ The extent to which the gentry thought they had control of the nomination of freemen and hence nomination of the borough representative at this time is clear from the Lord Lieutenant's words: Bertie said 'there would be no difficulty' in obtaining the desired result as his ally John Manners was recorder of Grantham and Captain James Harrington 'having it in his power to make an addition of freemen'. This was despite the fact that Harrington was not mayor, but one of the aldermen.³² The only difficulty, said Bertie, was making new freemen who 'will be firm to your lordship's interest, and who really have a dependence upon you.'³³ This dependence was known to include those envisioned by Lord Fitzwilliam who

30 Hirst, *Representative?*, 24.

31 The list included the Newtons' stewards William (2) Parkins and Samuel Proctor. The freeman made at this time (who did not pay) were later denied any benefits by that freedom, see LRO, GHB, 7 March 1701.

32 HMC, *Rutland manuscripts.*, 16 March 1685, Bertie to Manners.

33 HMC, *Rutland manuscripts*, Vol. 2, 86, 87-88.

described his 'dependants of all sorts' to his steward, and by that meant his suppliers to his household (a plumber, saddler, coal merchant, carrier, brazier, and mason), as well as an 'old friend, and those whom he supplied (a bark merchant).³⁴

Soon after the contested election John Fleck from Lincolnshire informed Sir John Newton in Gloucestershire that:

"if you have not account from better hand, the Election at Grantham is over Sir William Ellys and my master Newton stood in Competition, but were outvoted by the great numbers of Freemen made by the new major (Mayor) Mr Robert Calcraft(.) Since the procuring of the new Charter which hath raised great Animosities in the Towne(.) all your old Friends of Grantham are dead as Mr Richard Calcraft(.) Mr (John) Wing and severall others ... and many others turned upside downe and all turned out of the borough court and common Councel now kept in the new Burrow (of) Grantham."³⁵

The political turmoil of the first years of the eighteenth-century saw an increase in the franchise from at least 225 voters to 278 between 1701 and 1710. The attitude to making new freemen, and paying them, in order to advance a candidate's chances was fairly matter of fact at this time. In 1710, when Sir John Thorold was apparently proposing to stand against John Manners, his ally in the corporation James Garner stated that there were about fifty men who could be made freemen who would support him. Garner also said that thirty or forty of them would expect to be paid for their 'trouble'.³⁶ The franchise in other places was expanded by the actions of sheriffs and candidates. In 1604 the sheriff as returning officer tried to poll the inhabitants instead of the freeholders, and in 1626 a former representative who was not re-elected got himself elected in open court,

34 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 147.

35 LRO, MON7-12-43(a), 8 April 1685, Fleck to Sir John Newton. John Wing was alderman 1678/9.

36 HMC, *Rutland manuscripts*, 15 September 1710, James Garner to John Manners.

and parliament later confirmed it. By these and other processes the franchise in Lincoln, Northampton, Leicester and Exeter grew massively.³⁷

The composition of the franchise was dominated by the middling sort, engaged in trades related to leather including fellmongers, skimmers, tanners, glovers, carriers, saddlers, cordwainers, bridle-makers and shoemakers. They accounted for over a third of the identified admissions to freedom between 1644 and 1663, and a quarter of all admissions in that period. Gentry admissions were about nine per cent of identified admissions.³⁸

Freemen were made as a reward for some service to the corporation or the expectation of some service. The corporation made Sir John Newton's son Jack a freeman talking of the 'respect they bore both to his father and to him'.³⁹ Again in 1660 they made John White esquire a freeman and returned his £10 fine, saying 'takinge in consideracion how usefull and proffitable he hath beene to this Corporacion and his promises to doe much good to and for this Burrough and Corporacion'.⁴⁰ Likewise William Blythe (a kinsman of John Newton) was granted his freedom noting that his 'Ancestors' had been graceful to the corporation 'in giveing severall giufts for the use of the poore' and that he had 'beene very respectfull to this Corporacion in causeing his Troops to meete in the Towne upon all occasion'.⁴¹

The detail reveals that nominations for alderman, court and freeman involved

37 Plumb, 'Growth of the electorate', 100-101.

38 Manterfield, *Topographical development*, 258-9.

39 LRO, GHB, f.331v (1660), and f.660v (1679). The rate was raised in a 1676 court, GHB, 642r.

40 LRO, GHB, ff.332r, 333r.

41 LRO, GHB, f.347r, the day of the Grantham election 17 April 1661.

networks of local people seeking cooperation (interest) and appealing to friendship, kinship and favour, as well as court, parliamentary and national networks. The production of a voter depended on an endless chain of inter-related and prior nominations, at every scale, national and local.

Unstable voter identity

The complexity of this production was an economy of nomination, and was unstable. A freeman was not just a freeman. He also had an identity which was in flux. The arguments about voter qualification show that he could be paying a municipal tax (scot and lot), or not paying it, he could be resident or non-resident, he could be receiving alms or not. Freeholders could include leaseholders and copy-holders, depending on which authority was consulted.⁴² Freeholders could include women, yet women never voted in Grantham, or those in possession of one burgage tenement.⁴³ Voters could be bribed, they could be present or absent, they could enter into agreements for reward, receive promises, obligations or engagements. Much of the debate around contested elections centred on the elector's identity – whose vote counted and whose did not. There was an ongoing **uncertainty** about which freemen could vote and which could not. During the early part of the century exactly who composed the franchise was sometimes unspecified and considered unimportant. Voters could sometimes vote without being qualified, a more significant problem in the shire than the town, and there were allegations of

42 Hirst, *Representative?*, 34.

43 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 145.

bogus freeholders, and non-resident freeholders.⁴⁴ However, even if he did vote, it was possible that his vote would be discounted by the alderman, or if not the alderman then the recorder, if not recorder then the committee of elections in London, or if not the committee then the house of commons sitting in session after a debate. The freeman's identity as a voter was customary, there was no law, regulation, statute or other writing to fix it, the charter being silent on the matter. The recorder was an important factor in the production of this unstable identity. Just before the uncontested 1661 election, the corporation ordered that 'Mr (William) Ellis the Recorders advise be had concerning the Electors who have votes and who vote for the time of the reading of the writt'.⁴⁵

The by-election of 1678 illustrates this, the potential size of the network producing this economy of voter identity and its complexity. Sir William Thorold was a fairly old man when he was elected in 1661. Manoeuvring for his replacement began early in 1677, a year before he died, by which time he had reached an estimable age of around eighty-six and hardly attended the house at all. Sir William Ellys and Sir Robert Markham stood in March 1678 with Ellys receiving 111 votes to Markham's 104. Despite this the Grantham alderman Michael Taylor returned Markham with the 'unanimous assent and consent of the freemen and commonalty'.

The contested election became a contested count, and on 16 March Sir William Ellys lodged a petition complaining of an undue return of Sir Robert Markham 'in

44 Hirst, *Representative?*, 17-20.

45 LRO, GHB, f.346v, 13 April 1661.

Injury of the Petitioner, who was duly elected, by the Majority of the Electors'. Two months later on 23 May a large Committee of Elections and Privileges was ordered to investigate no less than six elections.⁴⁶ Bizarrely the committee included Sir Robert Markham, which perhaps was an indication of how likely Ellys was to win his case. Markham had seventy-six voices in his favour who were 'Good voices, Residents paying Lot and Scot' against Ellys's sixty-six. Lot and scot was a term referring to payment of municipal tax but was an uncertain term whose meaning is lost in tradition.⁴⁷ However, with residents that paid neither Lot nor Scot, 'foreigners Nonresidents' and 'Paupers that received collections' taken into account Ellys had eleven to Markham's 104. In addition, Markham claimed that fifteen of Ellys's voices 'were procured by notorious briberies which takes them off'. Either contender could be determined the winner, depending on which men were determined to be voters. On 'good voices' it was Markham, on all voices it was Ellys, on all voices discounting bribes it was Markham. Four men whose votes were counted for Ellys were paupers and, as Hirst has shown, there was a view that almsmen – according to contemporary orthodoxy and proposals in Parliament in 1621 and 1641 – did not and should not vote. However, this did not become law, and the Grantham election partly turned on this ambiguous attitude toward the poor.⁴⁸ The contested election count became a contest in Parliament. After a long debate the 'court party' of Bertie and Manners won and the elections committee report was rejected by 179

46 JHC, Vol. 9, 455-6, and 480-2.

47 H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries* (London, 1868), 602.

48 Hirst, *Representative?*, 100-103.

votes to 167, and Markham was burgess.⁴⁹

Making a burgess required a voter to be made first. This voter identity was itself an unstable economy resulting from even earlier nominations in a social network. The authority for such nominations was derived from customary practice rather than the authority of writing. There was no original nomination, only an endless chain of prior nominations.

Part II – the social production of a burgess

Nominating candidates

We can think of an election in three stages – firstly the nomination of candidates for election, secondly a period of canvassing or campaigning, and thirdly, the election itself, though we will see that this simplification disguises many possible fluid intermediate and following events. The first members were sent from Grantham in 1467 the first parliament since their incorporation, however the charter made no mention of representatives, an automatic privilege seems to have been assumed.⁵⁰ All aspects of the election of representatives was therefore customary. Seventeenth-century evidence suggests that burgesses were freemen, though this simple statement is already problematic as Arthur Hall who was burgess between 1571 and 1586 was said by the corporation not to be a freeman.⁵¹ Candidates were made freemen if they were not already free, which applied to nearly all

49 JHC, Vol. 9, 493; Davies, 'By-election', pp. 179-182; Holmes, *Seventeenth-century Lincolnshire*, 241-2. For the another disqualification of freemen receiving alms see the 1710 Grantham by-election in Henning, *Commons*; JHC, 11 January 1711; BL, Add. mss. 42,702-67, (Grantham petition).

50 Street, *Notes*, 105-107; Martin, *Charters*, 16; May McKisack, *The parliamentary representation of the English boroughs during the middle ages* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 45-6 cited in Martin, *Charters*, 14.

51 Street, *Notes*, 115.

candidates, the exceptions being James Harrington and John Thorold the 1685 members who were the first two aldermen on the list of those newly appointed by James II.⁵² The candidate's route to freeman status was not necessarily easy. In late March 1660 the alderman John Simpson, who was sympathetic to John Newton, made several unsuccessful attempts to convene a court, before he was made a freeman two days before his election in 1660.⁵³ As there was no written right to send representatives it could only send the number called for by the king. The corporation did not always send two representatives and occasionally sent one or none.⁵⁴

If the corporation could send burgesses, provided they were freemen and elected, the question arises – who chose the candidates? Despite the possibility of corporation autonomy candidates were put forward to the corporation, and it is clear that a small number of local nobles and gentry were able to nominate candidates to them. The greatest interests in the town in the early Tudor era were the Hussey and Manners family, with Hussey being overtaken by the Cecil family, Lords Burghley, based at Stamford, lasting until 1626. In the later seventeenth century it was still the Manners family, with the Ellys family, Robert Carr and Robert Bertie all showing influence. This 'interest' or patronage has been seen as the dominating feature of elections, before and after the civil war, with the view that representatives

52 See for example LRO, GHB, 26 December 1700, the honourable Thomas Baptist Manners, elected 9 January 1701.

53 GRO, D1844-C1-1, 29 March 1660, Simpson to Newton; LRO, GHB, ff.331r and 331v, 11 April 1660.

54 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grantham_\(UK_Parliament_constituency\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grantham_(UK_Parliament_constituency))

were chosen by these elites, with the corporation and freemen rubber-stamping their choice. We will see that this is far from the truth. The corporation may have seemed to be a vassal for noble designs, but it did in fact retain a great deal of independence from them, and the complexity of the network thwarted them. In 1553 Cecil tried to nominate both candidates, but was politely rebuffed, as they had agreed to continue 'our ancient Burgess Sir Edward Warner' 'at the special suit of the earl of Rutland', which they could not ignore having already agreed with 'so noble a man'.⁵⁵ In 1584 the earl of Lincoln, and steward for the borough, asked for a seat at Grantham but there is no evidence that he was successful. Even the powerful interest of the earl of Rutland was variable. In the same year the corporation rebuffed him, saying that the majority of the commons had already 'given their voices' to two others, Arthur Hall and William Thorold. There was no evidence of noble patronage in the 1628 election, the last before Charles's personal rule.⁵⁶ The strength of gentry patronage seems to have peaked in 1688 when Bertie reported that Sir William Ellys 'has such an interest that he will not only be chosen himself, but his interest will also choose any other'.⁵⁷

There is evidence of private gentlemen's agreements in the run up to the Restoration, but they were negotiated between candidates and the corporation. John Newton and John Whitelock's uncle Hussey were in discussion with each other and the corporation via two mediators; firstly, Andrew Broome, a Grantham

55 Street, *Notes*, 158-9.

56 Hasler, *Commons*, Grantham constituency (1558-1603) and Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (eds.), *The house of Commons, 1604-1628* (Cambridge, 2010), Vol. 2, Grantham constituency.

57 HMC, *Rutland*, ii, 115.

comburgess acting for Newton, and secondly, John Whitelock, who was not one of the corporation, acting for Hussey. By March 1659 John Newton seems to have promised to Hussey that he would 'desist from acting in it for' himself if Hussey 'would stand for a Burgesseshipe at Grantham'.⁵⁸ The corporation was keen to avoid a contested election and begged them to agree on who should stand. The corporation were displaying what Kishlansky called selection, petitioning for a private agreement between gentlemen.

Candidates were also put forward in private gentry meetings for the shire. In December 1664 Sir Charles Hussey one of the two knights of the shire for Lincolnshire died and a by-election was called. Sir John Newton noted that:

"this day after the house rise was Spent with many of my Cuntrimen to consider of a fitt person to sucseede my Honored Cuntriman Sir Charles Hussey who departed this life upon Sunday Last and we pitcht upon Sir Robert Carr".⁵⁹

Carr was to be highly important to Newton's political life and was to be influential in the next election at Grantham, he was also a very colourful character with allegations of bigamy and debt-fuelled gambling.⁶⁰ Kishlansky argued that private meetings of the gentry to select candidates so as to avoid a contest was a defining feature of the pre-Civil War period. It is evident that such meetings still took place after the Civil War and Interregnum, but were not always successful. Private gentry agreements continued into the eighteenth-century. In June just before the 18 August 1727 uncontested election at Grantham, Peregrine Bertie invited Sir Michael

58 GRO, D1844-C1-5, 28 March 1659, John Whitelock to Newton. Uncle Hussey was probably Charles Hussey (1626-1664). Andrew Broome signed the certificate confirming Newton's return in the contested 1660 election, and was Captain Broome in John Newton's regiment of foot soon after, see LRO, MON7-11-50, MON7-11-59.

59 LRO, MON7-14-25, undated, but in the week beginning Monday 5 December 1664, Sir John Newton to Dame Mary Newton.

60 The marriage was thought by some to be bigamous, see Henning, *Commons*, Vol. 2, Members.

Newton and his brother-in-law John Archer to 'a meeting of Lincolnshire Gentlemen at the Duke of Ancaster's house' in London.⁶¹ Sir Michael stood down from Beverley and was returned unopposed at Grantham.

Standing itself was considered by some to be something someone did if they were asked, and only if they had 'an inclination for publick business'⁶² However, candidates were also known to recommend themselves. In 1621 Sir George Manners directed his servant George Falcon to 'commend' him to the deputy recorder Sir Thomas Ellys, Mr Moon and Mr Wycliff, urging him not to show them the letter but to burn it.⁶³

There is no record of how the candidates were chosen for the four-way contested election of April 1660, but if the corporation chose it was not unanimous given their extremely differing political views. Two of the candidates were hostile to the monarchy – William Ellys who had sat as the sole representative for the town in 1656, who was also Recorder of the borough and Solicitor-General under Cromwell, and William Bury who sat for the town in 1654. The two candidates favourable to the new king were: Thomas Skipwith, one of the existing two representatives for parliament, a lawyer who took no part in the civil war and who spoke favourably in Richard Cromwell's parliament of restoring the monarchy; and John Newton. Newton and Skipwith prevailed and Ellys obtained a second indenture, which we will discuss later. The 1685 election was equally uncertain and

61 LRO, MON7-11-29 and MON7-11-65, 26 June, servant of Duke to Michael Newton and William Archer.

62 LRO, MON7-14-89, copy letter with no date, no addressee or addressor, but in Jack Newton's correspondence. The author could be Anthony Newton, see *Notes and Queries* second series XII (Oct 19 1861), 315.

63 CSPD, 1629-31, 37; HMC, *Rutland*, 457.

had the only other four-way contest in the period. There was no sitting Parliament and Sir John's friend Edward Bigland, who assisted him in his 1660 dispute, received a visit from his old Parliamentary partner Sir William Ellys, an exclusionist, and Thomas Harrington who 'spoke verie respectfullie' of Sir John and 'will give you noe opposition'. Sir William appeared to be offering Sir John the candidature in his place.⁶⁴ This apparent picture is hard to reconcile with the actual events. Sir John did not stand but Jack Newton did, Sir William Ellys did stand, not against him but as a fellow opponent of king James II. Harrington far from being no opposition and respectful, was a prime mover in successfully opposing his son and Ellys.

