

**Staffing the Big House: Country House Domestic Service in Yorkshire,
1800-1903**

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**Abstract: Staffing the Big House: Country House Domestic Service in Yorkshire,
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This thesis examines domestic service practises among some members of the Yorkshire gentry during the nineteenth century. Historians usually consider the gentry to have shared the same social outlooks and practises as other members of the upper class in spite of significant differences in income and political power. However, as they were less well-to-do, they could not afford to maintain the variety of servants a wealthy aristocrat could. Three main families were selected to reflect the range of incomes and possession or lack thereof of a hereditary title: the Listers of Shibden Hall, the Sykes of Sledmere House and the Pennymans of Ormesby Hall. The Yorkshire gentry organised country houses servants along the same hierarchical lines as prescriptive authors suggested because this gave servants clear paths for promotion which reduced the frequency of staff turnover; furthermore the architecture of their country houses promoted such organization. Secondly, this architecture reinforced the domestic social positions of every rung of the domestic hierarchy. As part of a unique subgroup of the upper class, gentry ladies were less likely to experience class conflict with servants clearly placed within the domestic service hierarchy. The conclusion is that through selective recruitment processes, the distinctive work environment and a particular labour pool, this group created a unique labour market tailored to their social and economic standing.

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1.

Introduction

The ability to employ non-familial servants to deal with housework and other menial tasks has long been a hallmark of wealth and class. Most studies on domestic service and family labour divisions focus on the working-class and the middle-class. Historians have shown that working class and middle-class wives were the performers and organizers of household labour. At the lower end of the middle class, nineteenth century economic transformations led to increased wealth and enabled more people to afford multiple domestic servants than before, and even adopt a gentry-like lifestyle. This led to the publication of a large number of books discussing household management and servant employment aimed at middle-class housewives, but referring to upper-class domestic practises. Historians believe also that there was greater potential for class-friction in middle-class houses employing live-in servants than in the houses of the upper classes which had more space, both physically and socially. The wealthiest families could afford the most servants, including specialised ones such as stillroom maids and nursery girls. Specialised servants were a status symbol for the British upper class, both the aristocracy and the gentry. Theoretically, the higher the income and social class, the less wives were 'hands-on' in their running of the household. At the highest end of the social scale, wives could delegate all of the household labour and childrearing tasks to servants. For women such as these, personal interest rather than economic necessity dictated how involved they were in household tasks.

Both the middle-classes and the aristocracy have attracted more attention from social historians examining domestic service.¹ The middle group, the gentry have not been well represented in historical enquiry, particularly their roles as employers of servants and their domestic arrangements. Yet servants were integral to running gentry houses. It was their work which provided the meals, laid the fires and kept the dirt to a minimum. This labour needed to be directed, either by a member of the house family or by an upper servant. Gentry wives were normally responsible for the household budgets, the allocation of labour within their country house and the maintenance of the family's social position.² Country houses offer an unrivalled environment in which to study the impact of class interaction and physical space on female gender roles, two elements not considered in most other studies of female labour. The working class servants and upper-class women were side-by-side nearly every day, therefore examining how social distances were maintained is important. Given the number of country houses that belonged to the gentry, a significant number of domestic servants would have worked in such houses and for such families.³ It is thus important to understand how such labour was allocated and overseen in gentry country houses.

¹ See the works of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 18; Yaffa Clair Draznin, *Victorian London's Middle-class Housewife: What She Did All Day* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 71.; Judith Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (Harper Collins: London, 2003); Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives :Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 7, and Teresa McBride, *The Domestic Revolution: The Modernization of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920*. (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc, 1976), 10.

² These responsibilities were considered universal, from the very poorest of London's urban poor (Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 22.) to the growing industrial middle-classes (Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes*).

³ J. T. Cliffe in *The Yorkshire Gentry: From the Reformation to the Civil War* (London: The Athlone Press, 1969), back cover insert, identifies 571 gentry houses. F.M.L Thompson estimates that 72% of arable Yorkshire land was owned by gentry (F.M.L Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963)113-117.). By comparison, houses as large as Castle Howard and Harewood House are anomalous amongst country houses.

This thesis seeks to answer the following question: did the gentry organise and manage their country houses as prescriptive literature claimed the upper class did? It was hypothesised that gentry service would mirror that described as being that of the upper-class, but adjusted for income and with fewer male servants. A combination of social standing and greater physical distances inside the country house between the staff and their employers would help diffuse any of the class tensions that underpinned the middle-classes relationship with their servants. The findings have largely borne out this belief, but interesting factors other than financial and social ones had a bearing on how the country houses were organized. Internal regulations like space and uniforms were used to very visibly mark the distinction between the family and the servants who shared their home. One also gets occasional glimpses of servants' normative expectations, but the material available does not allow us to get a coherent vision of class tensions between servants and employers. Finally, a case study revealed that high rates of domestic turnover were not confined the middle-class and their 'Servant Problem'.

There has been much debate among historians on the parameters of the gentry. One of the earliest historians to try to clearly delineate the group was F. M. L. Thompson in his 1963 book *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*. Thompson identified the 'landed interest' as a group between the middle-class and the aristocracy. He identified three subgroups within this group, divided according to the acreage they owned: the greater gentry with 3,000 to 10,000 acres, the squirearchy who own between 1,000 to 3,000 acres and the smaller landowners with a single acre to 1,000 acres.⁴ Given the agrarian nature of landed income, this division by acreage is roughly equivalent to a

⁴ F.M.L Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963, 113-117.

division by income. Socially, he described the landed interest as resembling the aristocracy except in the scale of their possessions and style of living.⁵

Following Thompson, Gordan Mingay's work *The Gentry* asserted the centrality of income from landownership when defining the gentry. He relies less on the size of the acreage than on the amount of income combined with a common background to differentiate the lower rungs of the gentry from the wealthy middle-class. Mingay asserts

...the gentry were basically a class whose superior incomes made possible a certain kind of education, a standard of comfort, and a degree of leisure and a common interest in ways of spending it, which marked them off from those whose incomes, perhaps as great or greater in money terms, could only be obtained by constant attention to some form of business.⁶

He acknowledges the importance of land ownership but does not make it the main marker of gentry membership, although income from land rents was key to obtaining and maintaining the attributes he lists.⁷ In terms of income, he places the baronets and knights at the top of the group, and the untitled at the bottom.⁸ In addition to these easily verifiable attributes, Mingay adds the trait of gentility. This is a key component of the gentry identity that is extremely difficult for historians to quantify, but was easily apparent to contemporaries.⁹

The concept of a common culture that bound the gentry and the aristocracy has more recently been used to view both groups as constituting the upper class and treating them as such. J. V. Beckett's 1986 book, *The Aristocracy in England*, is one such work.

⁵ Ibid, 20.

⁶ Gordan Mingay, *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (New York: Longman, 1976), 2.

⁷ Ibid, 2-3.

⁸ Ibid, 14.

⁹ Ibid, 3. This quality is best seen in works of fiction, where the reader is informed, either through backstory as with Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, or in by the details describing the characters' income and lifestyle, as with Mr Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, of the character's belonging to the gentry. Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë make explicit their characters' gentility as a plot device to underscore the equality of the heroines who eventually marry the respective heroes. The elevation of the heroines underscores

Beckett defines the aristocracy as spanning “... the peerage...to gentry landowners...”¹⁰ Thompson revisited and updated his criteria for gentry membership in 1988’s *The Rise of Respectable Society*. Land is still the most important requirement, but Thompson now considers wealth and land combined to be better indicators of gentry membership than possession of a hereditary title alone.¹¹ The dividing line at the lower end between the gentry and the wealthy upper middle-class was possession of a country house with landed estate.¹² Michael L. Bush echoed this sentiment, claiming that “rentier landownership” was central to the gentry’s self-identity and furthermore, that last clear divide between the gentry and the middle-class.¹³ Lawrence and Jean Stone defined a person as belonging to the gentry if he owned a country house with landed estate, possessed a lower hereditary title such as a baronetcy or knighthood or the honorific esquire.¹⁴ Overall, the consensus is that landownership was fundamental to the gentry and lifestyle was the key difference between them and the wealthy members of the middle-class. This lifestyle was centred around the country house, and thus needed a significant amount of extra-familial labour to maintain it.

Understanding of servants and domestic service has undergone significant changes over the past half century. At the most basic was the matter of defining who was a servant. Historians initially broadly defined nineteenth-century servants as ‘those who were employed as servants’, and secondarily as female. This definition said more about

the concept that ‘gentility’ is a trait that is not conferred through economic status, birth, or education but rather reaffirmed by it.

¹⁰ J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England. 1660-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 217.

¹¹ FML Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830 -1900* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), 106.

¹² Ibid, 155.

¹³ Michael L. Bush, *The English Aristocracy: A Comparative Synthesis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 4-5.

¹⁴ Lawrence Stone and Jean C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880*(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 8.

the historians studying domestic service than it did about how contemporaries had conceptualized servants and their employment. Certainly, earlier studies were highly influenced by Second Wave feminist thought, especially dealing with women and productive household labour, and they dealt almost exclusively with females working in other people's households. Susan Brown and Carolyn Steedman have later attracted our attention to the fact that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the term "servant" was not unambiguous. Steedman found that servants were used as tools through which wider "consciousness of social inequality was first articulated."¹⁵ The servant taxes introduced in the late eighteenth century pushed employers to see servants not as people who were employees, but as luxury items.¹⁶ Once the taxes were in place, over employers' protests, the work servants did was also re-evaluated around who performed what task, and whether the workers doing these tasks could be considered as being productive.¹⁷ Edward Higgs and others have also debated the meaning of the term "servant" in the censuses, as discussed below. Historians now agree that 'servants' came in a variety of guises from farmworker, to shop-helper, to family member, to a paid employee scrubbing the floor. In this study 'servants' are understood to follow the most common understanding of the term: paid, non-familial employees residing in their employer's house and engaged in tasks of housework, cooking and childrearing.

Disagreement over who was a 'servant' affected estimates of the number of servants in late eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. It is difficult to arrive at an

¹⁵ Carolyn Steedman, "Service and Servitude in the World of Labour: Servants in England, 1750-1820," in Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman, eds., *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 136.

¹⁶ Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: domestic service and the making of modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134.

¹⁷ Susan E. Brown, "Assessing Men and Maids: The Female Servant Tax and Meanings of Productive Labour in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain," in *Left History* 12, no. 2 (2007), 18.

accurate count of servants in nineteenth-century Britain. In 1792, William Pitt estimated that 90,000 families had paid the maid servant tax the previous year, but qualified the estimate as only “the poorer class of householders” even though employers from all income levels were liable.¹⁸ A 1780 tax assessment counts 49,475 male servants working for 24,553 employers.¹⁹ Taken together, and assuming a conservative estimation of one female servant per tax payer, servants still constituted a very large part of the workforce at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Extrapolating from the number of people who had ‘servant’ listed as their occupation in a selected number of 1871 census enumeration books, Pamela Horn estimated there were 1.2 million servants in the country.²⁰ Higgs challenged this view in a tightly focused evaluation of the 1851 to 1871 returns for Rochedale district, now part of Greater Manchester. Higgs discovered that family members with a blood relationship to the household head were sometimes recorded with a domestic occupation such as ‘Housekeeper’, which resulted in artificially inflated counts of the total number of servants in Britain during that twenty year time span.²¹ Higgs’ final conclusion was that the number of servants in late nineteenth-century England was fewer than believed, and that their seeming decline in the 1891 census was the result of more specific

¹⁸ Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15 quoting *The Parliamentary History of England*, ed. W. Cobbett (London: T. C. Hansard, 1814), vol. 29, p. 829 (17 February 1792).