Crown influence was also possible but varied in success. Henrietta Maria, the Queen mother, on regaining her manor, attempted to nominate her own candidates at the election, in April 1661. As early as January 1661 she had written to them via Miles Cooke, one of her servants, who was also dealing with the toll leases. She recommended her attorney-general Sir Peter Ball and Sir Henry Wood, controller of her household. However, the corporation refused, and said that 'it is not in their power to make choice of a Burgesse without the consent of the whole Burrough'.⁶⁵ The corporation feared that this would prejudice their negotiation with the Queen mother about the tolls. However, Wood was very helpful to them, and 'did Act very much for the good thereof' in defending their rebuttal of the Queen mother and their interests in the toll negotiations; far from being punished, they

64 GRO, D1844-C14-50, 12 February, Bigland to Newton.

65 LRO, GHB, 16 January 1661 f.341v; 22 February f.343v; 1 March f.344v; 22 March f.345v; 5 April f.346r; 13 April f.346v.

appear to have been rewarded with an abatement of the fine.⁶⁶ The Queen mother's attempted intervention indicates that the borough could be independent of the crown.

The sovereign did not try, except very rarely, to intervene directly in putting candidates forward. One exception was the new king James II who attempted to nominate his own candidate Richard Graham in 1685, who was rejected by the borough and did not stand. However, his first two chosen aldermen Thomas Harrington and John Thorold were elected. Even in the face of the most determined crown interference it would ever experience, the town retained some autonomy.⁶⁷

The hotly-contested by-election at Grantham in 1678 (illuminating voter identity) also illustrates that candidates could be productions of networks of nobles and gentry co-operating together. There were at this time three well-connected parties who tried to influence this by-election. The first was Charles Bertie, the Lincolnshire-seated earl of Lindsey, Lord Lieutenant of the county, and brother-in-law of Thomas Osborne (earl of Danby and a well-known figure in the emerging Exclusion Crisis). The second figure was John Manners the eighth earl of Rutland, and steward of Grantham manor. (John Manners, his son, was also made recorder of Grantham and Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire by the patronage of the king, to help with court candidate, having replaced the disaffected William Ellys Senior). The third

66 LRO, GHB, ff.334-335; 13 April 1661, f.346v; 14 June 1661, f.348v.

67 Henning, *Commons*, Vol. 1, Grantham constituency.

figure was Sir Robert Carr, one of the two knights of the shire who considered Grantham to be 'my own stage'.⁶⁸ The election was finally called after Thorold died in the middle of a heated debate in Parliamentary session on 4 March 1678. Carr, with the help of Sir John Newton, put forward Sir William Ellys as their choice.⁶⁹ The election was to be held on Tuesday, 12 March 1678. Bertie put forward Sir Edmund Turnor as a crown sympathiser, but for unknown reasons he retired on the eve of the poll, again showing that candidates could de-nominate themselves if they expected defeat.⁷⁰ Bertie immediately put forward Sir Robert Markham just before the poll, and he was accepted by the corporation.⁷¹ Ellys complained of an unfair election and Bertie petitioned Manners to influence the members hearing Ellys' election enquiry. Manners was expected to deliver the result the crown wanted having been granted the recordership of Grantham and the lieutenancy of Leicestershire.⁷² The success that Bertie and Manners had enjoyed in March 1678 at the by-election was unstable, and was rapidly reversed in the Exclusion Parliaments. In the autumn of 1678 the political disarray which followed unfounded reports of a Popish plot (Titus Oates) and Osborne's secret negotiations with France, was followed by a dissolution of the Parliament.⁷³

Freemen did not put up candidates, as a result sometimes there was no candidate to represent the views of a minority of electors when the choice was not

68 Holmes, *Seventeenth-century Lincolnshire*, 240.

69 Henning, *Commons*.

70 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 141.

71 Davies, 'By-election', 182.

72 HMC, *Ormonde manuscripts*, Vol. 4, 429, 431, 433.

73 For a detailed account of this see Mark Knights, *Politics and opinion in crisis, 1678-81* (Cambridge, 1994).

unanimous. On 29 January 1679 Jack Newton was made a freeman of the borough of Grantham, his father and Ellys were then returned in the uncontested election on 5 February 1679 by 'the assent and consent of the major part'. This split in the electorate of freemen gave a voice to the exclusionsists (if they voted on issues) but not to the supporters of the crown. There was no change in this circumstance on 21 August 1679 when Sir John Newton and Sir William Ellys were returned again at Grantham, nor when they were returned uncontested to the 'Oxford' Parliament. After Charles dissolved it Sir John Newton would never sit in another Parliament. A short personal rule followed for four years until Charles's death at Whitehall on 6 February 1685.⁷⁴

Candidates could be petitioned to stand by their stewards. Some years after Sir John Newton had last sat for Grantham his steward John Fleck told him that he would be welcomed to stand again in December 1688 noting that:

"It is the hopes and wishes of your friends here that yow would continue your former endeavours of promoting the good of the country by serving in Parliament(,) not Questioning but that yow will be chosen in yow (sic) parts if you please accept".⁷⁵

The steward was not one of the corporation and lived not in Grantham but in the nearby parish of Stroxtun. His knowledge of the views of the freemen there and his petition to him was far from uncommon.

Candidates were sometimes put forward by 'friends' and other sitting burgesses. Sir John Brownlow the sitting Grantham member, and Jack's near neighbour in

74 *London Gazette*, No. 2006.

75 LRO, MON7-12-62, 16 December 1688, footnote in Fleck to Sir John Newton.

Bloomsbury Square, and Lincolnshire neighbour at Belton died in July 1697.⁷⁶ His family had no obvious successor candidate. Jack Newton was in Lincolnshire for the burial at Belton. Whilst there he 'was Invited by some of his friends to stand in his stead', but after some time a rival in the form of Sir John Thorold appeared.⁷⁷ As Jack's steward John Fleck put it,

"it was thought he might be Elected without Opposition, But now is so vigourously opposed by Sir John Thorold of Cranwell and Marston(,) being supported by the Earle of Rutlands Interest and all the old friends and party which stood for his Lordship"⁷⁸

Candidates could find themselves asked to stand by a combination of family, kinsmen and the corporation itself, acting in a kind of disorganised concert. In April 1700 Sir John Thorold announced that he would stand down at the next election at Grantham and stand instead for the shire. Soon after Sir John Thorold announced his intention not to stand again at Grantham, Sir Jack Newton's kinsman Robert Fisher enquired whether Jack wished to stand for the town. Newton's opposition is encapsulated in his endorsement of the letter 'No. 8. answered, of no use'.⁷⁹

The April 1700 pre-election campaign following Thorold's announced resignation began as soon as the announcement was made a full year before the actual election.⁸⁰ Sir William Ellys, the other sitting burgess, intended to get his son, Richard Ellys, elected to the second seat, so that father and son would represent Grantham, and accordingly he wrote to the earl of Rutland for his support.⁸¹ The

76 Third Baronet of Great Humby.

77 Sir John Thorold was the fourth Baronet, living at Marston.

78 LRO, MON7-12-94, 29 August 1697, Fleck to Newton.

79 LRO, MON7-12-102, 15 April 1700, Fisher to Newton; LRO, MON7-12-103, 22 April 1700, Robert Fisher to Jack Newton.

80 Reminiscent of 1660 and 1678.

81 HMC, *Rutland*, Ellys to Rutland, 17 April 1700; he was made free soon after alongside what looks like his steward, see LRO, GHB, 28 May 1700.

corporation was aware, again through informal networks of information hidden to us, that the other sitting member's steward (variously his 'Servant' or 'Gentleman') had 'been to the Lord Rutlands, and had got noe encouragement'. The corporation had learned about the outcome of this private meeting from others to the purpose that the earl 'thinks that two of a family is not proper, and If the matter comes to Sir William (Ellys) and his son standing Wee likewise rather than it should be so, my Lord would permitt his son Mr (John) Manners to put in'. The earl of Rutland was thought so influential that he could thwart the intentions of the sitting burgess by simply putting his own son forward.⁸²

Knowledge of opinions expressed in private meetings was evidently being reproduced and copied all over the locality. Sir Jack Newton's kinsman Humphrey Newton, who had assisted Newton in his unsuccessful pro-exclusion bid to be elected in 1685, asked him stand having heard that Thorold was to stand down. Fisher hearing the same, did likewise advising that it was 'very dangerous' to delay .. (and) suffer not so fair an opportunity to let slip'. According to Humphrey Newton 'the generality as yet denys him (Sir William Ellys) till such time as they shall hear your Worships pleasure', Ellys, said Humphrey, 'puts very strongly in for his son, sparing neither for charge nor trouble'.⁸³ Jack still refused, despite a further two letters from the members of the corporation. Newton acknowledged in conventional terms of patronage 'all your favours in offering me your Interests', and described himself 'unworthy to be your member of Parliament'.⁸⁴ When the election

82 GRO, D1844-C10-72. John Manners was the tenth earl of Rutland, and later created duke of Rutland.

83 LRO, MON7-13-113, 18 May 1700, Humphrey Newton to Jack Newton.

84 LRO, MON7-14-90, 23 May 1700, Jack Newton to unknown (probably Humphrey Newton) draft reply;

did come – in January 1701 – the earl of Rutland, still disapproving of having father and son as burgesses of the same place, put forward his own son. Ellys junior stood down so as not to oppose the earl's younger son, and Thomas Baptist Manners was elected without a contest.

The business of electing, campaigning, and informing in the election network had stopped, but the activities of seeking patronage by petition continued. A month after the election Robert Fisher sent Samuel Coddington, to Newton in London, hoping he could procure him a position. He was the son of a comburgess who 'was very just to you in your burgessing here' and 'a sober good young man'.⁸⁵

The circumstances of one election might be exceedingly similar to another one, but the outcome could be quite different. A new election was held just ten months later, and in the intervening short period the earl's son decided a career in politics was not for him. Sir William Ellys faced the same opposition from the earl, but this time was successful. Servants in the network played a part and an anonymous servant of the earl of Rutland who was 'very well known' to Newton and 'a servant in his (Newton's) family many years since' informed him that he if he made his 'application to my Lordshipp for his assistance I dare answer for his Lordshipp that it will be granted to Sir John who he desires it'. Opposition to father and son burgesses continued and Fisher reported that the 'Generallity of

D1844-C10-72, another draft letter on the same folio undated but 23 May, to unknown but probably reply to the members of the Grantham corporation dated 18 May.

85 GRO, D1844-C14-27, 15 February 1701, Fisher to Newton. For another example of petitioning burgesses and their network on behalf of clergymen see chapter six, naming a rector.

the towne are very averse to the choosing of one house'.⁸⁶ Mr De Ligne initially campaigned but suddenly stood down, as Turnor had done in 1678. Newton's supporters again asked him to stand, aware that 'since his disappointment (in 1697) (he) has seemed avers to any further burgessing(,) being apprehensive of the like usage'.⁸⁷ Newton was persuaded to stand when he felt he was certain of winning, and the pace of letters became frantic.⁸⁸ Despite this he lost and Sir William Ellys was blamed for his 'extraordinary methods'. After the November 1701 election another followed just a few months later in July 1702 (the third in around eighteen months). Not surprisingly Newton did not stand, nor would he ever stand again.⁸⁹

Canvassing and campaigning

Campaigning was an attempt to obtain a freeman's vote by seeking the 'interest' of noble and gentry figures who were imagined to control him, or obtaining it directly from the freemen by treating them to alcohol-soaked feasts, bribery, financial inducement, whipping up crowds on the day, or obtaining pre-engagements – written or verbal promises.

Petitions for the interest of noble and gentry figures could be made through family or kin and on 18 February 1690 Gervase Newton wrote to his father to report to him that James Thynne and William Blathwayt wanted Sir John's interest

86 LRO, MON7-12-110, Fisher to Newton.

87 LRO, MON7-12-107, 20 November, Fisher to Newton. The letter Fisher wrote 'last night' on 19 November is lost.

88 GRO, D1844-C10-7; D1844-C10-120; D1844-C10-121.

89 For intimations of further attempts to persuade him see LRO, MON7-13-114, 2 October 1702, Humphrey Newton to Newton.

in the Gloucestershire elections.⁹⁰ On 15 November 1701 Jack received a petition of George Whichcot, the Lincolnshire knight of the shire between August 1698 until January 1701, whose friends had 'prevailed upon' him to 'stand this Election' in Lincolnshire, asking for his interest. Despite this early petitioning he evidently did not stand as he was not returned nor was there a contest in the shire.⁹¹

The interest that was sought must have been Newton's manorial tenants. At the 1776 election forty-seven freeholders voted from Bitton, thirteen from Hannam, and twenty from Oldland, the Newtons were lords of the first and third, and large landowners in all three, based on this later data Jack could have been thought to have influence or command over up to eighty voters.⁹² Sir John, Sir Jack and Sir Michael Newton did not have tenant voters at Grantham or Beverley, so their interest there must have been based on financial dependency or friendship.

Interest was sought whether the election was contested or not, not least because when it was sought the eventual number of candidates was unknown. Prior alliances and patronage or interest does not seem to have played any part. On 11 March 1705, before the uncontested May Grantham election, Jack was petitioned by John Manners. Manners was the second son to put in the for election, the younger son (as we saw) sat and then retired almost as quickly. Despite the fact that Manners family had consistently failed to support the Newton family over the decades Jack returned his immediate answer, noting that Manners' 'pleasure shall

90 LRO, MON7-14-137, 13 February 1690, Gervase to John Newton.

91 LRO, MON7-12-105, 15 November; Hayton, Cruickshanks, Handley (eds.), *Commons*, Lincolnshire constituency. For another example in Gloucestershire see Maynard Colchester's petition, GRO, D1844-C10-17, 17 November.

92 Ellacombe, *Bitton*, 203.

be a law to me'.⁹³

Gentry interest was variable and did not necessarily pass from father to son, as the 1697 by-election contest demonstrated, which also hinted at the way earlier ongoing local disputes could destroy it. Jack Newton, having been asked to stand by friends of his and the deceased Brownlow, expected to stand uncontested and to win. He found himself vigorously opposed in the town canvassing by men who had been favoured by Jack's father, or employed by both Jack and his father. Mr William (3) Parkins who was, according to the steward given Stroxtun living by Sir John, opposed his son.⁹⁴ Stewards too could be fickle in their loyalty to father and son. Jack complained to his father that 'Mr Proctor who keeps your courts, and since the death of Thomas Buck, mine ... doth his utmost to oppose my interest.'⁹⁵

Stewards could not only petition for their master to stand, but also intervene in canvassing on behalf of their kin. John Fleck wrote asking Sir John Newton to write letters on behalf of his son, and to petition himself. Fleck thought that Sir John Newton might successfully petition nobles such as the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Worcester (Somerset), 'or other noblemen or gentlemen of your acquaintance' He thought that writing to the brother of one opponent in Grantham would help – Leonard Towne once a parishioner in Sir John's parish of Aunsby, then living in London might sway his brother Mr Towne in Grantham, who was 'so violently hott

93 LRO, MON7-14-100, 11 March 1705, draft reply. For a petition to Newton from a candidate where both their fathers opposed each other in the 1678 by-election see LRO, MON7-12-202, 14 September 1714, Charles Willoughby to Newton.

94 LRO, MON7-14-88, Jack to John. William (3) Parkins was the grandson of William Parkins, attorney and Grantham deputy steward. See Appendix 1.

95 LRO, MON7-14-88, 4 September 1697, Newton to Newton.

aganse Mr Newton'.⁹⁶

Stewards kept lists of tenants and dependants and kept tabs on who dissembled, Lord Cholmondeley in 1681 instructed his steward to 'take notice who of either my tenants or friends shuffle in this service that I may set a mark upon them for time to come'. They drew up lists of those paying lot and scot with codes to indicate support, and lists of men to petition for interest by letter.⁹⁷ During the pre-election warm up after Thorold announced his future departure in April 1700 Sir William Ellys' steward or servant Mr Desborough went to Grantham and 'made many votes for (his son) Mr Ellys'. The alderman and corporation noted that 'Sir William Ellys has sent his Servant severell times to our Town, and has been about the Town to get all Votes he could'.⁹⁸ Stewards were a conduit for communication of canvassing news and gossip about elections from county to county. After the March 1690 election Jack Newton was at his father's house in Bitton, Joseph Weld the vicar of Heydour, Jack Newton's appointee, ordered Jack's Heydour steward William Jackson to 'let you know what Parliament men are chosen here about'.⁹⁹ In October 1695 there was an uncontested election in Grantham. Jack Newton and his father remained informed via Jack's friends, clergymen and stewards in Lincolnshire and on 12 November 1695 he wrote to his father to say 'Talk of Lincolnshire elections suggests William Monson instead of Sir E. Hussey at Lincoln and one Moore a citizen at Grimsby'. The information was accurate.¹⁰⁰

96 LRO, MON7-12-94, 29 August 1697, Fleck to Sir John.

97 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 143, 152, 155.

98 GRO, D1844-C10-72, 18 May 1700, Solomon et al. to Sir Jack Newton.

99 LRO, MON7-12-56, 12 March 1690, Jackson to Newton.

100 LRO, MON7-14-80, ?12 November 1695, Jack to John Newton; Hayton, Cruickshanks, Handley (eds.), *Commons*, Great Grimsby constituency.

The corporation, or at least some of its members, was prepared to do its own canvassing on Jack's behalf. The members of the corporation volunteered to 'take a turn about the Towne and see how wee are' prior to the January 1701 election. Ellys's servant had already been 'about the Town' to 'get all Votes he could for his (Sir William Ellys's) son' and Fisher worried that early advantage was lost.¹⁰¹

Getting elected could be helped by getting the nomination of the standing candidate. Robert Fisher made this very point to Jack in April 1700, 'you have and will loose many of the votes you had when ... you had Sir William Ellys friendship(,) but then you will have many new ones'. Jack did not have it this time and it counted against him in the end.¹⁰²

The emphasis on speed was related to canvassing techniques which included asking for voting commitments in advance of the election. This 'pre-engagement' made it sound a bit like a marriage, and once an engagement was made in theory it was an oral bond and could not be broken. It was certainly of concern to anyone conducting an election campaign because any pre-engagements would preclude any possibility of persuasion. The anonymous person who spoke of the earl of Rutland's good opinion of Jack in April 1700 was keen to avoid any pre-engagements and thought that he could prevent any by telling 'most of his friends that I thought he would stand and also that he had hopes of his Lordships interest'.¹⁰³ Recantations of these pre-engagements could also occur, but if they did they seem to have been formalised, giving weight to the idea that they were treated

101 GRO, D1844-C10-72, 18 May 1700; GRO, D1844-C10-121, 22 November 1701, Fisher to Newton.

102 LRO, MON7-12-103, 22 April 1700, Fisher to Newton.

103 LRO, MON7-14-89, undated but internally April 1700, copy letter in Jack's correspondence.

like oral contracts – bonds given by gentlemen. On 1 July 1709 Robert Fisher wrote to Jack to say that he knew that Jack had 'forbidden all burgessing at this election but some of his opponents have been pretending that they did it on his account', and he enclosed a specimen recantation.¹⁰⁴

Pre-engagements led to candidates being advised to be speedy in their campaign. 'if you appeared quickly you would not have any rival', 'Some say Mr De Ligne for all his present haste got the start of him and hath his (the earl of Rutlands) interest'.¹⁰⁵ In April 1700 it was the earl's interest which was held to bring the tradesmen's vote. The earl of Rutland was in contact with Jack via Jack's kinsman and agent Robert Fisher, directly, and through his own servants. On 15 November 1701 the earl's secretary sent a letter to Fisher, who informed Jack the next day, enclosing copies of the letter received and his reply. In this way information was being relayed and copied in several directions at the same time at a fast pace. On 25 November three days before the Saturday poll the earl sent a command to Robert Fisher to wait on him, presumably at Belvoir. Fisher obliged and the earl passed on his desire to have Jack in Grantham. Fisher did so in a letter of the following day.¹⁰⁶

Being present was still considered the only way to burgesse. The call to be present was repeated in November 1701 with Jack's friends exhorting that 'your imidiate

104 LRO, MON7-12-135, 1 July 1709, Fisher to Newton. Recant - 1530s, from Latin *recantare* 'recall, revoke,' from *re-* 'back' + *cantare* 'to chant'.

105 LRO, MON7-12-103.

106 LRO, MON7-12-110.

coming down .. will prevent any opposition... but if you delay then it is believed Mr (Richard) Ellys will stand having time to sollicit'.¹⁰⁷ It is not possible to tell whether Jack was genuinely stuck in London on business, but it seems unlikely, but his promoters blamed his 1701 loss on 'your absence' as well as the underhand methods of the Ellys family.¹⁰⁸ This maxim did not always hold. Sir Robert Markham had apparently not thought of standing until just before the 1678 by-election when he was invited by Bertie. He declared his intention to stand on Monday 11 March and the election was the following day.

The foregoing shows that patronage was an important contemporary precept of canvassing and the electoral process generally. The earl of Rutland, John Manners, was seen by Grantham townsmen to have controlled a number of the tradesmen, necessarily also freemen, in the town. Robert Fisher expected that Grantham tradesmen would vote for Jack 'if they had his Lordships allowance.' (my emphasis).¹⁰⁹ However, the patronage model has been applied mostly to the relationship between the crown, at the centre, and the town, or between the local lords and candidates.¹¹⁰ The patronage model extends only to elite social individuals, and not to the most important element in the election – the voter. In the event of an uncontested election the voter is obviated, the patronage chain ends before the Grantham tradesman, but in the contested elections, which were

107 GRO, D1844-C10-121.

108 LRO, MON7-12-106, 15 November 1701, Fisher to Newton; MON7-14-96, 29 November 1701, Fisher to Newton.

109 LRO, MON7-12-103.

110 See for example Patterson, *Urban patronage*, Namier, *Structure of politics*, Kishlansky, *Parliamentary selection*.

politically and nationally important, they were critical. The patronage model if it were true would be impenetrable to historical investigation, because the several hundred voters in the franchise are not named in returns.

The contemporary usage of interest is in disuse today, but was rather a legal claim or right, or a personal or legal concern in.¹¹¹ Muldrew has argued elegantly that interest reflected mutual advantage rather than one-side self-interest and could be held by a social inferior. There was however certainly a sense in which it was held to be a property or claim, and yet there was also a sense in which it could be offered as well, as when Matthew Robinson reconciled with Thomas Billiard and told him '...for what is past I am sorry ... here is to thee with all my hearte, thou shalt have more interest in me then ever thou hadst in thy life'.¹¹² It is a noun used in the context of elections very frequently, its Latin meaning of figuratively to 'be between' is indicative of its social network meaning. The man (and it is a man in the electoral business) with interest was a man who could intervene (metaphorically to 'come between') the relationships of other social individuals in the social network. Such a man was imagined to be able to put himself between an elector and the candidate(s), and thereby make a difference to the electoral outcome. It was an expectation that the freemens' freedom and personal ability to nominate a candidate of their own free will could be curtailed and their vote directed or commanded. The nature of this interposition (metaphorically to 'place

111 Mid-15c., 'legal claim or right; a concern; a benefit, advantage, a being concerned or affected (advantageously),' from noun use of Latin *interest* 'it is of importance, it makes a difference', literally *inter-* 'between' + *esse* 'to be', an etymology which relates it metaphorically with possession of land, see Introduction.

112 HCCD, Case 45; Muldrew, *Obligation*, 140, citing Pepys interest in Sir George Carteret.

between') with its limitation of the voters' agency in the nomination of candidates was never spelled out, and no records of the voting habits of individual freemen in in Grantham were made. The relationship between the earl of Rutland for example and the freemen of Grantham was one which may have been coloured by a variety of narratives such as obligations due to patronage or rank, personal affection and friendship, hospitality, charitable giving, or financial dependence. The source therefore of any interest that he had will remain unknowable. There is a sense in which the earl's interest as an exchanged narrative was a production of the electoral process. It was contingent on its success, and the actions of the freemen. If the earl recommended a favourite and the freemen voted for a rival, the earl's interest was challenged, not accepted. His interest, as a socially shared narrative, was a product of both his offers to freemen of his own candidate preference(s) and their acceptance of it.

Landowners still had a view that their tenants and dependants would follow their election lead, as their forbears had led them to war, and this assumption of unquestioning obedience was seen as an expression of their natural right and their social superiority. It was treated as though it were a piece of property which could be bestowed at will. The earl of Huntingdon told his steward he could assign his interest where he wished or 'else leave them to their liberty'. Steward correspondence shows that tenants were not bound as this elite narrative proposed. They could not be ordered but could be cajoled, persuaded or bought. There was a view amongst voters that it was

"oppression and arbitrary for landlords to compel them to vote contrary to their inclination and (it) takes away their liberty allowed to them as subjects of having a free vote in the choice of members of parliament".¹¹³

When this expectation was crushed, stewards were left to give the bad news to their master. Lord Weymouth's interest failed in 1690 during the Tamworth election when they told him 'though your lordship be pleased to change your mind so often, they will not'. Their more blunt observations to him were such that 'it is not fit for me to tell your lordship what they say to it'.¹¹⁴

The election

Producing a burgess was partly about physical control of the elector's body. As anyone (and only those present in the room) could vote, control of the electoral body was control of the franchise. The site where electors gathered is uncertain. A few days before the 1661 election the corporation debated a new unnamed site, the freemen being 'more numerous than heretofore'.¹¹⁵ The schoolroom was in use in 1765 but a complaint from the school trustees about damage led to the election site being relocated in the church or guildhall (Map 5).¹¹⁶ The corporation must have experienced non-freemen being present and voting without (customary) right, and ordered that 'noe man not being free should be present at the Eleccion'.¹¹⁷

Great efforts were made to physically move electors. Sir William Massingbird spoke

113 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 148.

114 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 142, 143, 148.

115 LRO, GHB, f.346v, 13 April.

116 Street, *Notes*, 115.

117 LRO, GHB, f.346v.

of organising clergymen in all parishes near his home, and at Boston: encouraging them to gather together their parishioners, and to find them horses where they had none.¹¹⁸

Elections were social theatre and part of it was mustering the militia. The militia network was used by its most senior officers in overt efforts to influence the outcome of an election. Montague Bertie, with his authority as Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, summoned the militia to muster at Grantham on the day of the annual election of borough officers in October 1677. As we saw earlier Bertie had the interests of King Charles at heart, and opposed Sir Robert Carr and Sir John Newton who, as deputy-lieutenant to Bertie in the militia, must have been called to the muster himself, whether he agreed with Bertie's tactics or not. This action was no precedent, and Bertie had done this before during the by-election at Stamford, in Kesteven, a few miles from Grantham in 1676 'soon after the muster at Corby', and it had the desired effect, Henry Noel, backed by Bertie, won there. On the day of the by-election poll of March 1678 Bertie again mustered the militia at Grantham.¹¹⁹ Mustering was used in two ways, first, to encourage attendance at the election and secondly, to which candidate the vote was given. In 1679 the earl of Manchester as lord lieutenant assisted his candidate Robert Apreece, summoning his deputies and the justices to his house so that they 'agreed for Apreece', after the militia were summoned those who supported Apreece were sent home to vote, the others threatened with more duties, newcomers were summoned and their fines for non-

118 LRO, Massingbird Mundy 2/10/7, 20 December 1720.

119 Holmes, *Seventeenth-century Lincolnshire*, 240; Henning, *Commons*, Grantham constituency.

attendance abated if they gave their support, and other tricks were used. Election day, perhaps resonating with the civil war, with which so many had first-hand experience, had a martial air. The increased absenteeism of landowners following the Restoration led to a vastly increased role for the steward in elections, from a clerical one to a full-blown involvement in gathering information, canvassing, campaigning and mustering on election day.¹²⁰ Stewards could be masters of election theatre and would muster a large body of horses and men, and march through town, hoping to prove strength and support for their candidate. In 1679 Sir John Bernard took 3,000 to 4,000 horse and foot into Huntingdon threatening to make the streets run with blood. In March 1685 1,000 men on horseback and 'many hundreds of foot' were mustered outside Leicester town before marching through it 'crying for Verney and Sherard'. The physical production of the burgess was matched discursively with metaphors of military action, Lord Cholmondeley describing a kinsman 'drawing off' his tenants to give their votes to another.¹²¹

Discursive production of a burgess included the making of lists in the form of a poll and post-Restoration elections tended to be conducted by a poll, rather than a 'view' or 'shout' which had sufficed beforehand.¹²² Making a list was not only making a voter by writing, but also identifying a voter and their vote. So in 1661 the corporation ordered that no names be recorded, but instead 'a dash under the name' of each candidate. This precedent was set forty year earlier when the

120 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 136-7.

121 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 143, 149, 150.

122 Hirst, *Representative?*, Introduction.

committee of elections and privileges noted that 'notice might be taken of them (the voters), to their prejudice'.¹²³ The absence of a written record of actual voting freed freemen from a patron's expectation of obedience and tended to preserve their independence and reduce 'interest' and the power of patronage.

The last step in making the burgess was the production of more writing, the election indenture. Even this was unstable and there were occasions when more than one result was returned to London. Grantham had its first and only known double return after the 1660 election. On 16 March 1660, just before dissolving itself, Parliament excluded, *inter alia*, those who had compounded for their delinquency, unless they had since shown 'good affection' toward Parliament. John Newton's nomination and creation as freeman in 1660 meant that he was eligible for being a candidate for burgess, however this statute would have put him at risk of being excluded from this nomination.¹²⁴

The corporation duly signed its indenture returning Thomas Skipwith and John Newton, but a second, competing, indenture was also returned to London, with Skipwith and William Ellys, the former member and current recorder of the town, returned. Newton did not take this intrusion lying down, and after the Convention Parliament met on 25 April, he appealed to the Committee for Privileges and Elections and a certificate of the election was drawn up by the alderman.¹²⁵ Newton was assisted by his old attorney friend Edward Bigland. There was a

123 LRO, GHB, f.346v; Plumb, 'Growth of the electorate', 97.

124 JHC, Vol. 7, 873-4. He would not have been certainly disqualified (Henning, *Commons*.)

125 LRO, MON7-11-50, 30 April, certificate by Grantham corporation of the election result. Henning, *Commons*, Grantham constituency.

suggestion that Newton was disqualified under the late act of Parliament but Bigland thought the alderman John Simpson, who had assisted Newton to become candidate, was 'very weak to bee induced by that for the Parliament must determine that and not the town that makes the choice'. Bigland was sure that 'there are those that envie this honor the towne hath soe frely given you and will oppose you to the uttmost'.¹²⁶ On 18 May the Commons approved of the committee's finding that John Newton had been elected.¹²⁷ There were no less than four double returns of indentures to the Parliament dealt with on that day, all from boroughs.

Evaluating the burgess

Standing for burgess was partly a matter of capital. Without capital a candidate could not stand. A member needed to have independent means in order to serve and spend time in London without making a living with their own hands and time. Members may have been paid until at least 1586, when Arthur Hall esquire sued the corporation for non-payment of parliamentary wages. There is no evidence that members after the Restoration were paid.¹²⁸ The costs of campaigning could be very high. At the 1673 by-election at King's Lynn assisted his son-in-law Robert Coke lending him £6,000 to secure the election. The debt persisted for thirty-five years costing £12,600 in interest over its life.¹²⁹ The cost to Michael Newton of his

126 GRO, D1844-C14-52, no date but April, Bigland to Newton.

127 JHC, Vol. 8, 35-36.

128 Street, *Notes*, 115.

129 Stirling, *Coke and his friends*, 144.

election at Beverley in 1722 was a more modest £250.¹³⁰

Gentry 'interest' required capital. Raising rents could lose votes, a Weymouth voter steadfastly refused to change his vote because his rent had been doubled to £4 a year. Interest could lead to a renegotiation of economic contracts on more favourable terms to the voter. When viscount Cholmondeley found his tenants were wavering he instructed his steward 'to intimate that all those that appear on my account shall hereafter have their expenses allowed them'. Interest could be used to maintain economic solidarity within the trading community against rivals, as Thomas Thynne's steward reminded him. The Anglican butcher fraternity did not complain to him about his buying from a Quaker butcher but they could whisper the 'unkindness' and he would lose their votes.¹³¹

Capital funded entertaining the voters with drink and feasts, or paying them bribes. Parliament had strict rules. Before the investigation into the 1678 by-election the commons was reminded (by reading out) of an order made 2 April 1677 concerning 'Bribery and drinking at Elections of Members to serve in Parliament', which prohibited the provision of 'any Meat or Drink' in excess of £10 to anyone who had a 'voice' after the election writ was issued, nor any 'Present, Gift, or Reward, or any Promise, Obligation, or Engagement'. In November 1701 Jack insisted on this law but capitulated to their demands to stand.¹³² Other candidates and their promoters, servants, stewards, friends and family could have

130 LRO, MON7-13-15, 10 April 1722, Jack Newton to Michael Newton. For £100 election costs see LRO, MON7-14-178, 9 August 1732.

131 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 150-1.