¹⁹ Leonard Schwarz, “English servants and their employers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” in *Economic History Review* LII, 2 (1999), 240.

²⁰ Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), 18.

²¹ Edward Higgs, “The tabulation of occupation in the nineteenth-century census, with special reference to domestic servants” in Nigel Goose, ed., *Women’s Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hatfield: Local Population Studies, 2007), 251. Higgs, “Domestic Service and Household production” in Angela V. John ed. *Unequal Opportunities. Women’s Employment in England 1800-1918* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 125-152.

enumeration than a rise in alternative employment opportunities for women.²² By 1891, there were an estimated 783 600 female servants, comprising 20.6% of the total female working population.²³ For the fifty year period 1841 to 1891, domestic service accounted for 20.9% of all female workers, making it the third largest employer of women behind manufacturing (37.8%) and agriculture (23.1%).²⁴ Overall, Higgs' argument and findings spurred historians to be more cautious when speaking of nationwide servant numbers, and to instead focus on smaller regions when undertaking quantitative analysis.

Michael Anderson revisited Higgs' findings using the 1851 census alone. He discovered that the census had been taken on Mothering Sunday, a time when servants were likely to be given leave to visit their own families.²⁵ Anderson believed that these people, servants by occupation who were away from their workplace to visit family, were the partial cause of Higgs' claim that previous estimates of servant number had been too high.²⁶ While Higgs and Anderson's findings are important for studies of agricultural servants and shopkeeping business practises, their impact on this study are negligible. The recording clerks and enumerators were socially savvy enough to realise that a spinster sister living at the country house of her brother was not a domestic servant. Mary Sykes, who was keeping house for her bachelor brother Sir Tatton Sykes II, is not listed as a housekeeper or domestic in the census returns for Sledmere House in 1851, Furthermore, servants were more likely to be away from the country house, rather than visiting it on census night. The resident of the country houses in this study who were

²² Ibid, 258.

²³ Edward Higgs, "Women, Work and Occupations in Nineteenth Century Censuses" in *History Workshop Journal* No. 23 (Spring, 1987), 75.

²⁴ Ibid, 75.

²⁵ Michael Anderson, "Mis-specification of servant occupations in the 1851 census: a problem revisited," in Nigel Goose, ed., *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hatfield: Local Population Studies, 2007), 263.

²⁶ Ibid, 264.

listed with domestic occupations in the census were in fact non-familial household occupants whose only relation to the head of the house was employment.

Taking a wider scope, Leonard Schwarz looked at the number of servants nationally and whether this number increased or decreased from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth. In doing so he found that servants as a percentage of the population had actually decreased from the beginning of the eighteenth century, and particularly through the period 1780 to 1851.²⁷ By widening the timeframe of Higgs and Anderson's analyses, Schwarz challenges the belief that servant numbers rose across the century as a whole, not just in certain decades or because of differing definition of 'servant'. Furthermore, by finding that the total population percentage of female servants in 1780 is greater than in 1851, he disproves the theory that the nineteenth century saw the 'feminization' of service, which resulted in fewer and fewer male servants.²⁸ Feminization of service would have an effect on the houses in this study, reducing the number of male servants across the century. Instead both numbers of genders remained stable, with females consistently outnumbering males. This gender imbalance harkens to the concept of productive and unproductive labour: the work the women were engaged in (cooking, laundry, cleaning) was more time- and labour intensive and more productive than that of the male servants (polishing silver, waiting at the table, looking after a couple of horses).

Given the variety of interpretations of data in the census enumeration books, Drake has suggested they be viewed as "...a series of local censuses, reflecting local

²⁷ Leonard Schwarz, "English servants and their employers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," in *Economic History Review* (May 1999) 52 (2), 238.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 253.

interpretations...” rather than a cohesive national whole.²⁹ Five such studies by Kearey Sambrook, Gant, Reid and Pooley did just that, using the census enumeration books to examine very specific geographic locales.³⁰ All of these studies took into account the Higgs, Anderson findings and all seek to answer the overarching question, ‘Who employed servants here?’ These historians corroborate Schwarz’s finding that the employment of a servant was not the marker of membership in the middle-class that it had previously been thought to be. Many “true domestic servants” (non-kin and non-apprentice living-in servant) were employed by families in trades not associated with servant keeping.³¹ The authors focus on the most common exemplar of domestic service: the one- or two servant household, an approach which excludes country houses which employed greater numbers of domestic servants. There are similarities between the two groups however, like the impact of family life cycle on the number and type of servants employed being one and the distance between a servant’s birthplace and his or her place of work.³² Overall, historical enquiry is moving towards tightly focussed case studies of specific geographic areas; for instance, Derek Kearey examined two working-class streets in London, and a small Welsh market town was the focus of Robert Gant’s study.

Michael Drake identifies an area that historians have not yet adequately explored:

²⁹ Michael Drake, “Aspects of Domestic Service in Great Britain and Ireland, 1841-1911,” in *Family and Community History* 2 (1) 1999, 127.

³⁰ Derek Kearey, “Domestic servants in part of Rotherhithe, and a comparison with Bethnal Green in 1881,” in *Redriff Chronicle* 4 no. 1 (2000-1): 9-13; Pamela Sambrook, “Servants, Family and Business: Domestic Service in Staffordshire in 1851” in *Staffordshire Studies* 17 (2006): 1-37; Robert Gant, “Domestic service in a small market town: Crickhowell, 1851-1901,” in *Local Population Studies* 84 (2010): 11-30; Siân Pooley, “Domestic servants and their urban employers: A case study of Lancaster, 1880-1914” in *The Economic History Review*, 62, 2 (2009): 405-429; Antony S.Reid, “Servants in Society: Victorian servants in affluent Edinburgh” in *Family & Community History* Vol. 2/2, (November 1999): 129-140.

³¹ Pamela Sambrook, “Servants, Family and Business: Domestic Service in Staffordshire in 1851” in *Staffordshire Studies* 17 (2006), 10; Robert Gant, “Domestic service in a small market town: Crickhowell, 1851-1901,” in *Local Population Studies* 84 (2010), 18.

³² Pooley, 420.

servants working in institutions such as seminaries, schools and hospitals.³³ This study has the same tight focus, using the census returns for the study houses.

Broadly speaking, country houses exerted a ‘draw’ for skilled and specialised domestic servants, and this ‘draw’ was in proportion to the wealth and social standing of the house involved. Pamela Sambrook discovered that the majority servants working for the wealthier urban families who employed specialised servants, had birthplaces more distant than those working for less affluent families.³⁴ A slightly different pattern was discovered among servants working on two affluent Edinburgh streets: more servants came from lowland Scotland than the highlands.³⁵ As she posit that servants moved farther afield to gain more experience and better positions, Sambrook’s urban Staffordshire servants may be future country house workers, acquiring the skills and knowledge to move to a larger house with more specialised positions. The other case studies revealed similar findings with regards to birthplace and service in wealthy urban areas. Pooley’s wealthiest urban Lancaster employers also attracted servants from “rural areas” in comparison to servants who had been born in Lancaster and worked there for less affluent families.³⁶ In the market town of Crickhowell, the majority of servants of both sexes came from outside the town and its immediately adjacent parishes.³⁷

Initially, service was defined simply as an occupation not linked with larger market forces or shaped by outside influences. Earlier studies of servants reflected this, claiming “...servants... were a group withdrawn from the general mass of the common people and committed to lifelong service, and were decisively influenced only by

³³ Drake, 126.

³⁴ Sambrook, 28.

³⁵ Reid, 134.

³⁶ Pooley, 415.

³⁷ Gant, 25.

changes in the ability to recruit them or pay them.”³⁸ Servants fared little better in works on female labour, being called “helpless slaves” in opposition to supposedly more independent factory workers.³⁹ It was only in the 1970s, when women’s history began to emerge as a sub-field that domestic servants began to be treated as a serious subjects of enquiry, and servants as other than helpless drudges.

As the early works focussed on the experience of being a servant, the group was defined by the nature of their paid employment. Historians examined the experience of domestic service such as the daily round of chores and the hiring process. This focus meant that servants who worked for all levels of employers were lumped together, thereby conflating the experiences of a maid-of-all-work employed by a middle-class family with maids who had worked as part of a larger domestic hierarchy. Books such as *Not In Front of the Servants* and *Life Below Stairs: Domestic Servants in England* are rich sources of descriptions of domestic service, making them helpful for understanding qualitative aspects of nineteenth century service, but lack analysis of outside influences or sustained examination of differences between places of employment.⁴⁰

More in-depth analysis of the physical labour involved in housework generated more critical analysis of domestic service. Pamela Horn in *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* was one of the first to note a sharpening of the social lines between servant and employer occurred during the nineteenth century.⁴¹ The physical work of housework was the divider between the two groups, one working for pay for the other

³⁸ Thompson (1963), 187.

³⁹ Wanda Fraiken Neff, *Victorian Working Women: An Historical Study of Women in British Industries and Professions* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 17.

⁴⁰ Frank Dawes, *Not In Front of the Servants: Domestic Service in England, 1850-1939* (London: Wayland Publishers, 1973); Frank E. Huggett, *Life Below Stairs: Domestic Servants in England from Victorian Times* (London: John Murray, 1977).

⁴¹ Horn, *The Rise and Fall...*, 13.

and thereby emphasising the difference between the two. Social shifts in wider society including the increasing power and wealth of the middle-classes, the rise of Evangelicalism with its concept of God-ordained social place and the impact of industrialization on traditionally female jobs, also gave added legitimacy to the inequality of the employer-servant relationship.⁴²

In the last decade, historians have expanded on the notions that domestic service was neither a homogeneous workforce nor one whose tangible results were its reason for being. Critically, more research is being done linking the seemingly sudden increase in the social prominence of service (as shown in the explosion of prescriptive literature) to factors that predate the nineteenth century. Carolyn Steedman's work on service during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century has shown how the economic conceptualization of the service relationship crossed all social boundaries to become an organisational pillar of British society.⁴³ During the time period of 1750 to 1820, Steedman found that legal, political and philosophical debates used servants as theoretical examples when attempting to justify social subordination.⁴⁴ On a continental scale, the French Revolution and the attendant upheaval in other European countries undoubtedly added impetus towards justifying service within Britain. The prescriptive literature in this study, as well as the employers' unquestioning assumption that servants were there to serve them even in the face of occasional labour disputes, highlights the continual relevance of this debate during the nineteenth century.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the population in general was reconceptualising domestic service. New taxes labelled certain classes of male servant

⁴² Samuel Dunn, *A Present for Female Servants*. (2nd edition, Manchester: J. Everett, 1834), 9.

⁴³ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, 16.

⁴⁴ Steedman, "Service and Servitude", 134.

such as valets, butlers and footmen, as luxuries. This tax was as well-received as taxes generally are, and was in place from 1777 until 1937.⁴⁵ Attempts at a similar taxation of female servants as ‘luxury items’ were widely met with protests and that tax lasted only seven years, from 1785 to 1792.⁴⁶ In public perception, this distinction stressed the gendered divide between servants who were considered necessary, and those who were not. Public protest over taxation on a necessity rather than a luxury caused the female servant tax to be repealed. The echoes of the twin taxes shaped nineteenth century domestic service, not just at the middle-class levels, but for every household that could afford to hire more than one servant.

In *Master and Servant*, Steedman expands on her assertion of the importance of outside forces in understanding the domestic service relationship. The book focuses on the Anglican minister John Murgatroyd and Phoebe Beatson, his live-in servant who becomes pregnant out of wedlock while working for him (the child’s father was George Thorp, a labourer). The majority of historians would assume that such a pregnancy would automatically lead to her firing; instead Phoebe, and her illegitimate daughter Eliza stayed on under Murgatroyd’s roof and in his employ to his death. Steedman purposefully chooses this particular pair to understand how the religious and philosophical beliefs of late-eighteenth century West Yorkshire were made manifest in the everyday behaviour of people.⁴⁷ As West Yorkshire was the setting for E. P. Thompson’s classic *The Making of the English Working Class*, Steedman specifically sets out to discover what factors

⁴⁵ Horn, *The Rise and Fall ...*, 9.

⁴⁶ Brown, 12.

⁴⁷ Steedman, *Master and Servant*, 1.

beyond the economic ones were left out of Thompson's influential work, in particular Anglican religious thought and lived religion.⁴⁸

In a departure from standard methodology, Steedman uses the voice of Nelly Dean, *Wuthering Heights*' narrator and resident servant, to partially replace the absent voice of Phoebe Beatson. The timeline of *Wuthering Heights* is roughly contemporary with Beatson's career and pregnancy, and is set in the same larger geographic area of Yorkshire's West Riding. Steedman's approach to using a fictional character as a source of historical information is applied to two other Brontë novels for this study, *Agnes Grey* and *Jane Eyre*, in order to better understand the experiences of governesses.

Steedman also focuses on the confusion of product (domestic service) with the person.⁴⁹ Historians have consistently done this with servants, defining them both by their occupation and assuming that the private nature of their workplace cut them off from larger society. (Isolation is usually cited as the reason servants did not create industry specific unions when other more 'public' industries did.) During the eighteenth century, the relationship between a servant and his or her employer was understood as a form of business relationship in a recognised industry.⁵⁰ At the same time, many employers considered that servants' time was to be entirely at their employers' disposal, a rather more sweeping interpretation of the labour relationship than was standard.⁵¹ The 1788 servant taxes formalised the servant-employer relationship and fuelled the belief that employers 'owned' their servants' time because they were being taxed for the labour of

⁴⁸ Ibid, 4.

⁴⁹ Carolyn Steedman, 'The servant's labour, the business of life, 1760-1820,' in *Social History* Vol. 29, No. 1 (February 2004), 29.

⁵⁰ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, 28.

⁵¹ Steedman, "The servant's labour", 25.

said servant, labour which the servant performed on the employer's time.⁵² This is a shift that had great impact on nineteenth century approaches to domestic service, as seen in prescriptive literature wherein servants' labour is not perceived as being the servant's, but rather as a 'thing' that the employer commanded the servant to perform. Furthermore, the fact servants were not viewed as individuals with all the rights of any other contracted labourer are amply seen in T. Henry Baylis's 1873 book, *The Rights, Duties and Relations of Domestic Servants and their Masters and Mistresses*. According to Baylis, "[t]he servants are bound to give up their *whole* time to their masters or mistresses, and to obey all their lawful orders in relation to their employment."⁵³

Labours Lost extends and elaborates on the argument Steedman originally put forth in her article 'The servant's labour: the business of life, 1760-1820'. Here she seeks to reposition servants as agents of change in eighteenth century Britain by putting them back into mainstream society rather than the typical approach of studying them in the closed, private nature of their workplace.⁵⁴ By placing servants in the totality of British eighteenth century society, Steedman reasserts the importance of interpersonal relationships in shaping service.⁵⁵ When domestic service thus properly situated, the reader can see how service was central to discussions of labour laws and concepts, and how servants themselves changed and ordered the circumstances of their daily lives.

Jessica Gerard's *Country House life: Family and Servants, 1815-1914*, bridged the gap between servant research and gentry research. Gerard's purpose was to "...reveal how the majority of landed families and their servants actually behaved towards each

⁵² Ibid, 2.

⁵³ T. Henry Baylis, *The Rights, Duties and Relations of Domestic Servants: with a short account of servants' institutions, etc. and their advantages*. (London: Butterworths, 1873), 2.

⁵⁴ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 355.

other...” and in doing so, to “fill gaps” in the history of the landed classes.⁵⁶ Gerard’s most original contribution is the identification of four different classes of servants: career servants, life-cycle servants, distressed gentlewomen and relatively unskilled low paid labourers. While the differences in class and outlook between ‘distressed gentlewomen’ and more ‘housework oriented’ servants was known from Victorian fiction like *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair*, the groups of career servants and life-cycle servants were only nebulously known, much less classified and understood.

While the labour, organisational and emotional parts of this ‘place’ have been examined, the physical part of it has not. While there has been some fleeting recognition paid to the fact that greater physical distance between the employers and their servants leads to greater psychological distance as well, the study of the physical history of country houses is overwhelmingly focused on the domestic technology.⁵⁷ As the removal of dirt and preparation of meals continue to be part of everyday life, it is hardly surprising that the study of the tools used for these activities is popular. Putting the influence of the building back into studies of domestic service deepens our understanding of the social meanings of work.⁵⁸ But the country house was more than the sum of its technological parts; it had an active role in shaping how servants and the family perceived service as an industry.

Moving from an understanding of how servants fit into the macrocosm of larger society into the microcosm of individual households, a couple of studies have examined

⁵⁶ Jessica Gerard, *Country House Life: Family and Servants, 1815-1914*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 2 both.

⁵⁷ Sheila McIsaac Cooper, “From Family Member to Employee: Continuity and Discontinuity in English Domestic Service, 1600-2000” in A. Favre-Chamoux, ed. *Domestic Service and the formation of European identity: Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th-21st Centuries*. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 290.

⁵⁸ Pamela A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1999), 246.

the microcosm of one side of the service relationship. Analysing the published autobiography of Louise Jermy who worked as a servant of all work and then laundry maid, Jane McDermid attempted to understand what working as a servant meant to the life and self-definition of one woman.⁵⁹ Overall, Jermy's autobiography highlighted the lack of opportunities for self-improvement for working-class women.⁶⁰ She used service as a springboard first to escape an abusive home life, and then to improve her education. Jermy may have been unique in this, as contemporaries who worked in urban Lancaster claimed no especial motives in their entering domestic service, but both probably recognised the fact that their departure would lessen the strain on family resources.⁶¹ A study of Mary Anne Disraeli's household account books for 1838 to 1872 shows the servant-family relationship from the other side. Mrs. Disraeli maintained a small staff of between five to nine servants at her London home, but she had just over 200 different servants go through her employ from 1838 to 1872.⁶² While Louise Jermy had legitimate reasons to seek out other employment, employers could dismiss servants for trivial reasons. Mrs. Disraeli hired Richard Mitchell to be an under butler on February 1, 1847 only to dismiss him on the 8th for "...impertinence about some waistcoats."⁶³ While those who particularly displeased her were quickly dismissed, some of the servants who left must have done so of their own accord. Living in London, Mrs. Disraeli had quick access to many more potential servants than those in this study might have had, but even so the number of male and female servants who stayed less than three months is quite high.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Jane McDermid, 'The Creation of a 'Domestic' Life: The Memories of a Working Woman,' in *Labour History Review* 73, No. 3 (2008), 255.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 262.

⁶¹ Pooley, 419.

⁶² Pamela Horn, "Mrs. Disraeli and her servants: 1838-1872' in *Genealogists' Magazine* Vol. 30, No.2, 2010, 39.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 45-47.

While London provided a huge number of job openings for potential servants, and anonymity if they had been dismissed for bad or illegal behaviour, urban service did not seem to foster the same sense of community that was found in the country house. The influence of print has also attracted attention. Prescriptive authors dealt extensively with servants and wrote for the middle-class, but the employer-servant relationship appears in other types of literature for the same audience. Patricia Johnson discovered that the more entrenched the concept of a working-class male as the sole breadwinner became, the less visible working women characters became in social problem novels.⁶⁵ Female servants, whom readers knew were overwhelmingly unmarried or widowed and therefore without a male breadwinner were invisible as well, not because their employment threatened social norms, but because it supported it.⁶⁶ While the employers were reading books wherein servants were unseen if they were doing their job correctly, other media that hinted at what the servants might also be reading while they were unseen by their employers had a very different effect. Suzanne Beal argues that depictions in art of servants reading were interpreted as a sign of disobedience and rebellion against their employers.⁶⁷ Showing a servant who was not actively engaged in the work they were paid to do was seen by nineteenth-century viewers as a sign of social disorder within the house. For Margaret Beetham, what exactly the servant was reading was even more subversive than his or her literacy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Patricia Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social Problem Fiction* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001), 4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁷ Suzanne Beal, "Changing the Reading of Victorian Maids" in Antoine Capet, ed., *The Representation of Working People in Britain and France: New Perspectives* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 79

⁶⁸ Margaret Beetham, "Domestic Servants as Poachers of Print: Reading, Authority and Resistance in Late Victorian Britain," in Delap et al, *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 187.

This study seeks to answer a limited number of questions about domestic service in gentry country houses using nineteenth century Yorkshire households as case studies. Did the prescriptive literature, which purported to describe how the upper classes ran their houses, genuinely reflect what was going on in gentry houses? What kind of servants did the gentry keep? How did they recruit them? How was work organized in those houses? How did employers and employees share the space in the house, and how were class distinctions preserved despite sharing the same premises?

To begin one must first understand what people perceived upper class service to be like. This includes an analysis of domestic prescriptive literature across the study period. Books like *The Complete Servant* and *Book of Household Management* purport to describe the domestic hierarchy of the upper classes so that aspiring middle-class readers can adapt it to their own homes. Prescriptive authors such as Sarah and Samuel Adams and Isabella Beeton consistently appealed to readers because the behaviours they wrote about were recognisable to readers. Constancy and uniformity of advice indicate the search for a universality of behaviour among the group the authors described. If the job structure and domestic hierarchy remained constant across the century, then the dialogue around class and place within the household was probably constant as well. The books were striving to give readers a sense of how the upper class, a group that included the gentry, ordered their servants. If the Lister, Sykes and Pennyman women ordered their own servants along the same divisions, then it can be inferred prescriptive literature was an accurate reflection of how a fully staffed country house would be run. Gradual shifts in the books' advice on household organization correspond to an increase in authors' commenting on a perceived dearth of 'good servants' This shift is closely related to the

‘Servant Problem’, a phenomena that did not affect the study group precisely because of the way they organized their country households.