132 LRO, MON7-14-94 and 95.

widely differing attitudes to 'gaming' the electorate. Robert Fisher in November 1701 was happy to admit that 'wee could have gam'd many for 10 or 20 pound a man(.) and by drinkeing could have got .. many more(.)' Jack however took a more formal line which Fisher recognised:

'..But these are waies and meanes I know your scorn and are thought soe corrupt as to be abhorred by most of your Friends'. 'In burgessing ... there is soe much more trouble then you thinke it worth and soe much art in gameing people which I know you cannot be reconciled to'.¹³³

The bribery and entertainment scandals of these elections were not kept secret, indeed it seems to have been widely recognised, and observed. Robert Fisher was not the only one to notice, Richard Foster also noted the opposition's corrupt methods in the during the canvassing.¹³⁴ Such feasts were expected, so much so that their absence could lead to a town's ridicule by other neighbours. In 1721 townsmen in Rufford complained to George Saville's steward that they were being jeered at in public places because he had failed to arrange for the usual taverns to keep open house for them. There was certainly a sense that these treats, put on by stewards, where the party-goers ate the lord's venison, drank gallons of wine and were expected to drink to the lord and his candidate, directly led to a sense of obligation to him. Voters 'avowed by the great favours they constantly received from (Lord Weymouth) they were highly obliged to serve him in whatever way lay in their power'.¹³⁵ Jack's distaste for entertaining voters to get their votes was not shared by his son Michael.¹³⁶

133 LRO, MON7-12-107.

134 LRO, MON7-14-97, 21 November 1701, note on a receipt for rents.

135 Hainsworth, *Stewards*, 152, 156.

136 LRO, MON7-13-15.

Although candidates were expected to spend money on canvassing the corporation itself (or at least some part of it) was quite ready to spend money on a candidate's behalf. In April 1700 they set out to assist Jack Newton, though presumably on the understanding that he would recompense them. 'This may Occacon' they said 'Some Money to be Spent, but the necessity of the Case with some People do's require it.' Their attitude was a practical one, claiming that they 'wish (it) need not be done', and yet was necessary. They would pay the bribes quietly though, as it was illegal, so Newton could 'assure your Selfe Your real Friends will be as carefull in this matter as prudence and Interest will allow'.¹³⁷ He was unwilling to enter into the expense of burgessing before even knowing if there would be an election saying that

'to begin an expence before there is a colourable pretence is in my opinion the purchasing a reversionary title att too dear a rate'.¹³⁸

Local gentry were expected to offer gifts to the corporation on the election of a new alderman. In 1693 Jack Newton's steward reminded him that a gift to the new alderman Mr William 'Hascoat' (Haskard) was expected and an invitation to his inaugural feast, 'it is a custome amongst all the neighbouring gentry to doe something at this time', though by 1708 the reciprocal nature of relations and the ever-present possibility of downward economic mobility took Haskard to 'a very Lowe Condition in the World' and caused him to beg for £18 from Sir Jack Newton.¹³⁹ When Jack Newton referred to burgessing as the purchase of a

137 GRO, D1844-C10-72.

138 LRO, MON7-14-90, 23 May 1700, draft reply, Newton to ?Humphrey Newton.

139 LRO, MON7-12-82, 23 September 1693, Fleck to Newton; GRO, D1844-C10-145, 8 December 1708,

reversionary title (of land) at too high a price, he drew attention to the link between capital and names, and between the title of burgess and the title of land.

Conclusion

The application of complexity and deconstruction to the Newton letter-books demonstrate that the process of electing burgesses was not only hugely complicated, but also complex. The conditions for the election were already highly involved processes of nomination of freemen (who might be physicians, merchants, manufacturers, clergymen), corporation officers, the alderman or mayor, and the burgess candidates, whose nomination involved everyone from neighbouring gentry, knights of the shire, militia officers, the county sheriff, nobles, state office holders, stewards, servants, family and kin, and included the king and queen themselves from time to time. Canvassing involved any of the above petitioning anyone else, spending money for the benefit of the corporation, for entertaining, for bribery; it involved pre-engagements and recantations, speed, being present in the town, obtaining the assent of influential people, private agreements to stand, public agreements to support candidates, and withdrawals. Canvassing could imply walking the town, or writing private letters, getting candidates, servants, kin, freemen, or agents to walk the town. If it was complicated it was also complex – the product of social processes forming a complex adaptive system.

This network of nominations was dominated by kinship. The candidates were related to one another, albeit distantly. They were involved with one another

Haskard to Newton.

financially and in charitable trusts and lending to the corporation. In the 1670s John Newton acted as an intermediary to help his son-in-law Francis Stringer into the Grantham constituency.¹⁴⁰ Sir William Thorold, member in 1661 with John Newton was married to Anne Blythe, sister-in-law of Mary (Eyre) Blythe, John Newton's aunt by marriage. The son and daughter of the 1685 members John Thorold and James Harrington, married in 1683. Harrington's connections with Newton went back to the previous century with marriages into the Williams and Coney families, and earlier in the century to the Sacheverell family.¹⁴¹ Thomas Harrington's family was allied with the Brownlow, Thorold, Skipwith and Markham families, but his family interest in Grantham may extend to John Harrington esquire elected in 1472.¹⁴² His grandfather Thomas married Elizabeth Skipwith of Keythorpe whose grandfather Sir William Skipwith was great-great grandfather of Sir Thomas Skipwith the 1659 and 1660 member.¹⁴³ Harrington's uncle James married Elizabeth Markham daughter of Sir John Markham. The last of these Bridget Harrington was married to Sir Anthony Markham the grandfather of the 1678 member, and she was sister-in-law of Ann (Markham) Eyre, grandmother of Sir John Newton's wife Mary. This same Sir Anthony Markham was grandson of Sir Anthony Thorold the 1558 member. Sir John Markham of Cotham a Nottinghamshire member in the early 1500s and ancestor of the 1678 member was the grandson of Sir William Skipwith

140 LRO, MON7-14-24, no date, to Anthony Eyre or William More.

141 A. R. Maddison (ed.), *Lincolnshire pedigrees* (Harleian Society, 50, London, 1902), 461. Jane Newton married William Sacheverell of that family in 1676, (LRO, Heydour register).

142 R. Storr, *Storr's impartial narrative of the proceedings at the contested election at Grantham in 1820* (Grantham, 1820), 23.

143 Douglas Richardson, *Magna Carta ancestry: a study in colonial and medieval families*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City, 2011), 36.

of Ormesby, the ancestor of the 1660 Grantham member. Sir William Ellys member first in 1679 was seven times great grandson of Elizabeth Markham wife of Richard Stanhope of Rampton (d1432), and hence distant cousins of Thorold and Harrington. Robert Markham, Grantham member in 1678, was great-grandson of Sir Anthony Thorold the member in 1594, as well as great-great grandfather of Sir John Newton's wife Mary Eyre.¹⁴⁴ Markham was seven times great-grandson of Sir John de Markham, whose great-grandson by his eldest son Sir John Markham of Cotham married Alice Skipwith, daughter of Sir William sheriff of Lincolnshire.¹⁴⁵

Elizabeth Carr daughter of Sir Robert Carr, member for Lincolnshire between 1664 and 1681, was married to William Thorold son of the 1661 Grantham member. In August 1681 Sir Robert Carr and Sir John Newton became kinsmen when Sir Robert's grandson, Robert Scrope married Sir John's fourth daughter Lucy. However, there would be no kin alliances in Parliament, Sir John did not stand at the next election and Carr died in November 1682, his young son the following year.¹⁴⁶ In 1654, during the Interregnum, William Bury was Grantham member and married to Jane Ellys the niece of Sir Thomas Ellys the 1597 Lincolnshire member and cousin of William Ellys the member for Grantham 1656 and 1659.¹⁴⁷

Sir John Brownlow third baronet and Grantham member 1689-1697 was uncle of his namesake the 1722-1741 member. The Brownlows had Tudor alliances too. The first Sir John Brownlow's great aunt Elizabeth Sherard was niece to William

144 Charles Mosley (ed.), *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage* (Wilmington, 2003), vol. 3, 3896.

145 Maddison, *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*, Vol. 2.

146 Sir Robert's daughter Mary married Sir Adrian Scrope (1616-1667) a Royalist officer.

147 C. E. Gildersome-Dickinson, 'Sir William Bury, Knt.', *Notes and Queries*, Series eight, 4 (London, 1893), 36, 461-462.

Thorold of Harmeston who died around 1615, and Edward Saltmarsh a later relation of Sir John Newton the 1660-1681 member. In addition her husband, John Sherard's first wife Rose Sherard (a cousin) was sister-in-law of William Bury the father of William Bury the 1656 member, who failed to beat Sir John Newton in 1660.¹⁴⁸ The degree of closeness is illustrated in a trust deed of 1667 relating to a trust holding the Red Lion in Walkergate Street in which representatives of the families of Thorold, Markham, Newton, Harrington, are trustees, and representatives of the Blythe, Welby, Sanderson, Hurst and Parkins families, who were variously members for Grantham, kinsmen, freemen, creditors, and corporation office-holders.¹⁴⁹

Viewed from the perspective of complexity and post-structuralism it is evident that burgesses were produced discursively, physically and reflexively. Discursively the process of standing and being elected or not, was the product over a period of time of a complex network of nominations and competing nominations. The nominations for a particular election were not discrete and had no origin – they were made possible by earlier nominations, which in turn were the product of even earlier nominations. The charter which incorporated the Grantham corporation was not an origin and was silent on the right to send representatives. The first burgesses of the town are so ancient as to be lost to writing, the first freemen likewise. The alderman was made with a somewhat magical ritual involving a

148 Maddison, *Lincolnshire pedigrees*, Vol. 1, 213.

149 *London Gazette*, January 1839. No. 19695, 86, citing the deed.

cushion, and being seen by others. The charter demanded a perpetual succession of comburgesses and aldermen, each choosing the next. An argument can be made constitutionally that the sovereign or their royal prerogative is the origin, and Edward IV made the first freemen. This is still problematic, as the king himself was only the latest nominee of a chain of monarchical succession. The identity of the Grantham burgess was an economy, an endless chain of substitutions, of name for name, title for title, a remarkably deconstructive quality.

Naming a burgess was making a burgess, a strangely mystical activity attempting to bind an abstract representative (a narrative) with the body of the gentry men who stood as candidates. It was a social activity in which narratives of obligation, engagement, credit, reputation and interest were circulated. These narratives were frequently of a metaphorical martial nature. Charters were surrendered; candidates challenged; were defeated or won victory; espionage and message interception was a common problem; candidates entered or left the field. Names were both made and unmade. Aldermen had reversionary titles, lasting a year after which they became comburgesses again, or they were removed by parliament or the crown, or by dying. Comburgesses were lifetime titles, but they too were removed by parliament or the crown, or by the court for absence, age or being in prison. Unlike corporation officers a freeman could not be unmade a freeman, he could only stop being a freeman by dying, however it was hereditary and passed to his sons.

This discursive production in the narrative space, as a metaphor of a physical

act, was combined with actual physical acts with respect to the bodies of electors, physical threats and encouragements. Elections were partly theatre, sometimes martial theatre, the electors bodies were gathered together by stewards, marched into town, or in taverns to drink to the candidate, or locked into the schoolroom to vote. Physical control of the narrative space through physical control of marks was attempted. Writing was used in an attempt to fix and stabilise a process which was inherently unstable. The borough charter, election writs, the poll, lists of electors, lists of interests, orders to stewards and servants, letters between candidates and interested parties, royal commissions, privy council commissions, election indentures, and certificates of elections were all produced in the course of these elections in an attempt to influence them. Control of the writing was always one way of seeking to control the economy of nomination. Bertie took control of the writ in 1679, two indentures were issued in 1660 and sent to London via the sheriff, raising the question of authenticity. The minute books, deeds, mortgages, and charter was kept under three locks (the common hutch) in St. Wulfram's, or in a desk.¹⁵⁰ Interception was always considered a possibility, and guarded against. Robert Fisher in April 1700 and on other occasions was prepared for and took measures against his letters being intercepted and destroyed, the implication being that his opponents would attempt to disrupt communication between him and Jack Newton in London. 'On this day 7 night I put a Letter into the post house for you but your silence makes me suspect it was stopped'.¹⁵¹ Fisher again worried that

150 Street, *Grantham*, 119.

151 LRO, MON7-12-103.

his letters would be intercepted and thrown away, or at best delayed. He advised sending them to his friend Mr Ralph Clarke, the apothecary, 'underneath a cover, otherwise they may happen not to be given me in time'. Later he thought a letter was 'in danger of being broke open'.¹⁵² If interest was a legitimate 'coming between' then interception was an illegitimate 'taking from between'.¹⁵³

All this was played out against a constant ground-bass of tacit acceptance and copying – reflexive production. This reflexive production was evident when freemen participated in the process of campaigning and electing rather than staying away; when women did not participate and the law did not forbid it; when women did participate and gentry officials styled it 'a matter verie unworthie of any gentleman and most dishonourable ... to make use of their voices although they might in law have been allowed'; when voters accepted bribes, offers of patronage, or entertainments; when neighbours jeered their neighbours because they were not being entertained.¹⁵⁴ In these activities the franchise of Grantham and the rest of the population participated in the reflexive production of the burgess.

The burgess was produced by the same social networks which produced the Newtons' gentility, their real estate, their precious metal as currency, and their ability to lend and borrow.

152 GRO, D1844-C10-121, November 1701.

153 Intercept from Lat. *inter* + *capere*, to take or catch.

154 See Hirst, *Representative?*, Introduction. Rate-paying women appear to have lost the vote in the 1832 Reform Act, which positively named qualified *men* to have it.

Conclusion

Complexity as a world view cannot be ignored. Any interpretation of history which intends to keep its feet firmly in the material world will always be an interpretation of a complex material space. Just as natural scientists, mathematicians and engineers have had to radically rethink their founding principals, complexity calls historians to do the same. The question arises though, how has the theoretical approach taken in this case study generated answers to the questions posed? Put another way, what has complexity and deconstruction applied to the case study added to our interpretation of capital and gentility? The conclusions generated by complexity are ones which privilege instability and play; which emphasise discontinuity, dynamic flow, variation, uncertainty and social networks. These concepts are not absent from the work of some social historians, but complexity gives us the possibility of a formal and consistent model of those features. I have argued that complexity coupled with post-structuralism has produced some fresh ways of viewing capital and identity, in particular that they are the product of dynamic iterated social processes (physical, discursive and reflexive) in a complex social network. I have argued that there is a real-world materiality to deconstructive concepts, and that abstract ideas like identity have a materiality, expressed in terms of information spread diffusely through a social network. Complexity represents a challenge to the notion that there are categories of anything, in particular, a social category of gentry. The analysis of complexity in the Newton's social network has also offered a concept of reflexive production of both capital and identity. This

systemic form of production emerging from the imperative to copy, reproduce and to cooperate, promotes continuity over change, and is very reminiscent of Gramsci's cultural hegemony. However, instead of being grounded on a proposed conspiracy of elites, complexity points towards everyone being implicated.

Capital and identity

Social individuals had a knowledge of each others' worth or their wealth, either as income, or a capital sum or capital goods. Alex Shepard has demonstrated that witnesses in English courts between 1550 and 1728 had a keen sense of their own and others worth and taken together they enunciated 'an intricate hierarchy based on sophisticated forms of social reckoning that were articulated throughout the social scale'. For the majority of English men and women their measure of status was the moveable goods in their possession which provided their status, goods ranging from 'livestock to linens, tools to trading goods, tables to tubs, clothes to cushions. Such items were repositories of wealth and the security for the credit on which the bulk of early modern exchange depended'.¹

For the tenants, stewards and attorneys of Lincolnshire their worth was measured (in social exchanges evidenced by the letter-books) less by goods and more by annual income, or a capital sum. Narratives of an individual's worth were an element of their identity, and socially exchanged and publicly-known, but the worth itself was contested, and rarely agreed. Searches for spouses, which were

1 Alex Shepard, *Accounting for oneself: Worth, status and the social order in early modern England* (Oxford, 2015).

explored further in chapter three, featured an assessment of worth, which tended to be income for men, and a capital sum for women. This worth was central to the assessment made by family and kin of the validity of the marriage, and was considered alongside values placed on alliances, filial duty, and the couples' liking for one another. Searches for tenants called on similar considerations and exchanges of worth, and like spouses, they featured personal character traits.

The accumulation of capital was partly a function of naming and partly a function of kinship and capital networks. Capital accumulation came by naming a spouse, or naming an heir. Naming a spouse was made possible by kinship networks, and it brought access to both capital and strengthened the existing kinship network, and sometimes expanded it. Being named or becoming an heir or heiress brought further access to capital, there are no example of heirs or heiresses who were not kindred. The strict settlement tended to concentrate estates in fewer hands, and produced a heyday of landed aristocracy in England in the late eighteenth-century. However, in the case of the Newton family this was not a factor, because from William Newton's death in 1594 until the death of John Newton viscount Coningsby in 1733 there was only ever one surviving son.²

Capital and identity had a mutually dependent reciprocal relationship. To be successfully nominated as burgess for Grantham a man required sufficient capital to provide the income (without labour) that was a necessary qualification of being

2 H. J. Habakkuk, 'English land ownership, 1680-1740', *EcHR*, 10:1 (1939-40), pp. 2-17. For a challenge to the view see Lloyd Bonfield, *Marriage settlements, 1601-1740: the adoption of the strict settlement* (Cambridge, 1983), chapter 6.

nominated. The corporation did not pay wages. It was necessary to pay bribes, charitable donations to the town, hospitality, and beer in the canvassing of freemen before an election. Robert Coke, the grandfather of Jack Newton's son-in-law spent £6,000 being elected burgess of King's Lynn in 1673, a sum which was borrowed from his father-in-law Thomas Osborne, and which took thirty-five years to repay.³ Even becoming a freeman required money to pay the fine, if the nominee was not a freeman's son. Paupers were not made freemen, and those who were free but became poor were frequently disenfranchised.⁴

There are indications that there were reciprocal positive feedback loops between capital, gentility, credit, finance cost and reputation, generated by the dynamic complex system. One of the important effects of lending is that it increased the capital of the borrower. The capital of the lender remains the same, unless and until they accumulate interest, the asset of a precious metal coins is replaced by a promise to repay which is accounted an asset of equal value. The creditor accumulates further capital to the extent that they do not lose the principal and spend the income. The generous terms of the Tontine for example nearly doubled the investment over the first ten years at seven per cent from £100 to £194 16s, and fourfold over the next ten years at at seven per cent to £383 6s.