The fourth chapter delves into how the employers at Shibden Hall, Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall ran their households to answer the questions ‘What kind of servants did the gentry keep? How did they recruit them?’ Beginning with recruitment and the staff hierarchies then moving through duties and employer expectations, the household organization of each country house will be examined in light of the depictions made by prescriptive authors in the preceding chapter. Attention will be paid to why the so-called ‘Servant Problem’ did not manifest itself in these country houses. Discipline is a fundamental part of domestic service and its management, and it helped mitigate potential conflict before it could become systemic. The explicit and implicit ways in which it worked to reinforce the service and social orders within the country house are as important as the other management techniques deployed by the ladies of these houses.

As any relationship has its issues of disagreement and conflict, so too did country house service. Despite the shared roof, contentious issues between servants and their employers were a fact of daily working life. How work and living spaces were organised to minimize these frictions is the topic of the fifth chapter. For the country houses in this study, these issues tended to coalesce around undeclared duties, which created labour conflict, and the crossing of group boundaries. The domestic hierarchy of the third and fourth chapters acted as a pressure valve towards reducing labour conflict, as each person knew their explicit duties in relation to those who worked above and below them on the service ladder. Friction arose when duties other than those typically assigned were demanded by the employer, and when the servant felt that the duties were too far from

the tasks demanded by their position.⁶⁹ Outside of the strict service hierarchy, one servant crossed many of the boundaries of duty, proximity and social class that separated the country house family from the majority of their hired servants: the governess. A popular figure in nineteenth-century charity and literature because of her liminal status, she was neither part of the main body of female servants who ran the laundry and kitchen or cleaned the house, nor was she an equal to her employers precisely because they *were* her employers. The governess's nearer social proximity, real or perceived by the governess herself, created greater friction between her perceptions of an employer's proper duties and their reality. The ways such conflicts were resolved or not were tied to the management techniques as much as the outward culture of the country house.

The last chapter is a case study of employment records from Ormesby Hall for the period 1861 to approximately 1903. Account and wage books cover the entire domestic service staff during this period, recording wage payments, monetary perks and the addresses of next of kin. Combining this information with entries from the 1861 through 1891 censuses uncovers the geographical 'draw' a country house could exert. Also, the length of service for each rank can be calculated. Given the frequency of late nineteenth century complaints on 'job hopping' in domestic service, illustrating length of employment and frequency of promotions allows one to see if such complaints were grounded more in perception than fact. Combined with the conclusions of the previous chapters, this case study will illustrate the organisation of a gentry country house.

⁶⁹ Presumably tensions also arose when those within the hierarchy either failed to keep to their place or did not perform their tasks adequately. Such inter-servant conflicts were likely resolved amongst themselves, without the need to involve the employer. Unfortunately the primary source evidence is biased towards the employer, so very little evidence was found of inter-servant conflict.

Chapter 2

Yorkshire and the Gentry Families

Yorkshire was selected as the location for this study for a variety of reasons. The most important was distance from London. Even in the early years of the study period, London was an alluring and sophisticated metropolis.⁷⁰ Girls and young women looking for work were attracted by its seemingly numberless job opportunities, both legal and illegal. By contrast, Yorkshire had fewer job opportunities for women; as will be seen, the majority of women working at Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall came from small Yorkshire towns and villages where few other job opportunities were available to them. Yorkshire also had the highest number of servant employers outside of London and its nearby counties of Kent and Middlesex.⁷¹ The distance from London also influences the family's lifestyle, making them more likely to remain in Yorkshire year round rather than split their time between the family country house and another place in London. The households in this study made Yorkshire their year round home. Additionally, Yorkshire was the home and employment location for two former servants, Charlotte and Anne Brontë, for both of whom useful primary sources exist.

In addition to distance from London, Yorkshire has an abundance of primary sources available. The county boasts many easily accessible archives and gentry country houses open to the public. Its local archives and libraries hold fonds from many different landed families, making it possible to cover the whole economic and title range of the

⁷⁰ One of the principal attractions of Thornfield for Jane Eyre is that it is 70 miles closer to London than Lowood, the character's first teaching position. As 70 miles was still more than a day's travelling by road, the appeal of London for young working women extended even to the more remote countryside. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 120.

⁷¹ Schwarz, 242-243.

gentry. This allowed for a larger pool of potential families and their country houses to draw from in forming the study group. Furthermore, the existence of a wide range of nineteenth century primary sources points to the existence of a large number of potential employers during the study period. This greater range proved helpful when one of the fonds identified in the thesis proposal, the one of Newby Hall in the Leeds City Archives, did not contain sufficient information on the Hall's servants. After careful consideration of the Lister family and Shibden Hall's local prominence, the Anne Lister fond at Halifax's West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS) was substituted. The substitution resulted in a study group that was less economically homogeneous, but more representative of the gentry's diversity. On the servant side, it was hoped that both isolation from London and a large number of potential employers would create a semi-closed marketplace, making it possible to trace the career trajectories of some Yorkshire-born servants. Unfortunately, this proved not to be the case, as none of the fonds examined provided sufficient information to track any servant's career beyond the time they spent with the family represented by a particular fond.

The ownership of a country house is the primary determinant for inclusion of a family in this study. In order to determine which country house owning families could be considered gentry, the size of the house, the income of the estate and the length of time the family had lived at the house were taken into consideration. Issues that had an impact on lifestyle were also considered, including sources of income and formal education. Particular notice was paid to houses and families who have not received much scholarly attention. All of these criteria resulted in well-known Yorkshire country houses like Castle Howard outside of York and Temple Newsam in Leeds not being retained. The family trees of the main families in this study appear in the Appendix A.

Three Yorkshire country households are the focus of this study: the Pennyman family of Ormesby Hall, the Listers of Shibden Hall and the Sykes family of Sledmere House. The three main families were chosen for a variety of reasons: geographic location, availability and accessibility of primary sources and social background. Documents from other gentry families, such as the Thellussons of Brodsworth Hall and the Langdales of Houghton Hall will be examined but these families are not part of the main focus group. On the other side of the 'stairs', the letters and novels of Charlotte and Anne Brontë provide insight into the work governesses were expected to perform and the employer/governess relationship. The two sisters were natives of Yorkshire who worked as governess for other Yorkshire families. The Ms. Brontës' observations are valuable social commentary on the distinctions between upper and lower servants and the social rank of employers.

The physical presence of a country house could draw potential staff regardless of the employers' personality, so possession of the house alone, without title or pedigree, cannot be the only criteria to be considered gentry. Hereditary titles are not a reliable indicator a gentry membership either. Only two of the three main families in this study were entitled, the Sykes and the Pennymans; the Pennyman baronetcy was lost through primogeniture. Long local pedigree and county responsibility are common to all the families who appear in this study. These features, sufficient wealth to maintain a certain lifestyle that included multiple servants and long familial ties to the locality along with ownership of a country house, were all used to determine which families were parts of the final study group. Income determined the size of the staff; arrears in pay were a sure method to losing staff and having trouble recruiting more. Maintaining too large a staff could overtax an estate's income, leaving insufficient funds for other aspects of country

house ownership or family use. Money and other liquid assets were necessary to the maintenance of the country house lifestyle: open-handed generosity, upkeep of grounds and stables, and the employment of staff. The lifestyle for these families was a mixture of *noblesse oblige* and status preservation. Employing servants was a part of this lifestyle: new servants could be recruited from disadvantaged and poor tenants, and retaining a domestic staff of both men and women was a status symbol.

Today Anne Lister is better known for her lesbianism than as a member of the Halifax gentry; however, her sexuality is but one facet of her life and not necessarily the defining one. The woman who emerges from her letters and diaries is uncompromising, controlling, socially aspirational, conservative and highly rank conscious. All of these traits colored how she ran Shibden Hall and treated her servants. While locals had long suspected Anne's sexual orientation, it did not appear to have discouraged potential servants from working for her. Or if it did, Anne neither knew nor commented on it.

The Lister family had been landowners around Halifax for roughly two hundred years when Anne Lister inherited Shibden Hall in 1826. Shibden Hall had been built in the early fifteenth century and the Lister family acquired it through marriage in 1619.⁷² During the seventeenth century the Lister built their fortune as middlemen in the wool trade. The family fortunes took a downturn during the eighteenth century as dependents and expenditures outnumbered revenues and savings. Anne's father, Jeremy Lister turned to the army for an income and fought in the American Revolution.⁷³ Her uncle James inherited Shibden Hall as the eldest surviving son (Anne's father was the fourth-born son) but did not engage in any profitable expansion of the Shibden estate nor did he

⁷² Jill Liddington, *Female Fortune: Land, Gender and Authority* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1998), 4.

marry.⁷⁴ In 1815, Anne was taken to live at Shibden with her uncle James and her aunt, also named Anne. The reasons why are somewhat unclear. The younger Anne seem to have had frequent disagreements with her father and sister, but she was also the heir presumptive to Shibden Hall and the move may have given her uncle James time to show her the ins and outs of running the estate. Anne inherited Shibden Hall, its estate and another family house, Northgate House in urban Halifax at James's death.

Following Anne's death whilst travelling in Russia on September 22, 1840, her partner Ann Walker received a lifetime's tenancy of Shibden Hall.⁷⁵ This meant that it was not until Walker's death in 1854 that Shibden Hall reverted to Lister hands, this time to a branch of the family that had settled in Wales. The last Lister to own Shibden Hall was Anne's cousin once removed, John Lister, in 1867 (see genealogy in appendix). He was the one to crack the code Anne employed in her diaries, although he did not make public the explicit sexual and personal details the encrypted passages held.⁷⁶ He willed Shibden Hall to the city of Halifax as museum; he died in 1933.

Anne Lister's partner Ann Walker came from the Haligonian mercantile élite. Ann Walker's grandfather William Walker had made a strategic marriage to the daughter of a wealthy merchant. He then used his wealth and new position to gain a foothold in the local gentry as Deputy Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace.⁷⁷ William's son, also named William, inherited the family estate Crow Nest and continued the trend of county appointments. Although William Walker II died unmarried, his younger brother John,

⁷³ Ibid, 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 238.

⁷⁶ Helena Whitbread, ed. *No Priest But Love: Excerpts from the Diaries of Anne Lister, 1824-1826*. (New York: New York University Press, 1992), xv.

⁷⁷ Liddington, 28-30.