Good credit reduced the costs of borrowing. A high ranking social individual such as Lord James Cavendish could borrow at four per cent and lend to the

3 Stirling, *Coke and his friends*, 144.

4 See chapter seven for the relationship between capital and canvassing.

Crown at seven to ten per cent. Good kin networks made money more readily available to borrow (to refinance or for first time), and provided a reliable source of borrowers to lend to. Lending gold increased gold, capital bred capital, upward economic mobility was possible. This could reverse catastrophically and become a negative feedback loop, such that downward mobility could be fast and brutal.⁵

Capital in the form of gold could be used to purchase a crown office or military commission, which would provide them with status and an income. Gold could fund the expenses of a legal education at university and the Inns of Court, or to purchase a clergy living or to purchase an apprenticeship and fund a business with stock and premises. All of these investments of moveable capital as money were made by the Newton family and their kin.

Capital made the building of almshouses possible, those built with the money of Richard Hickson at Barkston and William Welby in 1653 at Denton. The right to name a rector to a benefice was bought and sold as property, bringing with it the right to nominate a rector to an income for life. The need to have tenants to farm surplus real estate, and thus give it value, gave lords a power to nominate tenants, as well as stewards and bailiffs to manage them. The relationship between capital and the social activity of naming was therefore a strong one.

The accretion of identities with a social status within a narrative hierarchy, such as gentleman, esquire, baronet, or knight of the Bath tended to be further accretion, because of the reflexive and iterative production of capital narratives and identities. Hence the title of gentlemen tends to generate wealth, which generates higher

5 Muldrew, *Obligation*, chapter 9.

status titles, which generates more wealth. This is one paradigm of social mobility, and describes the lives of the Newton family. The social production of identities and names was intimately bound up with the production of capital, because they were products of the same biological and social processes. Both identities and capital were economies in the narrative information space – fractal, dynamic, contested, unstable and contingent, and both social productions were perpetually mediated, distanced, from the physical bodies and resources of which they were imagined to magically inhere.

Power

Why consider power at all? The gentry, along with gender, is one of the most political of social categories, and a deconstructive and complex interpretation of it has political implications.⁶ It could be argued that the study of power is intrinsic to all historical interpretation, just more or less overt or obvious.⁷ The argument that capital and identity are social productions must inevitably be expressed in terms of social relations and the study of historical social relations has at its heart some conceptualisation of power or another. Secondly, power as an organising concept rests at the heart of most of the literature concerning the gentry. The assertion of a class or socio-economic group of gentry on the one hand and social and political power on the other have always gone together. Gentry power has been argued to be political power which either flowed from land, or office, one leading to the other

6 For a post-structuralist interpretation of gender generating a more radical feminist politics see Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the politics of history*.

7 Simon Gunn, *History and cultural theory* (London, 2006), 83.

but with differing causality. On the face of it the Newtons grew from small-time farming obscurity to wealth and political power as burgesses of towns in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, courtiers, and county deputy-Lieutenants, seeming to confirm one or other argument. Interpretations of what power is or was, how it worked, and how it related to historical change are wide and narratively and logically unsatisfactory, and there is no widespread agreement in approach, focus, lexicon or conclusion. Lawrence Stone, for example, claimed that 'power is a difficult concept to handle ... (but it) ... is fairly easy to define, as the capacity to exercise one's will over the majority of others in the community'.⁸

However, I will argue that this conceptualisation of power is too reified, clumsy and lacking in detail to be useful as an analytical device. Power was not a thing, nor was it something done by someone to someone else, but it was rather a production of the early modern English complex social network, an activity and an experience of all elements of that network. It has been argued that the body is 'central to an understanding of power relations', and that although Foucaultian historiography has lost sight of the materiality of the body and remains 'oddly absent' from it the body nevertheless 'functions as the subject and the object of power, as both representation and embodiment'. Gunn asks for a refocus which 'encourages an attention to the micro-physics of power and responds to the 'radical insistence' of social historians to 'rooting its analysis in the material ... the dynamics of everyday life'.⁹ Any conceptualisation of power must be consistent with complex

⁸ Stone, *Open Elite*, 9.

⁹ Simon Gunn, 'From Hegemony to Governmentality: Changing Conceptions of Power in Social History', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2006), 717-718.

materialism, and therefore the socialised body must be the source and the site of power. The body was the local micro-source of the complex social network with its five systemic imperatives, and accordingly the experience of power was the experience of the diminution of those somatic imperatives, which were necessary for the functioning of the complex adaptive system.

Power flowed therefore not from real estate, nor from gold, which are inert, but from the everyday production of capital and gentility, the offers of physical power, symbols and narratives, and the reflexively-copied and reproduced activities of every social individual. Everyone was implicated. It was the Grantham freeman middling sort, Grantham paupers, Barkston almsmen, parishioners, inhabitants of neighbouring parishes, tenants, freeholders, corporation officers, parish officers, incumbent clergy, estate and house stewards, servants, attorneys, tradesmen, carriers, drovers, family and kin, who articulated capital and identity, and in doing so produced the experience of power.

Power gradually morphed from a predominantly physical activity in the time up to the medieval period into metaphors of physical power. By the later seventeenth century it was no longer the socialised body which was attacked, it was the narrative body – their honour, name or reputation. The Jacobean edict to push trials by battle, which is what duels were, into the legal sphere just before the civil war, turned gentility into a trial of words. Power became less physical and more discursive. A chiasmus formed from the decline of physical power and the concurrent rise of discursive power.

The category problem

There was a view that gentility was innate and that this natural gentility was evidenced by outward shows in the form of tokens, symbols or other marks. These outward tokens indicated or pointed to the prior gentility and were therefore signs of it. The gentleman made the sign, the sign did not make the gentleman. This was a strong ontology which held that qualified observers could interpret the evidences (signs) to discover the reality of whether the man in question was a gentleman or a plebeian. It was a necessary but unstated axiom of this ontology that the sign did not re-present the inalienable gentility of the man but was his un-mediated gentility, and it was because of this unbreakable bond that the privileged interpreter could be sure of their interpretation. If there was a gap, some mediacy between one and the other, there was scope for opinion, for human subjectivity, and for error.

These axiomatic and unstated beliefs were so obvious to them as to be common sense and not necessary to dwell on or explain. It is rare to find them stated as bluntly as they are by Henry Peacham, who in discussing the gentility of nobles, says that nobility was 'inherent and natural', honours and titles could be 'externally conferred' are 'but as apparel'. Nobility (and therefore gentility) 'hangeth not upon the ayery esteeme of vulgar opinion, but is of itself essential and absolute'.¹⁰ Where gentility was said to be created or made by man rather than birth it was a creation by the highest temporal authority, the sovereign ('the fount of all honours').¹¹

¹⁰ Peacham, *The compleat gentleman*, 3.

¹¹ Smyth, *De Republica Anglorum*.

From the strong ontological perspective (for example the herald or an objectivist historian) there were pretended gentlemen or pseudo-gentlemen – those who mistakenly claimed gentility, or who lied they had it. There were those whose status had been 'deliberately or unwittingly ... elevated or downgraded' by clerks, implying a true but misrepresented underlying status.¹²

Some have taken a real politick view of gentility, acknowledging that it was perhaps a category of praxis rather than metaphysics. John Selden acknowledged that a gentleman was 'hard with us to define', and in England it was contingent and depended on which venue one was in. This weaker form of categorisation is based on institutional use rather than innate property or temporal qualification.¹³ Harrison (and Sir Thomas Smyth) famously said that gentlemen in England were 'made good cheap'. This was a reference to the ease of acquiring the status by becoming a lawyer, having a university education, professing the liberal sciences, or living 'idly and without manual labour' and being able to pay for the 'port, charge and countenance of a gentleman': for such a man would be 'taken for a gentleman'.¹⁴ Despite Harrison and Smyth's confidence, none of these criteria figure at all largely in the Newton experience nor the chivalry depositions.

For Tawney the category was 'ragged at the edges' but a 'wise and comprehensive tautology' defined a gentleman – he was a 'man who spends his

12 Cressy, 'Describing the social order', 36; Everitt, *Change in the provinces*; Stone, *Open elite?*.

13 Selden, *Table talk*, 60.

14 Smyth, *De Republica Anglorum*, 26.

money as a gentleman' reverting, as do so many, to Smyth.¹⁵ Some historians found that gentlemen were not defined by capital or qualification or birthright, but by peer-group acceptance. In fifteenth-century gentry culture 'one became gentle by a consensus of recognition among one's supposed peers', and because of the 'vagueness of the category' the exact identity of any individual as a gentleman/woman remained haphazard throughout the fifteenth century.¹⁶ Beckett admitted that the 'social factors which defined aristocracy were inevitably vague', and 'amorphous', which he attributed to the 'absence of legal restraints', and concluded that 'peer-group acceptance was the only real test of belonging.'¹⁷ Others argue that 'the gentry were that body of men and women whose gentility was acknowledged by others'.¹⁸ The key conceit of these conceptualisations is that they both rely on the strong ontology, seeking and expecting to find a real gentleman, the object of study, with real boundaries that isolate the gentleman from others, but continually return to a discourse of raggedness, fluidity, and permeability: the margin was real but fuzzy. There was, they maintain, a hard certain core of the group but an uncertain boundary, it was the marginal gentleman who was most problematic. Heal and Holmes for example suggest that 'the difficulty of placing individuals, and the almost total fluidity of marginal classifications, does not mean that this boundary was not real' (my emphasis).¹⁹ The problem however, once

15 Tawney, 'Rise of the gentry', 4.

16 P. C. Maddern, 'Gentility' in R. L. Radulescu and A. Truelove (eds.), *Gentry culture in late medieval England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 18-34; for a similar position see Mervyn James, *English politics and the concept of honour 1485-1642* (Past and Present Society, 1978), esp. pp. 22-27.

17 Beckett, *The Aristocracy*, 18, 21, 39, 40.

18 Heal and Holmes, *The gentry*, 19.

19 Heal and Holmes, *The gentry*, 16. Gregory King cited gentlemen and reputed gentlemen.

raised is never put to rest. The rhetorical gesture that follows was to press on anyway, and forget the play of meanings that generates both the 'core' and the 'margin'.

Was there a gentry class? It has been argued that the gentry were the only class, as they were the only group to have wealth and power.²⁰ It is a basic tenet of social theory that there are social groups, such as the gentry, and that it was composed of people (now dead) who had common or collective attributes, interests, properties or qualities. There is a peculiar circularity to this project. The circularity is born of the premise that there is a gentry class. Contemporaries spoke of the gentry, submissions were made to the gentry as a whole, so – the argument goes – there must be a gentry, and its continued use as an organising principle is 'its persistence as a living social term'.²¹ Having presupposed the social group on the basis of its contemporary use the enquirer examines lists of visitations for armigerous families, hearth tax returns for large houses, chancery returns for lists of justices on the local bench, county histories and perambulations and so on to find who was listed at the time. Having identified the members of the group and perhaps counted them, the task then becomes to identify and describe the attributes and qualities that make them members.

Despite the apparent clarity of this approach the boundary enclosing the class has continued to evade historians. Susan Wright noted that in the fifteenth century

20 Peter Laslett, *The world we have lost* (London, 1965), chapter 2.

21 Peter Coss, 'The formation of the English gentry', *Past and Present*, 147 (May 1995), pp. 38-64; pp. 39, 40.

the line between yeoman and gentleman remained blurred and men in courts of law could be both yeomen and gentlemen at different times. Acheson wrote that the title gentleman was adopted 'haltingly and with some confusion' as the Pardon Rolls reveal.²² Clarke spoke of 'occasional gentry' who seemed to act as gentry only in intermittent contacts with the wider world.²³ The difficulties of finding or determining the boundary of these categories is echoed in attempts to classify individuals when preparing a database to organise a mass of documents. Susan Whyman classified the Verney network, but arguing that status was 'extremely fluid' in the 1660 to 1720 period she accepted a certain 'overlap in most categories'.²⁴ The proposed gentry group has also been segregated internally. Yet the attempts to divide the group have encountered the same problems that frustrated the attempt to divide the gentry from the commons. The peerage was not clear-cut in the late middle ages. Even the concept of baronage, the lowest level of the upper tier, was 'fluctuating and unclear'.²⁵ For Tawney 'inconsistencies were inevitable in speaking of a class freely recruited from below, in a society where the lines of social stratification were drawn, not, as in most parts of the Continent, by birth and legal privilege, but by gradations of wealth'.²⁶ Siding with this open elite concept, Beckett thought that

22 Acheson, *A gentry community*, 34.

23 Clarke, *English provincial society*, 126.

24 Whyman, *Sociability and power*, 181.

25 Coss, 'Formation', 4, 42. For blurred boundary between parochial versus county elite see Heal and Holmes, *The gentry*, ix, 6-19; For boundary with no rigid barrier see Perez Zagorin, *The court and the country: the beginning of the English revolution* (London, 1969); Perez Zagorin, 'The Court and the Country: a note on political terminology in the earlier seventeenth century', *Economic History Review*, 77 (1962), pp. 306-311; See also Lawrence Stone, *The causes of the English revolution, 1529-1642* (London, 1972); For the argument that gentry court patentees with local powers clashed with local gentry see A. Hassell Smith, *County and court: government and politics in Norfolk, 1558-1603* (Oxford, 1974); For the argument that this gentry divide persisted into the age of Whig and Tory see Dennis Rubini, *Court and country 1688-1702* (London, 1967).

26 Tawney, 'The rise of the gentry', 3.

'entry and promotion were an extraordinarily complicated process which makes it extremely difficult to decide who belongs to the group at a given time'. By this logic the category problem is blamed on mobility, the problem of not knowing how many are in the group arises from the movement of people into and out of the group, it is a practical counting problem not an ontological problem.²⁷

These strong and fuzzy ontologies of gentility are in opposition to a complex and deconstructive ontology. The expected diversity of the narrative space is the product of the iterative exchanges of narratives with constant novation. Narratives of gentility which are found in the record should, therefore, be in conflict with one another, be diverse, heterogeneous and not uniform, coherent, or homogeneous. The pretended or pseudo-gentleman was a fake, and all gentlemen were fakes, made socially. As we too live in a complex system historians themselves are implicated in the social production of gentility. The problem with gentry as an organising category is that the threshold which separated gentry from the common people, was not a clear line, nor a fuzzy one, nor a permeable membrane permitting or required by social mobility, it was fundamentally infinite and fractal, or put another way (for the purposes of interpretation) it was unavailable.²⁸

Stability and continuity: gentry longevity

F. W. Brooks pertinently asked "how is it that so many county families survived the financial troubles of the war, loans to the crown, destruction of property, army

27 Beckett, *Aristocracy*, 41.

28 Russell Newton, 'Towards an economy of identity: why fractals make a gentleman nervous', read at Social Relations in British History workshop, UEA, 25 April 2012.

assessments, fines for compounding and so on, and yet we find them comfortably established in the eighteenth century and some are still with us to-day?'.²⁹ Everitt noted that the 'metamorphosis' of English society under the Tudors and Stewarts was spread over two or three generations or more and Beckett noted that 'magical transitions from plough-boy to duke simply could not take place within a single generation'.³⁰ Despite this slow change and a flow into and out of the group historians have found that it was nonetheless a very stable category and highly adaptable to social, political and economic change.³¹ This begs the question – why was it so?

The life of gentry families such as the Townshends and Newdigates before the civil war is exceedingly similar to the life of the Newton family after it.³² Like other families their estates remained in the female line until the 1920s. Familial bonds at the family level and marriage have been suggested as overriding factors. Christopher Durston found the basic nuclear family surviving the civil war. The war, far from weakening this most basic of institutions, served in some cases to strengthen it, as family and kin stuck together through the bad times. Permanent fissures between relations did not frequently persist, instead family bonds proved stronger than ideological rifts.³³ Gentry families exhibited a 'robust culture' which made them 'remarkably resilient in a fluid and litigious society'. Part of this

29 F. W. Brooks, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 22 (1971), pp. 151-152.

30 Everitt, 'Social mobility', 72; Beckett, *Aristocracy*, Introduction.

31 Heal and Holmes, *The gentry*.

32 Larminie, *Wealth, kinship and culture*; Whyman, *Sociability and power*; Linda Campbell, *Sir Roger Townshend and his family: a study of gentry life in early seventeenth century Norfolk*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, (East Anglia, 1990).