Ann Walker's father, made an advantageous union and inherited Crow Nest at the death of William II. Ann Walker lost both parents in 1823 when she was nineteen, and her younger brother John, the only male child, inherited the now settled estate while Ann and her sister Elizabeth were left with valuable stock.⁷⁸ John lived just long enough to let the estate fall into disrepair, dying without issue whilst on his honeymoon in Italy.⁷⁹ This left Anne and her sister Elizabeth as joint heiresses to the entire Crow Nest estate. It was this wealth that prompted Anne Lister to seek out Anne Walker as a partner and by January 1834, the two ladies were living together at Shibden Hall. Elizabeth and her husband Captain Sutherland were suspicious of Anne Lister's motives, particularly when large amounts of cash flowed from Ann Walker's purse into Anne Lister's.⁸⁰ Legally however, the Sutherlands had little recourse to dam the cash flow due to the terms of their parent's will, which gave Ann relative independent control over her own inheritance. However years of suspicions and an earlier bout with 'melancholy' prompted Captain Sutherland to have Ann Walker declared insane and forcibly removed from Shibden to an asylum in 1843.⁸¹ Although she was released in 1845, it appears as though the Sutherlands moved into Shibden as Captain Sutherland died there in 1847.⁸² As was her right under the terms of Anne Lister's will, Ann Walker remained a tenant at Shibden until her death in 1854, at which time the country house and its estate passed back into Lister hands.

The Sykes are the wealthiest family in this study, and their ancestral seat Sledmere House, the largest of the three country houses under consideration. The Domesday Book records a Sledmere settlement, which continued through the Middle

⁷⁸ Ibid, 34.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 36.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 70.

⁸¹ Ibid, 238.

Ages.⁸³ The Sykes family's connection with Sledmere began in 1748 when Richard Sykes inherited land with an older manor house where Sledmere House now stands, from his uncle and father-in-law.⁸⁴ Prior to his inheriting, Richard had been a successful merchant in Hull. He demolished the older buildings and laid the first stone for a new house on June 17, 1751.⁸⁵ His grandson Christopher made further improvements and alteration to the building, including enlarging and improving the domestic wing.⁸⁶ A baronetcy was awarded in 1783 to Christopher Sykes, who instead recommended it be granted to his still-living father. Thus the first baron Sykes was in fact the second baronet; the family retains the title today.

Sir Tatton Sykes I, the fourth baronet inherited Sledmere in 1823 upon the death of his brother. He lived stringently, devoting his time to outdoor and agricultural pursuits, and pressed a rather ascetic domestic life on his wife and children.⁸⁷ His son, Tatton Sykes II married late in life to Christine Jessica Cavindish-Bentinck, known to all as "Jessie" and eighteen years his junior. Tatton and Jessie spent a significant amount of time travelling, both in Europe and further abroad including a stop in Ottawa.⁸⁸ Sledmere House remained largely architecturally unchanged through the nineteenth century. Even the eighteenth century plumbing was not upgraded until the late 1880s. The house that

⁸² Ibid, 239.

⁸³ Anonymous, *Sledmere*, (Norfolk: Jarrod Publishing, 2008), 3.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 3 and Christopher Sykes, *The Big House: The Story of a Country House and its Family* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 13.

⁸⁵ Anon, *Sledmere*, 4.

⁸⁶ Sykes, 153.

⁸⁷ Sykes, 122-124.

⁸⁸ Early in their marriage they travelled to North America and spent some time in Ottawa. While here they were entertained at Rideau Hall by then Governor-General Lord Dufferin who was quite taken with Lady Sykes. For her part, Jessie found Dufferin to be "the most charming man I had ever met." (Sykes, 161). It appears the mutual infatuation increased on both sides during the Sykes' stay. On her last dinner with him, Jessie records in her diary "...made a discovery which pained me. It is always sad to find weakness." (Sykes, 161). It would appear that Jessie, whose marriage to Tatton was not what she had hoped for, had an assignation with Lord Dufferin.

stands today is only the shell of the original Sledmere, as the interior was rebuilt following a devastating fire in 1911.

Like the settlement at Sledmere, Ormesby village was mentioned in the Domesday Book. The Pennyman family had lived in the area since the fifteenth century, when a Thomas Pennyman, “gentleman” is recorded as living in Stokesley, roughly seven miles from Ormesby Hall.⁸⁹ A crest to the coat of arms was granted to James Pennyman, great-great-grandson of Thomas Pennyman, in 1599. The next year James purchased much of the township of Ormesby. In 1601, he built the stone house that would become the servants’ wing by the nineteenth century. In 1660, Charles II rewarded the family’s loyalty to the deposed King during the Civil War by granting a baronetcy to James Pennyman, grandson of the James who had been granted a coat of arms.⁹⁰ A couple of strategic marriages to heiresses in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth increased the social standing and wealth of the Pennymans.

The current house was built between 1740 and 1745 under the direction of James Pennyman, the fourth baronet and his wife Dorothy.⁹¹ Her husband died before the house was completed so it was Dorothy who oversaw the last stages of its construction. She had a very strong connection to the house; her 1753 will included details of “the brass locks fixed on the doors...marble chimney pieces, hearth slabs, chimney pieces, dutch tiles and bells.”⁹² Ormesby Hall was empty for roughly fifteen years following Dorothy’s death as the fourth and fifth baronets preferred other family houses. The sixth baronet James Pennyman (1736 -1808) spent a significant amount of time at Ormesby. The large stable

⁸⁹ Sophie Raikes, *Ormesby Hall* (London: Centurion Press, 2002), 32.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 33.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 34.

⁹² *Ibid*, 35.

block built in the 1770s is testament to his passion for horse racing.⁹³ This passion had disastrous effects on the family fortune, and in 1792 Ormesby Hall's contents right down to the lead water pipes were auctioned to settle his debts.⁹⁴ Travel writer William Hutton recorded a local story that Ormesby's interior fittings were saved by an elderly female servant. Apparently she remained in the house and "never stirred out or admitted anyone within the premises, but sustained a siege of many years..." her food being supplied via a basket and pulley.⁹⁵

Thus the Pennymans and Ormesby Hall began the nineteenth century with their fortunes at a low ebb. William Pennyman, the seventh baronet, lived frugally and was able to replace the auctioned off water pipes. When he died childless in 1852, Ormesby Hall and its estate passed to his aunt's grandson, James White Worsley Pennyman. The dictates of primogeniture prevent the passing of titles through the female line, so the baronetcy was lost. Capitalising on the rapid population growth brought by Middlesbrough's industrial boom, White Worsley Pennyman leased some of the increasingly valuable estate land.⁹⁶ He also was able to modernise the house, renovating some rooms and installing gas lighting. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Pennymans made Ormesby Hall their main home, with only brief stays in London and this constancy is reflected in the domestic service patterns of the house.

None of the married women in this study worked for an income. Any money that they had of their own was either from property settled on them before marriage or given to them as pin money by their husbands. Thus the servants' wages did not come directly

⁹³ Ibid, 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 37.

⁹⁵ Raikes quoting William Hutton, *A Trip to Coatham in Yorkshire*, (London: J. Nichols & Sons, 1809) in *Ormesby Hall*, 37.

out of the ladies' pockets but were paid from money their husbands earned from the country house estate and business shares.⁹⁷ Strictly speaking then, the women were not the employers of the servants. However, as all the women in this study were in charge of the domestic arrangements and management of the servants, they are herein considered the employers. Furthermore, the servants were more likely to deal with the lady of the house both on a day-to-day basis and as the person who hired them. The word 'employer' in this study is used in this context.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 39.

⁹⁷ The obvious exception here is Anne Lister who paid her servants' wages out of her own income from Shibden's estate revenue.

3

Prescriptive Literature

Household manuals and servants' guides can help us find out what was expected of servants. Books dealing with how to run households were published before the nineteenth century, but their number increased subsequently.⁹⁸ Household manuals were written for the lady of house and typically covered every service position a country house would have. They purported to describe how the upper classes ran their homes, for the benefit of the reader who could then adapt the practices to suit his or her own individual circumstances. Servants' guides were written for those already working in domestic service, and mainly offered hints and specific tips on cleaning and serving. Such books are reactive, the authors were not creating completely new ways of organising a household, but refining a system that already existed. Prescriptive works are excellent tools with which to understand the normative aspects of domestic service because they are concerned with the rules and limits of power and place in addition to describing tasks. More comprehensive prescriptive works attempted to rationalise service work, by prescribing exact times for certain chores and recording stain removal recipes, but much remained the product of guesswork and personal experience. Although the rules became more elaborate as the century wore on, the balance of power shifted towards the servants. The need for more rules suggests that the people making the rules, the employers in this case, felt their authority was weakening.

The choice of books analyzed was determined by availability and location of the archives, in this case the Brotherton Collection in the archives of Leeds University.

Firstly, this archive offered a special fond of prescriptive literature dealing with domestic economy. Secondly, a couple of the books had actually been published in Leeds rather than London which increases the likelihood that they were purchased and used in the region. The books consulted span the nineteenth-century from 1825 to approximately 1907, and fit with this study's timeline of 1800 to 1900.⁹⁹ Five named and five anonymous authors are represented by the eleven volumes. Two of the books were published in Yorkshire and one comes from Edinburgh.

Work	Author
<i>The Complete Servant</i>	Samuel and Sarah Adams
<i>The Servant's Companion</i>	Anonymous
<i>A Present for Female Servants</i>	Samuel Dunn
<i>The Servants' Guide and Family Manual</i>	Anonymous
<i>Cookery and Domestic Economy for Young Housewives</i>	'the Mistress of a Family'
<i>The Book of Household Management</i>	Isabella Beeton
<i>The Servant's Companion and Useful Guide</i>	S.M.T. Millington
<i>The Rights, Duties and Relations of Domestic Servants and their Masters and Mistresses</i>	T. Henry Baylis
<i>Manners of Modern Society: Being a Book of Etiquette</i>	Eliza Cheadle (attributed)
<i>The Servant's Practical Guide: A handbook of duties and roles</i>	Anonymous
<i>Beeton's Every-day Cookery and Housekeeping Book</i>	Isabella Beeton (posthumous)

While most of the books were published in London, the genre reached readers outside of the metropolis. The inclusion of a dairymaid section in *The Servants' Guide and Family Manual* is significant. Not only was this branch of service falling out of

⁹⁸ *British Library Integrated Catalogue* [database online]. (London: British Library, accessed January 20, 2011); available from www.catalogue.bl.uk

⁹⁹ There is no publication year on the flypage of *Beeton's Every-day Cookery and Housekeeping Book* (Ward, Lock and Co., London) but the Brotherton catalogue posits a publication date no earlier than 1889 and no later than 1907.

favour as food production became more scientific, but such positions would only have existed in rural houses. In fact, fifteen pages are devoted to the dairymaid's role, whereas the immediately preceding section for the laundrymaid is a mere five pages.¹⁰⁰ Given that the book was published in London, where few people would keep cows as a source of food, one can reasonably assume that household manuals were written for and reached a wider audience than Londoners. More specific to Yorkshire, S.M.T. Millington's *The Servant's Companion and Useful Guide* was published in 1864 but is a reprint of the earlier anonymous 1832 *The Servant's Companion*. Millington does not appear as an author of any other works, and it is difficult to say whether he or she was also the anonymous author of *The Servant's Companion*. Both books are organized in the same way, around tips for specific tasks rather than overviews of service positions. The second book was published in Liverpool rather than Leeds, and the publisher is given as George Bateman, not H. Spink. This peculiar re-issuing of the book attests to both the genre's popularity as well as the continuity of domestic service as an activity.