33 Christopher Durston, *The family in the English revolution* (Oxford, 1989), 7.

resilience was attributed to women who were 'prominent in the socially and geographically wide networks of kinship, friendship and patronage which underpinned both public and family life', and it was their persistence in maintaining these ties that contributed to the families' survival. Mutual cooperating of all family members helped to weather the vicissitudes which followed marriage negotiations and the complex financial provisions of settlements and wills.³⁴ The Verneys lasted well and this was attributed to the Verneys internalizing family values of a strong dynastic vision, which was why they retained power. Their strength partly lay in the 'silent, neatly beribboned stacks of documents placed in the quiet privacy of their muniment rooms'. After the civil war period 'the construction of an ordered family memory' was highly significant to them.³⁵ The concern for family memory and inheritance was strong. Humphrey Newton, an early Tudor Cheshire gentleman steward, hands-on demesne landlord and erstwhile poet (unrelated to the Lincolnshire Newtons) recorded his genealogy and noted his coat armour – not for status but for the 'vital concern of landholding... the focus was squarely on inheritance'. Economic mobility came partly from land improvement and acquisition (which he said had been lost by earlier ancestors), but this capital expenditure added little to his income, whilst a marriage did.³⁶

Studies of the early modern family became a sub-discipline of social history with a focus on gentry families, occasioned by the extent of their records.³⁷ It grew out

34 Larminie, *Wealth, kinship and culture*. The archive extends to around 400 letters, about one quarter of the Newton archive.

35 Susan Whyman, *Sociability and power*, 179. For another view of this massive family archive see Miriam Slater, *Family life in the seventeenth century: the Verneys of Claydon House* (London, 1984).

36 Deborah Youngs, *Humphrey Newton (1466-1536): An early Tudor gentleman* (Chippenham, 2008), 39.

37 Lois G. Schwoerer, review of Slater (1984) and Houlbrooke (1984), *Albion*, 17:2 (Summer 1985), pp.

of a concern to understand how the gentry not only kept their estates but appeared to expand them into the eighteenth-century. Again it was landownership of the gentry as a socio-economic group which was the mainspring of the desire to understand them. Noting that it was marriage, as much as improvement, which seemed to be the driver of estate expansion Habakkuk examined marriage settlements, and found that grooms' families were promising less to brides in widowhood, and demanding they brought larger portions into the marriage, and married women with larger portions. In this way estates grew larger. In doing so he was one of the first to recognise the importance of gentlewomen in economic history.³⁸ Family ties within the Newton network have been beyond the scope of this thesis, however the letter-books are replete with family correspondence, open to further enquiry.

Even longer stability can be imagined if upward and downward mobility are considered. The account of apparent upward mobility and stability of the Newtons between 1530 and the 1900s may belie a rather different trajectory. There is good but circumstantial evidence of downward mobility followed by upward mobility. The ancestor of John Newton the husbandman is likely to have been a wealthy and well-connected Boston merchant, Richard de Neuton who flourished in the late fourteenth-century. He was controller of customs at Boston in 1364, and probably

201-207.

38 H. J. Habakkuk, 'English land ownership, 1680-1740', *Economic History Review*, 10 (1939-40), pp. 2-17; See also H. J. Habakkuk, 'Marriage settlements in the eighteenth-century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series 32, (1950), pp. 15-30; For a long restatement of his basic thesis see *Marriage, debt and the estates system: English landownership 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994); For a discussion of the debate these articles began see J. V. Beckett, 'English Landownership in the Later Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Debate and the Problems', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 30:4 (Nov., 1977), pp. 567-581; For the economic importance of non-gentle women in work see Alice Clark, *Working life of women in the seventeenth-century* (London, 1919, reprinted 1982).

the collector of subsidy at Boston 1372-73. He was a brother of the Guild of Corpus Christi in Boston, dead by 1380, and evidently related to Alice, wife of John de Rochford, who helped to execute Richard's will.³⁹ The lords, knights and gentry men who were members of the Guild of Corpus Christi were held significant land in the parishes immediately around Grantham. Richard de Neuton's likely descendant was Simon de Neuton 'franklin'. In 1451 de Neuton was also appointed controller of customs at Boston, in 1453 he was a feoffee of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, and in 1455 a merchant of the Staple at Calais, dying in 1461, with land around Grantham, including Careby.⁴⁰ One Robert Newton purchased and sold land in Careby and John Porter of Tattershall, enfeoffed John Newton the yeoman of Westby and Bitchfield, whose son Michael sold a Westby farm to John Newton, the husbandman.

It was the complex network of people producing capital and gentry identity itself which created gentry continuity and resilience to change, family bonds, marriage and strict settlements were only part of the phenomenon. As a complex adaptive system, their network had a self-restoring macro-level quality that is key to understanding the stability and continuity of gentry families in the face of the undoubted systemic political, religious and monetary turbulence of the seventeenth-century.

39 J.S. Roskell, L. Clark, C. Rawcliffe (eds.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1386-1421* (1993).

40 CPR, 14 October 1451, 504; TNA, C143/451/38; Wedgwood and Holt, *History of Parliament*; TNA, CP25/1/145/160, number 14, Feet of fines; LRO, Massingberd/29/2; A. 9534 cited in *A descriptive catalogue of ancient deeds*, Vol. 4, H. C. Maxwell Lyte (ed.), (1902), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64410>; TNA, C140/1/2 Mar 1461/62, IPM; LRO, Holywell 1/23 (1529), 1/24 (1530), 1/31 and 1/33 (1540), 1/39 and 1/40 (1541).

Why was gentle status so important?

This 'key social grouping' had an authority and 'claims to rulership' and power that came with that.⁴¹ Gentlemen 'seem to be born to defend their country in time of war and govern it in time of peace'.⁴² This reference to the medieval three estates (those who pray, those who fight and those who labour) indicated a view that the gentry were governors and soldiers. They had a civil and a martial aspect. The martial aspect is reflected in the continuous recall of the narrative that a gentleman was a bearer of arms, both literally in the form of weapons and symbolically in the form of coat armour. Gentleman alone were allowed 'the usual and ordinary liberties (which all gentleman enjoy as their birth right) to weare swords and daggers' in public spaces.⁴³ This allowed trial by battle, which was what a duel in effect was, and was confined to the gentry, so that no two yeoman could fight it out. However, a gentleman could draw a sword on a yeoman, and threaten him, if he argued that he was provoked. The 'functional identity' of the knight had largely eroded by Sir John Newton's time.⁴⁴ England had become demilitarised, the last king to die in battle was in 1485, the military occupation by William of Normandy had morphed into civil state: bishops were no longer soldiers: nobles did not have private armies; castles were not fortifications; manor houses were not defended; and cities did not have usable defensive walls.⁴⁵ The gentleman was a reliquary of

41 Heal and Holmes, *The gentry*, Introduction.

42 Chamberlyne, *Present state*, 345.

43 Proclamation of James I. *Edict and severe censure against private combats* (1614).

44 Wrightson, 'Estates, degrees, and sorts', 37.

45 The brief re-militarisation of England during the civil war was perhaps the death-rattle of this process.

medieval flight to violence, a sometimes warlike living repository of physical power. In him lay the vestiges of power by violence, force, fear and coercion. The chivalry depositions are full of violence, committed not by felons, cut-purses and highwaymen, but by gentlemen and esquires, against other gentry and against their inferiors. Physical power or its threat is persuasive and confers an advantage not shared by the non-gentle.

There were other privileges from being gentle; there was a view that the gentry should be preferred in fees, honours, offices and other 'dignities of command and government, before the common people'. Only they should be admitted near to the king, and they should be given credit 'before any of the inferior sort'. They should have more favourable punishment, he should have the upper hand in sittings, meetings and salutations, hunt and hawk freely without control in all places, and eat the 'beste and daintiest meate that the place affordeth', and wear whatever gold, jewels and clothes of whatever fashion they pleased.⁴⁶

Gentlemen were said to be separated off from the remainder. Gentlemen were 'raised to an eminency, above the multitude'. Gentlemen were the 'threshold of nobility' even if they were the 'lowest class of the lesser nobility in England'. They served the social function of 'keeping a middle rank' between the nobility and 'the common people', even though the gentry were a 'lesser (or lower) Nobility'.⁴⁷ According to Edmondson, arms were a mark of this separation, and were:

'hereditary tokens whereby families of ancient and worthy descent ... separated and

46 Peacham, *Compleat Gentleman*, 13-14.

47 Selden, *Titles of honour*, 706; Sir Henry Spelman, (1626) cited in A. Smythe-Palmer, *The ideal of a gentleman* (London, 1908), 14; Guy Miege, *The new state of England*.

known from the ignoble and common rank of people, who are not entitled to use such badges of honour and respect'.⁴⁸

Gentility enjoyed honour and respect, being worthy, whilst the differentiated commons did not, being ignoble and ordinary. This difference conferred advantages.

Gentleman status made success in court easier (at least in the honour court), both because of their financial means, which meant that imprisonment did not necessarily cause more financial difficulties, and because the honour court would always favour the gentleman over the plebeian. Sometimes commoners were made examples of by harsh exemplary punishments, and a gentleman's word was worth more than a commoner's. The honour court could be used to get the upper hand in disputes which were unrelated to gentility. Only a gentleman could begin such suits, and his chances of success were high, and the costs to his opponent enormous. George Glanville, one-time 'steward and agent' for fourteen years to Sir Thomas Fanshawe, gave bonds on his behalf in return for an annuity of £10. His son Thomas Fanshawe failed to release Glanville from the bonds or pay the annuity for five years. Glanville's understandable frustration with the son spilled over into mild words, calling Fanshawe a 'knave and a rascall', which were punished in the honour court at a cost of over six years of his annuity.⁴⁹ Suits were expensive. Some admitted their means left them 'in noe way able to contend in law' with a

48 Edmondson, *Complete body*, 1.

49 HCCD, Case 202, February 1638, Fanshawe v Glanville. Sir Thomas Fanshawe was indebted to the three daughters of Henry the first earl of Dover, he was great-grandfather of Abigail Heveningham who married Jack Newton; TNA, Royalist Composition Papers, (II. 35, 687), cited in John Gough Nichols, *The Herald and Genealogist*, Vol 4, (London, 1867), 144.

knight, and those that bragged they had 'four hundred pounds readie in the house' tended to lose anyway.⁵⁰ Some fines were very high and considered excessive, at the newly-recalled Long Parliament Edward Hyde complained and two Suffolk clothiers petitioned against their treatment, arguing ruination.⁵¹ Parishioners were aware of the risks to litigants from the court, Thomas Glapthorne warned his friend to recant his angry words to Thomas Billiard in 1637 'for that Robinson knew not in what danger he had come into'.⁵² In court the poor were restricted by the double bind of bad credit in money and bad credit in trust. Burrish, Wales and Mercer had been 'servants, labourers or workmen' to the Hobarts. All three were 'verie poore men of small credit or reputation', echoing this sentiment two female witnesses were 'poore beggarly people of noe credit or reputation'. The gentleman on the other hand was presented as a man of good credit, words which were allied with honest, civil, orderly, and of good life, good estimation, esteem, and honour.⁵³

Good credit extended beyond credibility to good financial credit. Narratives of gentility included narratives of good reputation and credit which give a social individual with a gentry identity a market and commercial advantage. Gentlemen were very jealous of their reputation and challenges to that gentility on the basis that they were liars (giving the lie) was a common cause of resort to the chivalry court. Libelling a gentleman was thought to destroy credit. Jervays Wood interceded in an argument in a shop near St. Paul's in London urging John Travers

50 See HCCD, Case 564, Rodes v Slater.

51 HCCD, Case 684, June 1638, Warner v Lynch, Snelling, Wilkes, Hayward.

52 HCCD, Case 45, Billiard v Robinson.

53 HCCD, Case 299, Hobart and Hobart v Mickelborough; Case 318, Hungerford v Broad. For gentle credit see Case 337, Jones v Wynn.

not to stab a tapster, after which Travers posted a libel in the church calling him a coward 'to the utter losse of the petitioner's credit and reputation being borne and bredd a gent'.⁵⁴ Numerous cases in the chivalry court revolved around an allegation of lying, or 'giving the lie'. A kinsman of John Newton Maurice Bawde was told by Henry Dawson that 'he did lie and that he could not speak one true word unlesse itt cam out of his mouthe by chance, and that he was a base, shitten, stinckinge gentleman'.⁵⁵ A gentleman was proud of his word as his bond, by the first decade of the twentieth-century it had become 'dictum meum pactum' at the London Stock Exchange.⁵⁶ Social status led to a perception that a high social status individual was a better risk because they had more to lose, and further to fall by defaulting and losing their reputation.

As a gentleman courtier it was possible to claim protections from creditors, or otherwise gain an advantage over an opponent. Royal servants such as John Newton in his capacity as a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in Extraordinary so routinely used this royal protection 'to obstruct the due course of law' 'to the grievance of many of (the King's) ... good subjects' that an Order in Council was issued in 1673 disabling them from doing so.⁵⁷ John Newton also, as we saw, successfully used his parliamentary privilege to obstruct the legal action of Francis Creswick, and used his influence locally to keep him imprisoned longer than necessary on his treason charge. The status of burgess conferred advantages, and

54 HCCD, Case 725, Wood v Travers.

55 HCCD, Case 35, January 1635, Bawde v Dawson. The first 50 cases contain 19 including this allegation. See for example Case 5, 8, 13, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 43, 45, 49.

56 R. C. Michie, *The London Stock Exchange: A History* (Oxford, 1999).

57 Nicholas Carlise, *An inquiry into the place and quality of the Gentlemen of his Majesty's most honorable Privy Chamber* (London, 1829), 160.

Jack Newton's observation that he 'never had any other designe ... than faithfully to serve the Corporation, without any prospects of advantage to my selfe', drew attention to the fact that there was an advantage.⁵⁸ The gateway to the justice network was barred to all but those of the rank of esquire, and the eldest son of an esquire could claim a Bachelor of Arts degree after twelve terms of residence at Oxford, a route not available to others.⁵⁹

It was because of these important implications for one's life chances that the social category of gentility was so contested. It also generated anxiety among those who were produced as gentlemen. The factors that made them economically secure – their identity and their property – were both unstable social productions, dynamically in flux. This anxiety extended to everyone in the production of credit and currency. The wide and interlocked early modern networks of credit increased tensions between the households of consumers and producers, the self-same households, who 'were linked by trust in chains of credit', and the market was characterised by long chains of obligation, where households were both borrowers and lenders, linking thousands of strangers together, but which could be a source of anxiety.⁶⁰ The gentleman's anxiety was an unwitting acknowledgement that ordered and stable models of the cosmos and man's place in it constantly failed, and that their own identity was not their own, and not under their control, nor indeed anyone's control.

58 LRO, MON7-14-93, 18 November, Newton to Fisher.

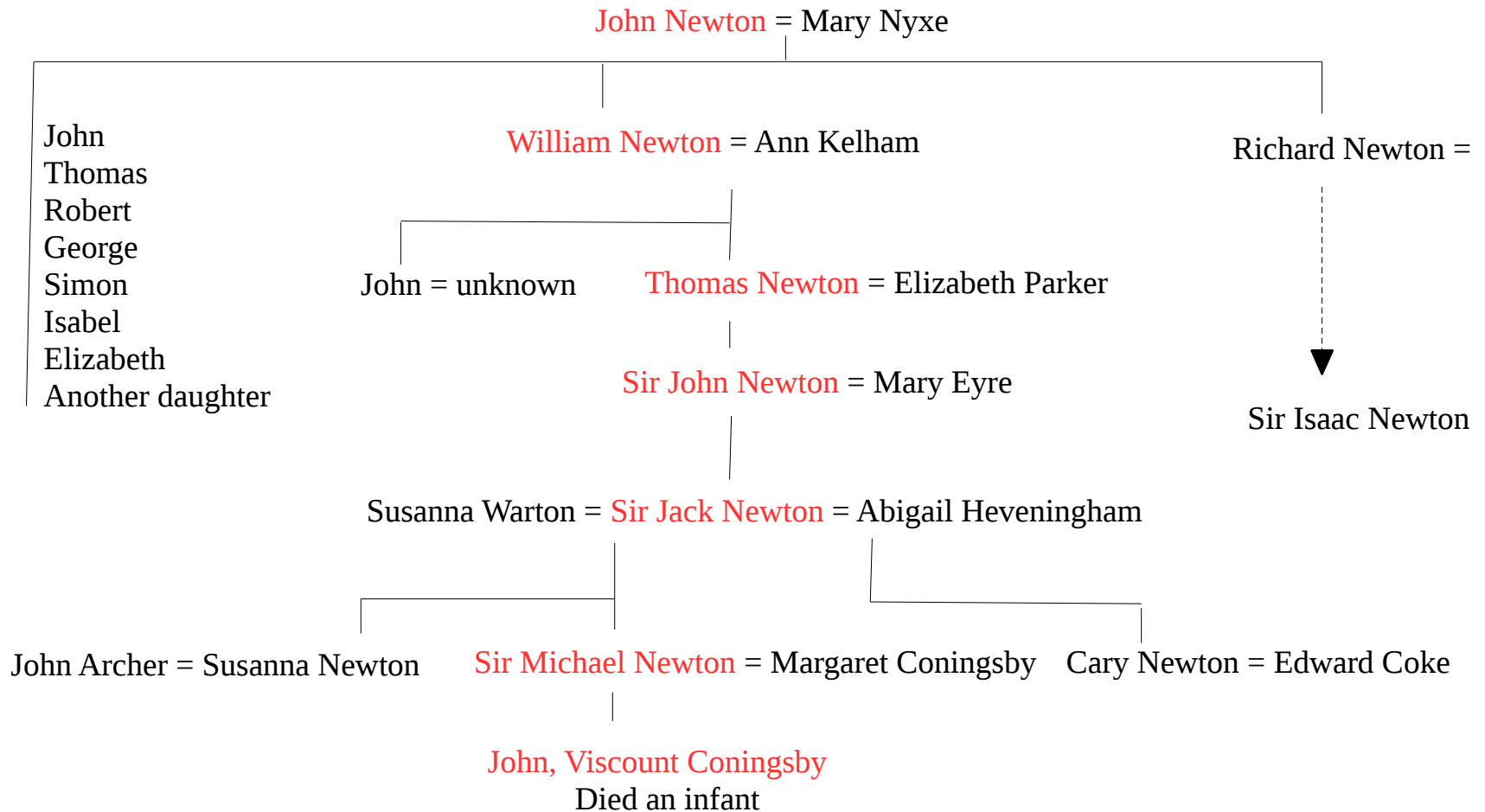
59 James McConica, 'The prosopography of the Tudor university', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, III: 3 (Winter, 1973), 552, cited in Cressy, 'Describing the social order', 43.