The majority of the books divide domestic service into several different departments: housekeeping, cooking, the nursery and the laundry. The lady's maid and the governess worked outside of these departments because their duties did not contribute to the running of the house. The unique position of the governess will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. Domestic service was highly hierarchal; at the bottom were the various types of maids, kitchen-, nursery-, laundry- and housemaids. Depending on the size of the establishment, there may have been several ranks in each department between the entry level positions and the head of a department. At the very tip of the pyramid was

¹⁰⁰ Anon, *The Servants' Guide and Family Manual* (London: John Limbird, 1835) 139-154 and 134-138, respectively.

the housekeeper. A parallel hierarchy existed for the male indoor servants, from hallboy, footman, valet, and butler up to house steward. Outside of the house, more positions such as groom, gardener and estate steward were available to men, but women's service positions were limited to the indoors. Promotion up the service ladder did not necessarily mean new jobs, but the same jobs in increasing visible parts of the house.

The oldest work studied here is *The Complete Servant* by Samuel and Sarah Adams, published in London in 1825. The introduction claims that the married authors are former servants who worked their way up the domestic service hierarchy to the positions of house steward and housekeeper, respectively.¹⁰¹ Careful reading undermines this assertion. The entire introduction is aimed at the lady of the house; but a claim that wash day is the “only one that can be called a hard day's work” a char lady will undertake implies a lack of personal experience with rigorous housework.¹⁰² The concept of husband and wife as co-authors allows both the male and the female service positions to be analysed without the appearance of contravening gender norms.

The Adams place the servant of all work as the lowest level of the service hierarchy. Girls for this post were to come from the poorest families on the estate.¹⁰³ As the job title implies, the duties combined those of the housemaids and the scullery maids.¹⁰⁴ Given the inclusive nature of the job, a servant of all work could be brought in to provide temporary relief when another servant was indisposed or when the family was entertaining and required extra help. The implication is also that those who could only afford a servant of all work belonged to the lowest possible income bracket that could

¹⁰¹ Adams, Samuel, *The Complete Servant* (Knight & Lacey, London: 1825), iv.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 292.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 285.

¹⁰⁴ Adams, 285.

still be considered genteel.¹⁰⁵ The fact such servants were from the estate suggests this post was a charity provided by the country house and a handy entrance point for the girls to move into any of the domestic service departments.

As befits a trade where learning and training were done on the job, the lowest positions are assigned the heaviest and dirtiest tasks. The Adams do not assign ranks to the servants under the heads of the housecleaning department; rather they group them under one title, ‘under house-maid’. Under-housemaids were the immediate responsibility of the ‘upper house-maid’, and their tasks supported her work. Before lunch, they were to scour stoves and grates, coal scuttles, kettles and the fire irons.¹⁰⁶ Then they were to scour the floors, stairs and passages.¹⁰⁷ Curiously, the under housemaids were also to beat and clean the carpets.¹⁰⁸ Exactly how often the carpets were to be taken out for cleaning is not stated, but given the disruption it would have caused, it was unlikely to have been done daily, perhaps weekly or even monthly. In the afternoon, when the rooms which they had previously scoured and cleaned were being used by the family of the house, the under house-maid was supposed to sew and mend both household linens and her own clothes and [do her own laundry].¹⁰⁹ Like the servant of all work, the under-house maid’s duties were not confined to only one department. She might be pressed into waiting at the housekeeper’s table if there was no stillroom maid, and she was to help wash dishes when the family had company.¹¹⁰

According to the Adamases, the upper house-maid was the next position up in the housekeeping department. Unlike the post of under house-maid which could be held by

¹⁰⁵ See discussion of Higgs’, Anderson’s and Schwarz’s studies in the introduction.

¹⁰⁶ Adams, 284.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 284.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 284.

¹⁰⁹ Adams, 284.

one or several girls simultaneously, the Adams allow for only one upper house-maid. In order to reach this level, she “should be fully competent to undertake the management of all the household business of a gentleman’s family.”¹¹¹ As the head of a department, the upper house-maid ranked among the head servants and her tasks and responsibilities reflected that. She was the supervisor of any under house-maids in the house, and as such was accountable for ensuring their work was done. There was some overlap with the chores of the under house-maid, cleaning and blacking the stoves and fireplaces of the front rooms as well as cleaning the carpets and floors of the same rooms, although beating the carpets was not her responsibility.¹¹²

The Complete Servant’s upper house-maid’s workday as laid out in begins at 5:00am and continues until the family has finished eating dinner. The majority of her tasks were to be completed before breakfast; in other words, before the family was likely to be using the front rooms of the house. Between rising and breakfast, the upper house-maid would dust, clean and lay fires in the family room, breakfast room, and library and sweep the main staircase.¹¹³ While the family were at breakfast she was to repeat the same tasks in the dining room and drawing rooms. After that, but before 1:00pm, the bedrooms slop pails were emptied and the ewers refilled, as well as their fireplaces cleaned and relit. Then she had a brief break to wash her face and change into a new apron to make the beds with the under house-maid.¹¹⁴ Washing and a new apron were presumably to prevent the accidental transfer of ashes or dirt onto the bedding. The change of clothes also meant she would be cleaner and therefore more presentable if she

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 284.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 276.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 277.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 277-278.

crossed paths with any member of the family. During the afternoon, she was to do “needlework under the housekeeper’s supervision.”¹¹⁵ Before the family dressed for dinner, the head house-maid brought hot water to their rooms. While they were at dinner, she was to straighten the dressing room, empty the slops, and ready the bedroom for the night by drawing the curtains, lighting the fires and turning down the beds.¹¹⁶ The Adams deem Tuesdays and Saturdays as “general cleaning days” on which the head house-maid, presumably with the aid of the under house-maids or the servant of all work, scoured the rooms instead of just sweeping them.¹¹⁷ The specificity of the tasks of the head house-maid contrasts with the vaguely defined ones for the under house-maids, suggesting that under house-maids duties were decided on a daily ‘as needed’ basis. The kitchen department’s equivalent to the under house-maid was the scullion or scullery maid. This position was the lowest in the cooking department, “assist[ing] in all the laborious parts of the kitchen business.”¹¹⁸ The Adams assign the scullion the tasks of keeping the kitchen fires going as well as keeping the kitchen implements and dishes serviceable and clean. Reflecting her low position in the kitchen, her only food related duty is to help the kitchen-maid with preparing the vegetables. The scullion also cleaned the service rooms, such as the servant’s hall and the housekeeper’s room. Oddly, she also was responsible for scrubbing the front doorstep and surrounding area.¹¹⁹ The Adams do not devote as much detail to the work of the scullion as they do to the kitchen maid, noting that if a scullion is not kept, then all of her tasks pass to the next higher servant, the kitchen maid.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 278.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 280.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 281.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 280.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 235.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 235.

Of all the servants, the Adamses claim that the kitchen maid has “the hardest place in the house.”¹²⁰ Also called the ‘under cook’, her tasks and responsibilities were more closely related to food preparation than those of the scullion. Under the cook’s direction she would prepare the minor meals for the household, such as the nursery dinners, the servants’ meals, and informal lunch for the family.¹²¹ The kitchen maid would help with the family dinner but it was more the cook’s task than her own. As mentioned above, if she was the only servant under the cook, then the kitchen-maid would have to keep the cooking fires lit as well as keep the kitchen clean. Her duties dovetailed nicely with the cook’s; she was assigned the responsibility for the lesser meals which allowed her to expand her skills and eventually be promoted to cook.

The cook was the head of the kitchen department, and one of the most important servants. Reflective of this status, *The Complete Servant* devotes almost as much space to the non-work elements of the post as to the various cooking tasks. As a person, the ideal candidate for the position had to be able to cook economically, be willing to conform to her employers’ tastes, be punctual and most importantly keep her work area and person as clean as possible.¹²² The cook’s work day was one of the longest, beginning before breakfast and ending well after the family’s dinner. Although the post was ultimately under the housekeeper’s direction, the cook might consult directly with the mistress of the house regarding which dishes to cook and what food to buy.¹²³ Given the cost of meat and the difficulties in storing it without refrigeration, the cook had control of the larder and she spent more time in preparing meat than either the kitchen-maid or the scullion. Thus her main cooking tasks were boiling, roasting and preventing the stored meat from

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 233.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 233.

¹²² *Ibid*, 194-195.

spoiling.¹²⁴ According to the Adamases, the family dinner was the most important job for the kitchen staff, and as the head of the kitchen the cook was responsible for overseeing its production. After the meal was over and the leftovers returned to the kitchen, it was the cook's job to carefully store these away.¹²⁵

The Adamases place one servant in the kitchen who is not under the charge of the cook. The still-room maid was accountable to the housekeeper. While her main responsibility was to wait on the housekeeper, her duties were much more varied than those of other subordinates. The still-room maid assisted the housekeeper in the tasks of preserving and pickling, wine making, pastry baking and coffee making.¹²⁶ Additionally, the still-room maid made perfume and cosmetics, washed the china and organised the storeroom.¹²⁷ As mentioned in the under house-maid's duties above, the still-room maid waited at the housekeeper's table where the upper servants took their tea and dinner.¹²⁸ While the inclusive nature of the tasks, combining both cleaning and cooking, suggest that the still-room maid would be the most likely to be promoted to housekeeper, the lack of any financial responsibility implies otherwise.

The Adams also describe the nursery, an area of domestic service that was a universe unto itself, staffed by the nursery maid, the under nurse and the head nurse. As the job title suggests, the nursery maid did the "household work" of the nursery; presumably the same tasks as the house-maid performs but restricted to the nursery rooms. Her only task directly involving the children was to carry "such of them as may

¹²³ *Ibid*, 218.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 196-218.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 220.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 63. A footnote in the Cook's section of the book directs the reader to the still-room section if they are looking for instructions for those particular jobs.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 63.

be required” when the children were outside. The under nurse’s job was more childcare focused. While she had to help with any of the nursery tasks, be they child-related or housework, her main focus was the elder children: waking them up, dressing them and taking them outside for exercise.¹²⁹ The head nurse’s primary job was caring for the infant in the nursery; she did everything except nurse the baby.¹³⁰ She was also in charge of the running of the nursery and oversaw the other nursery servants. The Adamses do not mention how the labour would be divided when the children were between toddlerhood and school age. Presumably the head nurse would chiefly care for the youngest child until this child became old enough for the schoolroom at which point a governess might become the chief architect of the children’s day.

Also standing somewhat apart from the main service hierarchy was the lady’s maid. Her daily close contact with the mistress of the house separated her from the main body of kitchen and housekeeping servants. Like the governess, a lady’s maid was to be better educated than “...the ordinary class of females, particularly in needle-work, and the useful and ornamental branches of female acquirements.”¹³¹ According to the Adamses, her tasks were “...extremely simple, and but little varied.”¹³² The lady’s maid main tasks were dressing and undressing her mistress and maintaining her wardrobe.¹³³ This included washing the lady’s fine fabrics and repairing any tears or holes. She was also to ensure that the house-maid had lit the fires and emptied the slops from the lady’s room.¹³⁴ Unlike the other domestic service departments, there were no subordinate positions in

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 284.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 271.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 255.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 236.

¹³² *Ibid*, 236.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 236-237.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 237 and 238.

which to train for the job, and no clear path of promotion beyond the position either.