60 Muldrew, *Obligation*, 10, 118.

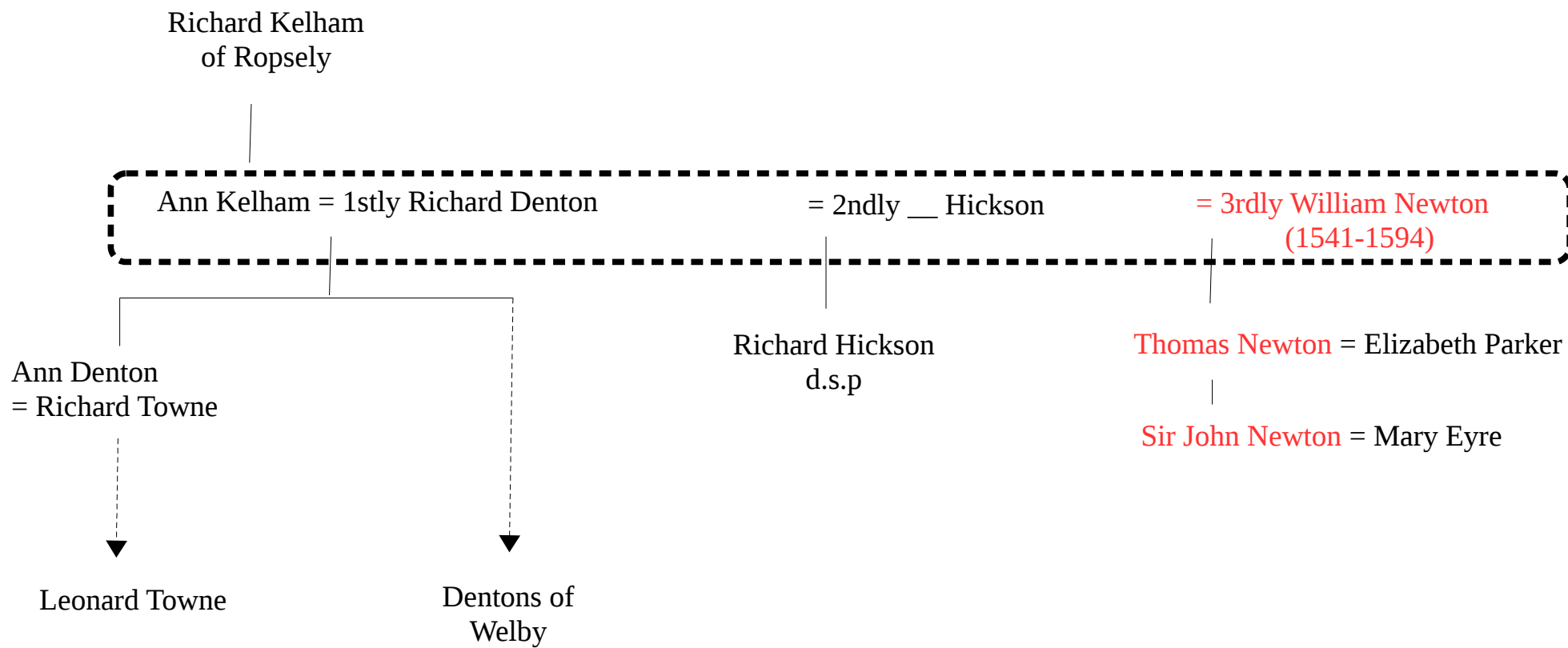
Appendix 1
Genealogical tables

The following pages show simplified genealogies of people who appear in this thesis. Names in red signify the key male descent which is the subject of this thesis.

<i>Family</i>	<i>Page</i>
John Newton, husbandman	380
William Newton, yeoman	381
Sir John Newton, baronet	382
Sir Jack Newton, baronet	383
Parkins of Grantham	384



FAMILY OF JOHN NEWTON, HUSBANDMAN



FAMILY OF WILLIAM NEWTON, YEOMAN

Sir John Newton (1626-1699)
= Mary Eyre (1627-1712)
daughter of Sir Gervase Eyre Kt.

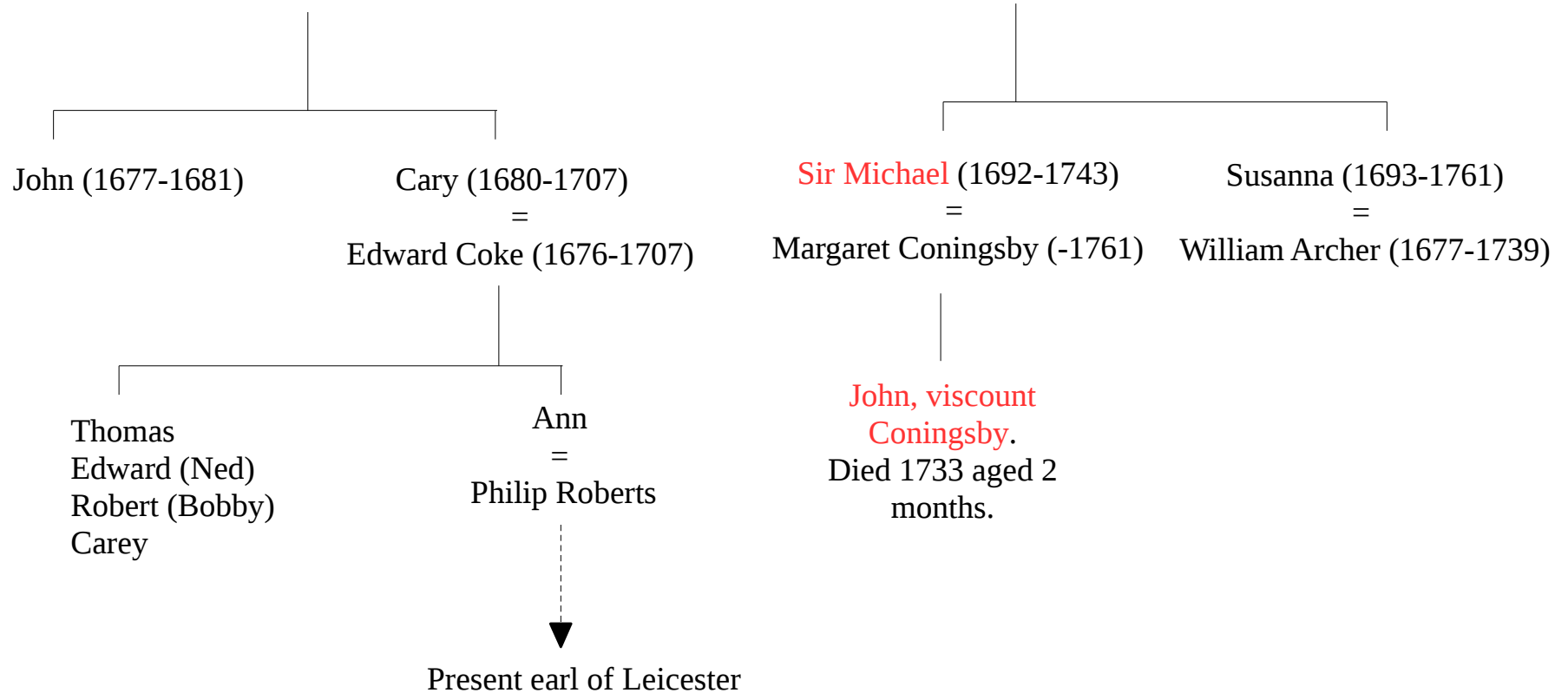
1. Elizabeth (1646-94) = Francis Stringer
2. Mary (1648-78) = William Marwood
3. Jane (1649-1710) = William Sacheverell (d1691)
4. Lucy (1653-1715) = Robert Scrope (d1718)
5. Hester (1655-bef.1709) = John Seymour (d1709)
6. Judith (1657-)
7. Penelope (1658-1722) = John Selwick
8. Eleanor (c1668-1705) = John Wade
9. Frances (c1670-1714) = John Wigfall (1637-1711)
10. Susanna
11. Another daughter
12. Catherine
13. Dorothy (1671-1712) = Francis Woodward (d1730)

1. Richard (c.1650 – c.1672)
2. Thomas (d.1672)
3. Sir Jack Newton (1651/2 -1734)
= Abigail Heveningham (1660-1686)
= Susanna Warton (d.1737)
4. Gervase (c.1660-1728)
= first wife
= Dorothy Hutton (1661-1726) daur. of
Sir Thomas, widow of Joshua Earnshaw,
Lord mayor of York

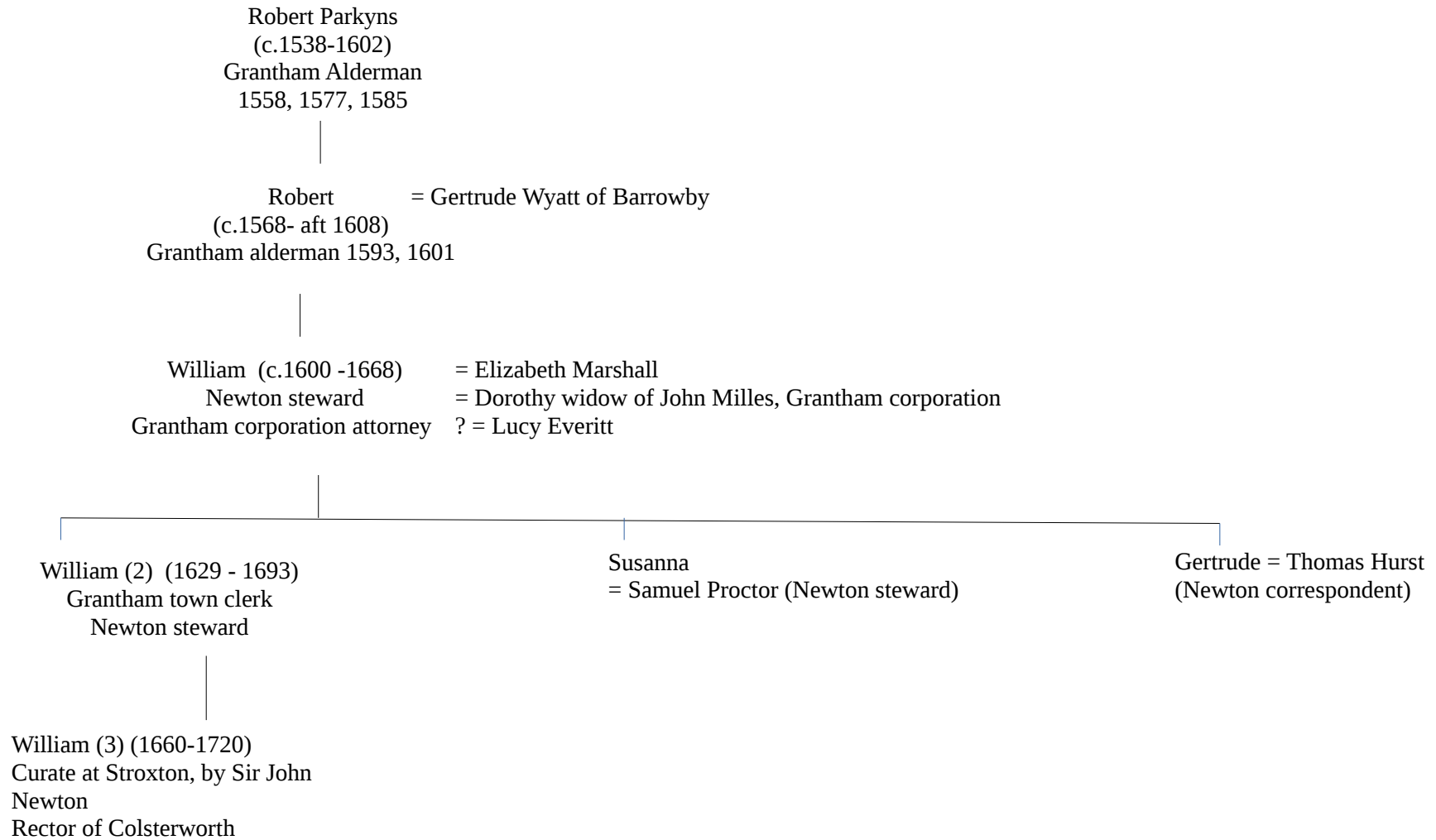
FAMILY OF SIR JOHN NEWTON, 2ND BARONET OF HEYDOUR AND BARR'S COURT

Sir Jack Newton = 1st Abigail Heveningham (1660-1686)

= 2nd Susanna Warton (-1737),
widow of Sir John Bright (-1688)



FAMILY OF SIR JACK NEWTON, 3rd BARONET OF HEYDOUR AND BARR'S COURT



PARKINS OF GRANTHAM – STEWARDS TO THE NEWTON FAMILY

Appendix 2

Lincolnshire gentry families temp. Charles II

The following is based on the list generated by Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State, including his estimate of income where given.⁶¹ It has been augmented by known gentry families not listed by Williamson, taken from A. R. Maddison (ed.), *Lincolnshire pedigrees*, 4 vols., Harleian Society, 50, 51, 52, 55 (1902-6), lists of high sheriff, Burke's Baronetcies and Peerage, and Parliamentary History, marked with an *. The list represents major county families contemporary with Sir John Newton, who held significant land, and who occupied the highest administrative county offices.

The 'sheriff' column indicates whether the family provided a high sheriff in the period 1450-1750 with the number of appointments in (). The 'commons' column indicates whether the family had provided knights of the shire or burgesses in the borough towns of Boston, Grantham, Great Grimsby, Lincoln and Stamford to the house of Commons in the same period. The last column indicates whether the Restoration family had medieval landed representatives, this data is based on the families appearing in Jonathan S. Mackman, *The Lincolnshire gentry and the Wars of the Roses* (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of York 1999).

Key

*	Does not appear in Williamson's list
+	Merchant origins
#	Lawyer origins
^	Cadet of noble family
Sh	Knight of the shire
B	Boston
G	Grantham
GG	Great Grimsby
L	Lincoln
S	Stamford
cand	stood unsuccessfully as a candidate

61 See introduction.

Family representative	Est. income (£ p.a.)	Sheriff	Commons	C.15 Linc. family?
<i>Noble families</i>				
Earl of Lincoln (Fiennes or Clinton)	3,000		✓(Sh, GG)	✓
Earl of Lindsey (Grimsthorpe)	5,000		✓(Sh, B, S)	✓
Earl of Rutland (Belvoir)..	8,000		✓(Sh, G)	✓
Viscount Castleton (Saxby) ⁶²	7,000	✓ (2)	✓(Sh, GG)	...
Lord Bellasize	1,500		✓(GG)	...
Lord Stanhope	...			✓
Lord Widrington (Blankney)	1,800			...
Lord Willoughby (Parham)	...		✓(Sh)	✓
<i>Gentry families</i>				
Anderson #	2,000	✓ (2)	...	...
Armyne +	4,000	✓ (4)	✓(Sh, B, G)	✓
Ayscough (S. Kelsey)*	...	✓ (10)	✓(GG, L)	✓
Barkham	1,600	✓ (1)	✓(B,S)	...