Sarah Adams claims to have spent time working as a lady's maid in between positions as a housekeeper.¹³⁵

The Adams place the housekeeper at the pinnacle of the domestic service pyramid. Their description of the personal qualities the post required and outside on-the-job experience she may have already acquired was the most detailed of all the servants. The housekeeper was unique among the servants [in being accountable] to the mistress and [having authority over] the other servants. *The Complete Servant* says that the housekeeper is the “active representative” of the lady of the house, and as such must be fair and tolerant to all the servants beneath her.¹³⁶ The housekeeper was responsible for all the servants and she directed their labour. In the absence of a house steward, it was the housekeeper's job to keep the accounts.¹³⁷ These needed to be recorded nightly and balanced weekly.¹³⁸ In order to do so, she would need a working knowledge of accounting. The Adamses place great value and emphasis on the laying of the dinner table, and it is the housekeeper's responsibility to make sure the dishes were placed in the correct spot by the butler. The closest the housekeeper came to cooking was making pastry in her “leisure time.”¹³⁹

The next work chronologically is *The Servant's Companion*, published in 1832. This anonymous work was one of the two books published in Yorkshire. As the title says, servants are the explicit audience, consequently directions for certain tasks are given,

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, iv.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 52.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 54.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 56.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 57.

ranging from cleaning cutlery to answering the door.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the book there are mentions of the servants such as footmen and butlers who would have been found in the largest and wealthiest of households, but the author assumes that the reader is familiar with who does which tasks.¹⁴¹ Here the cook rather than the housekeeper has charge of which dish goes where on the dinner table.¹⁴² The housekeeper is not mentioned in this book, which could either be an indication that any woman occupying that post would already have sufficient experience that she would not need *The Servant's Companion* or that her position did not exist in the household of the target audience.

Samuel Dunn's *A Present for Female Servants, or The Secret of their Getting and Keeping Good Places* is entirely different from the aforementioned books. Samuel Dunn was born February 13, 1798 in Cornwall and died January 24, 1882. He was a Wesleyan minister who preached mostly in the north of England, including in Sheffield and in Halifax.¹⁴³ Dunn wrote many religious tracts, but *A Present for Female Servants* appears to be the only one concerning servants. As befits his personal experience Dunn is neither concerned with a girl's work experience nor the division of labour between servants, but her moral fibre. He openly acknowledges the importance and impact of servants on their employer's family life, saying "...you, as female servants, sustain very responsible situations in society, and...have it in your power to greatly promote the peace and comfort of the families in which you reside."¹⁴⁴ The values that promote such harmony that *A Present...* lists are obedience, respectfulness, kindness, diligence, honesty, truthfulness,

¹⁴⁰ Anon, *The Servant's Companion* (H. Spink: Leeds, 1832), 2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 15

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁴³ H. C. G. Matthews and Brian Harrison, eds. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, volume 17*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 324.

¹⁴⁴ Dunn, 3.

modesty, patience and thankfulness.¹⁴⁵ While Dunn may not describe domestic service in terms of the jobs done, his work gives clues to some of the interpersonal and social issues that do not appear in the other books examined.

Given that the book is addressed to girls and young women who were either interested in becoming servants or were already in service, traits that have a moral angle are applied to all female servants. Thus Dunn imbues personal and workspace cleanliness with moral value rather than merely describe it in the context of scrubbing or dusting. Under the ‘Patience’ section, the reader is advised not to change jobs frequently.¹⁴⁶ The universality of Dunn’s recommended qualities means that job positions are not mentioned specifically, but some of the advice is more applicable to certain positions than others. For example, when dealing with a misbehaving child the servant should not take it upon themselves to punish him or her, but leave this task the parents.¹⁴⁷ This advice is in stark contrast to the Adams’ description of the head-nurse who was responsible for everything related to her charges, save breastfeeding.¹⁴⁸

Some of the advice Dunn gives concerns legal issues, although he addresses them from a religious standpoint rather than a legal one. For Dunn, theft by a servant is punished not just by dismissal from service, but by “the loss...of their souls.”¹⁴⁹ Using the example of a maid entertaining a male guest after the rest of the house had gone to sleep, Dunn claims that such breaking of house rules was grounds for the employer dismissing the maid and denying her a character.¹⁵⁰ As for the servant herself, she was not to claim

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 27.

¹⁴⁷ Dunn, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Adams, 255.

¹⁴⁹ Dunn, 18.

¹⁵⁰ Dunn, 8. ‘Character’ was the nineteenth century term for a character reference.

false qualifications for departments in which she had no experience.¹⁵¹ Although *A Present...* is unique among the books examined for its tone and point of view, it addresses the same domestic issues, such as frequent job changes and the reciprocal responsibilities of employer and employed as the manual targeting employers.

Returning to household manuals, the 1835 *The Servants' Guide and Family Manual* follows the same in-depth approach as the first book examined. The author does not claim to be a former servant, but rather claims to have gathered the information from exhaustive research of other books on the same topic.¹⁵² At least one of the books 'consulted' was *The Complete Servant* as several passages appear word for word without attribution.¹⁵³ The borrowing of material did not adversely affect its popularity; the slightly retitled 1850 edition of *The Family Manual and Servants' Guide* contains exactly the same information, right down to identical pagination.¹⁵⁴ These books do not describe the lowest jobs in the domestic service hierarchy, assuming that as servants themselves the readers have a familiarity with the tasks already.

As in the other publications, the positions in the kitchen department combine some housework with food preparation and cooking. The cook's qualifications and duties remained relatively unchanged. She must be clean morally and professionally, and in addition be flexible in her work, adapting to her employers' tastes.¹⁵⁵ As the head of the kitchen, she contributed to the health and safety of the household by checking the copper

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 21.

¹⁵² Anon, *The Servants' Guide and Family Manual*, 4th ed. (London: John Limbird, 1835), iv.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, the nursery safety precautions on page 118 and the dress recommendations for the lady's maid on page 98.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, *The Family Manual and Servants' Guide*, 5th ed. (London: John Limbird, 1850).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 69-70.

and tin saucepans for signs of corrosion.¹⁵⁶ However, the workload for the lower posts has undergone redistribution in comparison with earlier books. The work of the scullery maid is described as “the most laborious of the kitchen-work,” washing all kitchen tools used during the day.¹⁵⁷ Her food-related tasks are preparing the vegetables and helping the kitchen maid; she does no household cleaning. The kitchen-maid is assigned more work than before. She keeps the kitchen clean and does all the tasks that previous authors assigned the still room maid. Her cooking responsibilities are still the less formal meals, but the amount of work that is not food-related has increased.¹⁵⁸ The rather lopsided division of labour, with the kitchen-maid doing the lion’s share of both the cleaning and the food preparation might be the result of the scullery-maid being present full-time in the wealthiest and largest houses and not so frequently in the smaller ones.

The author treats the post of housemaid as though it is occupied by a single woman with no subordinate servants in her department. The housemaid’s main chore is “cleaning and scouring in nearly all their varieties.”¹⁵⁹ Her duties are not detailed, but from the cleaning tips given it would appear her daily tasks included cleaning the fireplaces, the outside stairs, and the family rooms.¹⁶⁰ In addition to her regular housecleaning, the housemaid may have to assist the laundress or the lady’s maid.¹⁶¹

The nursery maid, laundry maid and lady’s maid are discussed only in terms of qualifications, with no breakdown of the actual tasks involved. An ideal nursery maid should be of “lively and cheerful disposition; perfectly good tempered and clean and neat

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 69.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 95.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 95.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 126.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 129.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 126.

in her habits and person.”¹⁶² The laundry maid’s section is largely devoted to stain removal.¹⁶³ The lady’s maid’s primary duty is attending her mistress’s person and wardrobe, and her work is “...extremely simple, and far from laborious, and is...little more than an agreeable exercise of useful qualities.”¹⁶⁴ A unique benefit of the lady’s maid is highlighted, ‘improvement’ and “self-recommendation” through close contact with her social superiors.¹⁶⁵

As with the other books in this study, the housekeeper remains the most trusted servant and has the most responsibilities. Experience and economy are her two most important assets.¹⁶⁶ She still makes pastry, and in addition to distilling wines.¹⁶⁷ There are no immediate subordinates given as working for her, nor are there any cleaning hints or recipes provided. The recalculating of the labour division shows that authors were beginning to show service hierarchies that better reflected their readers’ everyday realities rather than the domestic organisations of a hypothetical upper class house.

Written by ‘The Mistress of a Family’ in 1838, *Cookery and Domestic Economy for Young Housewives* does not aim for quite the same in-depth coverage as *The Complete Servant* or *The Servants Guide and Family Manual*. Nonetheless it is valuable for the way it explicitly states what the other more exhaustive books leave implied. The audience is specifically “young Housewives in the middle ranks of society.”¹⁶⁸ The author assumed the housewife would take on provisioning the house, and hence keep the

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 119.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 134-139.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 97 and 116.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 117.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 17, 33.and 53, respectively.

¹⁶⁸ *The Mistress of a Family, Cookery and Domestic Economy for Young Housewives*. (William and Robert Chambers: Edinburgh, 1838), iii.

household accounts.¹⁶⁹ As the duties of each servant are not treated separately, it appears the housewife is also to decide the division of labour. Outside of deputizing, ‘the Mistress’ posits that while the housewife should not be “inattentive” to the household concerns, particularly in the kitchen, the best use of her talents is in “...those moral and ornamental pursuits which at once dignify and render the home a scene of happiness.”¹⁷⁰ This is quite a departure from earlier authors who treated the wife as a highly informed employer who possessed a firm understanding of the divisions of labour within her own household.

The ‘Mistress’ does not treat the duties of each servant separately, but rather gives brief mentions of the jobs involved in cleaning (which includes washing pots and making beds) or waiting at the table are given.¹⁷¹ She advocated hiring servants on a month to month basis rather than a six month term.¹⁷² While this practise helped the employer to quickly let go any servant whose work was not up to par, it gave the servants less job security and as will be seen was not the standard length of hiring. Regarding the daily housework timetable, the book is remarkably consistent with those before and those after it. All of the housecleaning is to be done in the morning, with a change into clean clothes for the afternoon.¹⁷³

No examination of domestic manuals would be complete without discussion of Isabella Beeton’s 1861 *The Book of Household Management*. Née Isabella Mary Mayson in 1836, she married author and publisher Samuel Orchart Beeton in 1856. Samuel was the publisher, editor and occasional columnist of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 7 and 118.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid* iv.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 123 and 124, respectively.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 118.