62 Saunderson, Irish peerage, raised 1628.

Family representative	Est. income (£ p.a.)	Sheriff	Commons	C.15 Linc. family?
Bowles or Bolle(s)	3,000	✓ (5)	✓ (L)	✓
Brown(e) +	300	✓ (4) ⁶³	✓ (Sh, S)	✓
Brownlowe (Belton), Sir John #	8,000	✓ (1)	✓(Sh, G)	...
Brownlowe, Sir William	1,600			
Buck (Hanby)	2,000	✓ (3)	...	...
Carr (Sleaford, Aswarby)	5-6,000	✓ (3)	✓(Sh, B, G)	...
Christopher #	1,500	...	...	...
Cust*	...	✓ (1)	✓(G, S)	...
De Le Ligne*	...	✓ (1)	✓(cand)	...
Lister (Rippingale)*	...	✓ (2)	✓(L)	...
Dymoke*	...	✓ (10)	✓(Sh, L)	✓
Earle #	1,500	✓ (1) ⁶⁴	...	...
Ellys (Wyham) #, Sir Thomas	1,500	...	✓(B, G)	...
Ellys , Sir William	1,500			

63 Names of Brown assumed to be of the same family.

64 Also provided sheriffs in late eighteen-century, and descendants into the twentieth-century.

Family representative	Est. income (£ p.a.)	Sheriff	Commons	C.15 Linc. family?
Fane (Fulbeck) ^	1,200	✓ (1)	...	...
Fitzwilliam (Mablethorpe)*	...	✓ (5)	... ⁶⁵	✓
Grantham (Goltho) +	...	✓ (1)	✓(Sh, L, GG)	✓
Hatcher (Careby)*	...	✓ (2)	✓(Sh, B, G, L, S)	...
Harrington *	...	✓ (1)	✓(G, S)	✓
Heron #	600	✓ (1)	✓(Sh, B)	...
Hickman (Gainsborough)	800	... ⁶⁶	✓(Sh)	...
Hussey (Honington, Caythorpe)	2,500	✓ (5)	✓(Sh,G,GG,L,S)	✓
Irby (Boston) #	1,000	✓ (1)	✓(B, S)	...
Lister (Rippingale)	1,500	✓ (2)	✓(L)	...
Markham (Sedgebrook) #	1,600	✓ (3)	✓(G)	✓
Massingberd, Sir Henry	1,800	✓ (1)	✓(Sh)	✓
Massingberd, Drayner	1,500			
Meres (Kirton) +	300	✓ (6)	✓(L)	✓

65 However, Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam represented Lincoln in 1459, and the shire 1489 and speaker of the house.

66 Provided three nineteenth-century sheriffs.

Family representative	Est. income (£ p.a.)	Sheriff	Commons	C.15 Linc. family?
Monson (Burton) +	4,000	✓ (3)	✓ (Sh, L)	✓
Newton (Heydour) +	3,000	...	✓ (G)	
Oldfield (Spalding) #	800	...	✓ (Surrey)	...
Pelham (Brocklesby) *	...	✓ (1) ⁶⁷	✓ (Sh, G, GG)	...
Rossiter (Somerby)	1,000	...	✓ (Sh, GG)	...
Rothwell (Stapleford)	1,500	...	✓ (Newark)	...
Scrope (Cockerington) ^	3,000	✓ (2)	✓ (GG)	✓
Skipwith (Ormesby)*	...	✓ (6)	✓ (Sh,G,GG)	✓
Thorold, Sir William Bt. (Marston) #	2,500	✓ (6)	✓ (Sh, G, L)	✓
Thorold, Sir Robert (Grantham)	600			
Thorold, Sir William Kt. (Hough on the hill)	800			
Trollop(e) (Casewick)	2,000	✓ (3)	...	...
Turnor (Stoke Rocheford) #	300	✓ (1) ⁶⁸	✓ (cand)	...
Tyrwhitt (Kettleby) #	...	✓ (15)	✓ (Sh, GG, L)	✓

67 Also numerous sheriffs up until 2014.

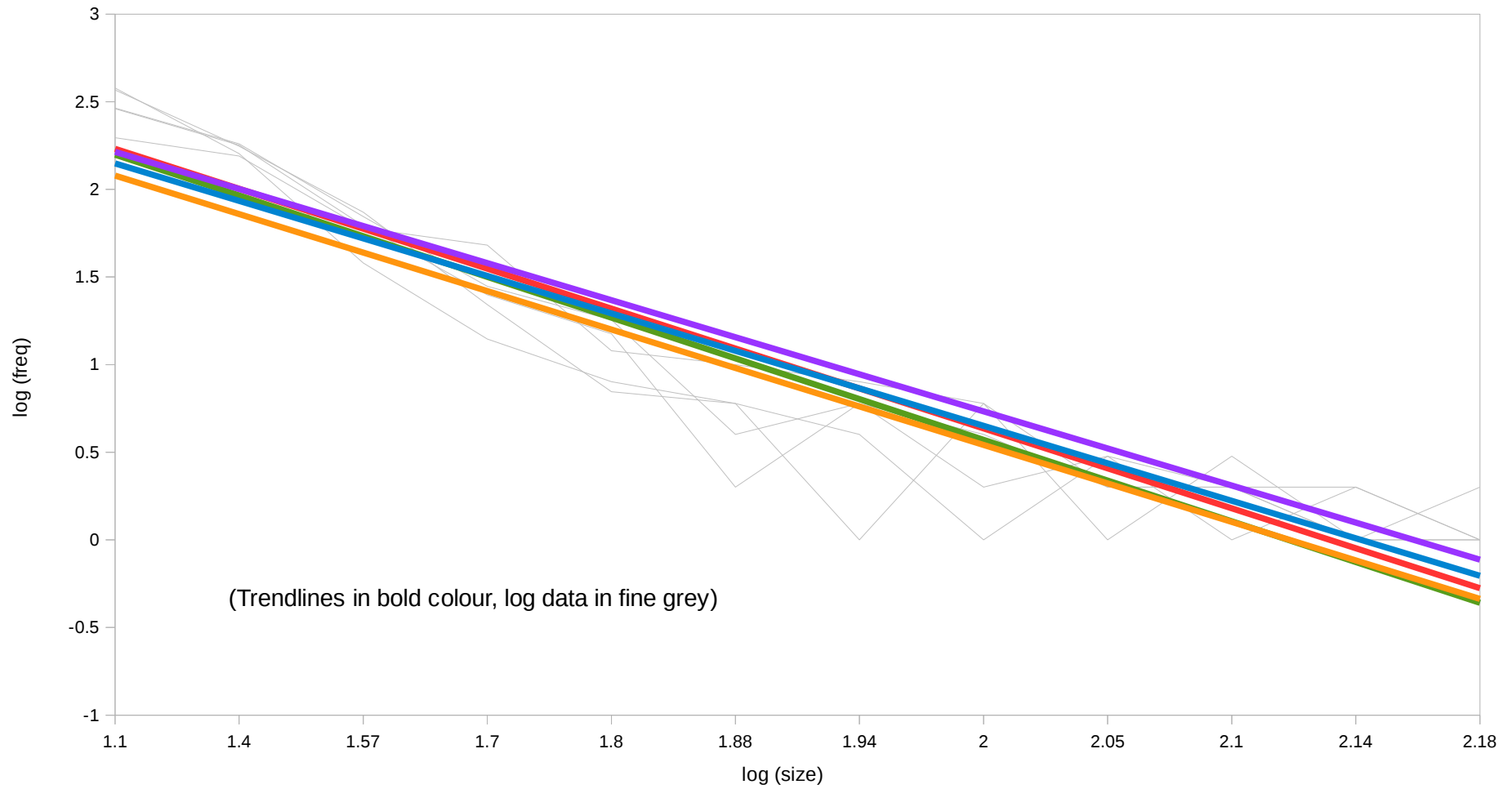
68 Provided five nineteenth and twentieth century sheriffs.

Family representative	Est. income (£ p.a.)	Sheriff	Commons	C.15 Linc. family?
Walpole, Sir John (Dunston)	400	...	...	...
Walpole, Sir Edward (Pinchbeck)	...			
Welby*	...	✓ (8)	... ⁶⁹	✓
Whichcot(e)*	...	✓ (1)	✓ (Sh)	...
Wray, Sir John (Glentworth)	3,500	✓ (4)	✓ (Sh,GG)	...
Wray, Sir William (Ashby)	3,000			
Yorke*		... ⁷⁰	✓ (B)	...

69 However, Richard Welby was Knight of the shire 1421, his father Roger was sheriff in 1396.

70 One nineteenth-century sheriff.

Appendix 3: The fractal dimension of Lincolnshire settlements in 1563, 1603, 1676, 1706, and 1723



Settlement sizes: archdeaconry of Lincoln and Stowe 1563-1723:

Table of results $y = ax + c$ and linear regression R^2 for each dataset, for the preceding graphical representation.

1563 $f(x) = -0.23x + 2.43$ $R^2 = 0.88$ (Green)

1603 $f(x) = -0.23x + 2.46$ $R^2 = 0.84$ (Red)

1676 $f(x) = -0.21x + 2.36$ $R^2 = 0.85$ (Blue)

1706 $f(x) = -0.22x + 2.30$ $R^2 = 0.81$ (Orange)

1723 $f(x) = -0.21x + 2.43$ $R^2 = 0.96$ (Purple)

Sources:

1563 and 1603: *The State of the Church in the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I relating to the Diocese of Lincoln*, C. W. Foster (ed.), (Lincoln Record Society vol. 23, 1926). It includes totals of families between 1562-4, and communicants, non-communicants and recusants in 1603.

1676: *The Compton Census of 1676*, A. Whiteman (ed.), (London, 1986). Gives the number of conformists, papists and non-conformists in each parish. Also includes comparative statistics with protestation returns (1641/2).

1706 and 1723: *Speculum Dioeceseos Lincolnensis, Sub Episcopis Gullium Wake Et Edmund Gibson, A.D. 1705-1723*, (Archdeaconries of Lincoln and Stow), R. E. G. Cole (ed.), (Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 4, 1913). Gives the numbers of families in each parish, with the number of dissenting families.

Bibliography

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1 Unpublished primary sources	394
2 Published primary sources	
2.1 Original authors	398
2.2 Lists, indexes, calendars, periodicals	400
3 Secondary published and unpublished sources	404

1 Unpublished primary sources

Lincoln Record Office

MONSON 3/28	Title deeds and other documents, mainly parchments, in boxes, including Newton family.
MONSON 7/11, 7/12, 7/13, 7/14	Newton papers.
MONSON 28B	Executorships and other documents subsidiary to title, Monson and other families: Newton papers.
Grantham borough/5/1	Grantham Hall Book.
GBQS/1-24	Grantham Borough Quarter Sessions 1608-1638.
BROG/1/1/1-2	Records of the Clerks of the Peace.
BRA866	Archer-Houblon family of Welford.
CRAGG/2	account books of Jack Newton.
CRAGG/3	Newton deeds.
LD/24/2/1/b/4	Lindsey deposits.

Gloucester Record Office

D1844/A2, C1-C6, C9-C11	} Newton family of Barr's Court.
C14-16, C20-C21, C24-C26	}
C30, E17, E24, E26, F1-F2	}
L2, X1-3	}
D1799/F94	William Blathwayt memorandum re. marriage.
D333/T9	Grant.

Bristol Record Office

6609/5-15	Estate and political correspondence of the Newton family.
AC/WH/7/8	Whitchurch papers.
5139/351-5139/433	Manuscripts originally kept by Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery and by Bristol Reference Library.

The National Archives

C1	Chancery: early chancery proceedings.
C5	Chancery: six clerks office, Bridges, 1613-1714.
C6	Chancery: six clerks office, Collins, c1625-1714.
C7	Chancery: six clerks office, Hamilton, c1620-1714.
C22	Chancery: six clerks office, country depositions, series II.
C66	Chancery: Patent rolls.
C142	Inquisitions Post Mortem – Henry VII to Charles I.
WARD7	Court of Wards and Liveries, Inquisitions Post Mortem.
PROB10	Prerogative Court of Canterbury: original wills.
PROB11	Prerogative Court of Canterbury: court copies.
E179	Taxation records.
E317	Parliamentary surveys of crown estate.
E320/K19	Trustees of crown estates.
SP19	Committee for the Advancement of Money: books and papers 1642-1656.
SP20	Sequestration Committee: books and papers 1643-1653.
SP23	Committee for compounding with delinquents: books and papers.
SP29	Secretaries of state: State papers Domestic Charles II.
SP46/135	State papers domestic: supplementary.

Bank of England

AC27/382	Subscribers to the Bank of England stock, 1694.
Book A, B and C	Further subscription to Bank of England stock, 1697.
AC27/385,6,7	Further subscription to Bank of England stock, 1709.
AC27/330-343	Five per cent annuity, Lottery, 1717-1752.
AC27/214	Four per cent annuities, 1717-26.

Hoare's Bank

A. B, C, D, E, H, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 24, 29, 55 56, 58, 60, 63, 65	} Customer ledgers: including Jack Newton esquire, } Madam Cary Newton, Lady Susanna Newton, } Lady Mary Heveningham, Michael Newton esq. }
HB/8/T/1	Partners' outgoing letter book 1701-06.
HB/1/5	Miscellaneous Record Book.
HB/1/2	Debt Book.
Money Lent ledger	1696-1718.
Goldsmiths Work Book	
HB/8/T/1	Partner's outgoing letter book.

College of Arms

J11	Visitation of Lincolnshire, 1562.
G4	Visitation of Lincolnshire, 1592-4.
C23	Visitation of Lincolnshire, 1634.
K5	Visitation of Gloucestershire, 1683.
R22	Grant of arms to John Newton, 1662.
Walker's grants Vols. 1 and 2	Grants of Sir Edward Walker, Garter Principal King of Arms.
D23	Visitation of Lincolnshire 1666.
2D14	Confirmation to Isaac Newton, Knight Bachelor, 1705.

Holkham Hall

F/G2/2	Newton correspondence.
F/G2/8	Newton correspondence.

British Library

Add. Mss. 18616, 28647	} Additional manuscripts.
Add. Mss. 18,266, 18,267	}
Add. mss. Misc. 42,702-67	}
Add. Charters 77214, 57339-72	Additional charters.

XIX 1-62, 14 91.2.TAB
Harley 4795
Boston.

King's Topological Collection.
The register of the gild of Corpus Christi,

Nottingham University

Ne D 2469
Ne D 2883
Ne D 2471

Deeds and other papers relating to estates held
by the Duke of Newcastle in the county of
Nottinghamshire thirteenth century – 1913.

Nottingham Record Office

157 DD/4P/33/1

Portland of Welbeck (4th Deposit): Deeds
and Estate Papers.

Sheffield Record Office

C/779
WWM/Br P/72
WWM/Br P/208

Bagshawe manuscripts.
Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments.
Timothy Kiplin letters from Jack Newton, 1701-
1715.

Hampshire Record Office

15M84/2/7/7

Wallop, Earls of Portsmouth papers.

Trinity College, Cambridge

MS add. 3996

Newton notebook.

John Rylands Library

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Bagshawe papers.

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ZA0353

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documents.

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Babson mss 421

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Glossary of terms

Complexity

A state of a dynamic system which is characterised by many interacting interdependent agents, exhibiting recursive feedback, and generating non-linear behaviour. It is not reducible to deterministic models, nor reductionist approaches.

Complex adaptive system (CAS)

A complex system which experiences a high flow of energy across the boundary, and has sufficient elements (social individuals) to adapt to changes in its structure.

Complex materialism

An interpreting paradigm in which the real is material but complex rather than classical or neoclassical.

Complex material space (CMS)

The surface of the earth, being the interface between the sun's energy flow into the system and the organic matter of life.

Complex social network

The activity of interacting social individuals constitutes a social network embedded in a complex material space, a wider physical system. The social network is characterised by the movement of social individuals, marks and resources within the complex material space. The social network can be fully described as iterated exchanges, with feedback, of physical contact and information between social individuals in a resource-laden environment.

Economies

Recursive and complex social productions. From the perspective of complex materialism they were activities and not things. They existed only in the form of copied and reproduced information in the form of narratives. They were otherwise social fictions, with social individuals, understanding, behaving and relating to them and each other as though they were material or externally real.

Imperatives

Qualities or properties of social individuals in a complex system which were inseparable but systemically necessary to form a social network and a complex adaptive system. Expressed as five imperatives - to live; to copy and reproduce; to move; to handle; and to co-operate.

Marks

Understood within the framework of information theory, a broader idea than symbols, Any articulation in physical media (a bend, kink, indentation, raised relief, ink on paper, some discontinuity or change) with which a narrative is associated. A mark is a 'bit' of information, an unexpected change.

Narratives

The form in which social individuals remember, repeat and understand their own social network. Narratives are stored biologically, and in other non-organic physical media, as marks. They are stories about the state or evolution of the system. In terms of complex materialism narratives are not 'things in themselves' which are stored, but *are* the biological form in which they are stored. Narratives have enormous species-like diversity and are often inconsistent with one another, in which sense they are competing narratives.

Narrative space (or message space)

The sum total of all narratives. Like narratives the narrative space is embedded in the complex material space and not independent of it. It is not discrete, and is described as though it were isolated only for the purposes of clear exposition.

The body

A local boundary in a complex social network. The origin of all activity within a complex social network is the human body. As an element of such a system it cannot be described in itself, but can only be understood and described as one which has always already been socialised, or composed, within a social network. This socialised human is the local nexus for, and caught up in, a web of iterated

social exchanges.

Social individual

An element of the complex social network, a human being, who is both an autonomous element of the CAS but intrinsically, systematically, and necessarily a socialised person.