Magazine. It was in this magazine that Isabella's columns on cooking and household management first appeared.¹⁷⁴ She died of puerperal fever in 1865. *The Book of Household Management* was a bestseller in its day, and lucrative re-issues and abridgments printed.¹⁷⁵ Unlike the Adams, Isabella Beeton's name and *The Book of Household Management* are still familiar today. Posthumously, her work continued through many adaptations; the British Library Catalogue lists approximately 135 different reissues since 1900.¹⁷⁶

The Book of Household Management treats the duties of the housekeeping department holistically, instead of dividing them by position. As with other authors, Beeton acknowledged the vital importance of the housemaid to the family's comfort.¹⁷⁷ Personality-wise, an ideal maid should be an early-riser, clean and orderly.¹⁷⁸ Keeping fireplaces and grates cleaned and lit was the most repeated task of the housemaids, so frequent that Beeton claimed that "[i]n summer her work is considerably abridged..." because fires were not needed for warmth.¹⁷⁹ Her workday began before breakfast with cleaning, sweeping and taking up the hearth rugs.¹⁸⁰ Once the family was awake and at breakfast, she was to clean their bedrooms and make the beds; once a week she was to thoroughly sweep and dust them.¹⁸¹ After breakfast was consumed, she would go back

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 123.

¹⁷⁴ Kathryn Hughes, *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs. Beeton* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), 194.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁷⁶ *British Library Integrated Catalogue* [database online]. (London: British Library, accessed December 9, 2011); available from www.catalogue.bl.uk The search returns 141 books, so the approximate total is from subtracting those which are biographies and other books about Isabella Beeton.

¹⁷⁷ Isabella Beeton, ed. *Beeton's Book of Household Management* (London: S. O. Beeton, 1861), 988.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 988.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 990.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 988 and 990. The hearth rugs would be laid over the larger room size rug and therefore easily removed. The larger rugs were too large to be carried by one person, instead they would be cleaned by having damp used tea leaves sprinkled on them, tamped gently into the carpet to pick up dust and grit, and then swept up again.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 991-993.

downstairs to clean any front rooms that had not been done before breakfast and then to change into a clean dress for the afternoon.¹⁸² Whereas the housemaid spent the morning combating dirt largely unseen by the family, in the afternoon she was expected to serve at the table and engage in other tasks where she would be visible and therefore should look clean. Her afternoon would be spent cleaning the plate used during lunch and straightening the pantry. No additional specific tasks were assigned again until the evening, when she was to lay the tea-tray. During her so-called “leisure days” the housemaid might be required to do some sewing for the household.¹⁸³

Beeton takes the same approach in describing the kitchen department as she did in the housemaid’s section. All of the duties she describes are assigned to the cook, with the occasional mention of a kitchen maid. Cleanliness is still held as the cardinal trait for any potential servants. Candidates for the position of cook should be neat, clean, orderly and swift of action. The cook’s day begin at 6:00am in the summer and an hour later in the winter, to have breakfast ready for 8:00am.¹⁸⁴ Strangely for a book which includes hundreds of pages of recipes, cleaning takes as prominent a part in the cook’s day as food preparation, beginning with her cleaning the hearth and stove before beginning to make breakfast.¹⁸⁵ After the family had eaten breakfast, the cook would aid the housemaid by sweeping the back stairs area.¹⁸⁶ Producing the family dinner remained the main focus of the cook’s workday, and she started actively working on it as soon as the breakfast dishes had been cleared.¹⁸⁷ Beeton allows for a possible division of labour in cooking dinner, with the cook focusing on the preparation of the meat dishes and a kitchen-maid on the

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 995.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 997.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 41.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 42.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 990.

dressings and vegetables.¹⁸⁸ Making the cook responsible for the dishes made from the most costly ingredients, and those most prone to spoilage, is in line with the advice of earlier and later authors.

As for the lady's maid, Beeton is clear about applicants' skills, she should be a "tolerably expert milliner and dressmaker", better than proficient at hairdressing and have some "chemical knowledge" to make cosmetics.¹⁸⁹ The lady's maid chief responsibility is her mistress' wardrobe; dressing, mending and washing the finer fabrics and using fashion magazines to know what styles were in vogue.¹⁹⁰ The lady's maid was to generally straighten up her lady's dressing and bedroom but did not do heavy cleaning like blacking the grate.¹⁹¹ Like the housekeeper and cook, the lady's maid would deal with tradespeople who supplied personal items for her mistress such as perfume and clothing.¹⁹² It is also the first and only time mention is made of lady's maids dealing with tradespeople. If the mistress did not have a lady's maid, the housemaid was to wake her mistress and to lay out her day and night clothes.¹⁹³

The nursery is not neglected by *The Book of Household Management*. As in *The Complete Servant*, the house service hierarchy was reproduced in miniature, but it was the number of children that dictated staff size. The heaviest labour was assigned to a nursery girl.¹⁹⁴ The under nursemaid was in charge of laying the fires, cleaning and fetching the nursery meals from the kitchen. She also washed and dressed the older

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 43.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 979.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 979 and 983.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 982-983.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 986.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 990 and 997.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 1014.

children.¹⁹⁵ As soon as they had been weaned, babies were sole the responsibility of the nursemaid.¹⁹⁶ Beeton lists the following as qualities of good nursemaids: patience, honesty, even-temperedness, obedience, docility and “purity of all manners.”¹⁹⁷ These qualities are quite similar to the virtues from *A Present to Female Servants* from earlier in the century, illustrating continuity in what type of person was thought to be the optimal servant even though the tasks were shifting slightly.

The Book of Household Management’s housekeeper plays a more active supervisory role than in previous works. Whereas the previous depictions of her make it clear that she is ultimately responsible for their work, here she is exhorted to “[c]onstantly [be] on the watch to detect any wrong-doing...by the other servants.”¹⁹⁸ The housekeeper remains the chief agent of the mistress of the house but her duties have moved away from cleaning. Beeton underlines this shift with an insistence on candidates being literate as well as able to do basic book keeping.¹⁹⁹ References to many other servants appear in the housekeeper’s duties. This sudden expansion in numbers implies that Beeton believes housekeepers are found in the larger and wealthier houses. Their work day begins after breakfast with an examination of the household linen; before lunch they were to verify the morning chores had all been done then see to the household accounts and order provisions. Beeton claims that the still-room maid had become redundant, and reassigns her work to the housekeeper’s afternoons.²⁰⁰ In the evening, the household accounts are to be revisited and the day’s expenditures entered.²⁰¹ The role of

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 1014.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 1013.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 1013.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 21.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 22.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 23.

the housekeeper has evolved from the earlier books where she was mostly responsible for housework into a more managerial one.

The anonymous author of *The Servants Practical Guide* is also clear on the importance of servants to the running of households, "...without the constant co-operation of well-trained servants, domestic machinery is completely thrown out of gear, and the best bred of hostesses placed at a disadvantage."²⁰² Contrary to Samuel Dunn's earlier advice which depicted the potentially disruptive servants as an individual with their own distinct personality, this author sees servants as cogs in the anonymous, impersonal and regulated 'machinery' of the household. With varying degrees of explicitness, all of these prescriptive works strove to ensure that servants uncomplainingly kept the household going through ceaseless labour. Obviously this was completely unrealistic but such an expectation underlay the reasoning behind some of the methods of organisation that will be examined later in this study.

The labours of the nursery and housekeeping are spread over fewer servants with the divisions between the lower and upper servants being more pronounced. The nursery still has just two servants, the nursery maid for cleaning and helping out, and the nurse for childcare.²⁰³ The under housemaid cleans all the family rooms, lays and tends the family bedroom fires and cleans the servants' bedrooms.²⁰⁴ By contrast the upper housemaid barely has contact with dirt, her main task is to ensuring the under housemaid's work is completed.²⁰⁵ Her cleaning tasks are watering houseplants, dusting

²⁰² Anon, *The Servants Practical Guide*, 1.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 122-124.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 175-176.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 174.

and restocking the bedroom candles and soap.²⁰⁶ If there is no lady's maid, she may be in charge of the household linen.²⁰⁷

The kitchen was assigned more servants than in any previous book: the stillroom maid, the scullery maid, and two kitchen maids. Here the analogy to a domestic machine is clearer, with each servant an independent cog whose duties interlock rather than overlap. The author lists the stillroom maid among the cook's subordinates, but she still reports to the housekeeper rather than the cook. No longer distilling anything, she bakes rolls, prepares dessert and hands out the informal china.²⁰⁸ She may also be called upon to help with any odd job in the kitchen. The scullery maid cleans all the kitchen equipment, as well as scrubbing the kitchen and its passages, scullery, servant's hall and the larders.²⁰⁹ The kitchen maids' duties contrast with each other: the head kitchen maid cooking the informal family and servant meals, and the lower one doing the prep work.²¹⁰ The additional labour in the kitchen clearly benefited the cook. Her entire day was spent planning future meals and cooking.²¹¹ Although her time was free after lunch had been cleared away, she had to be back in the kitchen by 5:00pm to begin dinner, after that meal had been served, her work day was done.²¹² This is the only incidence of a 'spilt shift' workday in any of the books, so it can be assumed to be rare.

Uniquely, *The Servants Practical Guide* created a path of promotion for lady's maids, albeit one that only promotes from within. A servant started out as a young lady's

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 174-175.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 175.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 158.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 157.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 156.

²¹¹ Ibid, 127-128.

²¹² Ibid, 128-129..

maid and gained experience working for the daughter or daughters of the house.²¹³ The responsibilities of both are nearly identical, caring for the ladies' clothes, dressing them, and straightening the dressing room.²¹⁴

The post of housekeeper continued to be a supervisory one in *The Servants Practical Guide*. She doublechecked work was done and dispensed supplies and balanced accounts.²¹⁵ Additional tasks included the traditional stillroom work of making preserves and distillations, and the "...greater part" of the household mending.²¹⁶

Dating to sometime between 1889 and 1907, the last book *Beeton's Every-day Cooking and Housekeeping Book*, is a posthumous reissue of extracts from Isabella Beeton. Like her first edition discussed above, the book does not divide the housework according to service position. Instead the cleaning is divided by days of the week, with two rooms getting cleaned per day except on Mondays when laundry is done and Saturdays when the plate is polished.²¹⁷ The pendulum of the mistress's personal involvement appears to have swung back toward a more hands-on approach of earlier in the century and she is expected to do some of the lighter housework.²¹⁸ The heavier and dirtier tasks like fireplace blacking and dusting remain the housemaid's job.²¹⁹ The higher positions show an amalgamation of duties. In addition to cooking, the cook now has to clean not only the scullery, kitchen, larder and wash-house, but also the halls, downstairs closets and steps.²²⁰ The nursery remains a miniature house unto itself, with

²¹³ *Ibid*, 152.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 153.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 138-139.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 139.

²¹⁷ *Beeton's Every-day Cookery and Housekeeping book*, (London: Ward, Lock and Co, n.d.), xv.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, ii.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, xix.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, xv and xix.

the single nurse to clean it, the night nursery and her own bedroom.²²¹ Lady's maids are still expected to have hairdressing and dressmaking skills.²²²

The only legal work, and possibly the only book that ever dealt exclusively with the legal rights and regulations of servants, is *The Rights, Duties and Relations of Domestic Servants and their Masters and Mistresses*. Published in London, this fourth edition was printed in 1873. Born about 1819, the author T. Henry Baylis was a lawyer of the Inner Temple who had been called to the Bar in 1856.²²³ Baylis retired from the legal profession in 1903 aged 82, after twenty-seven years as presiding judge of the Liverpool Court of Passage.²²⁴ By 1873 Baylis had a personal interest in seeing that both servants and employers understood their legal obligations. In 1872, his daughter Louisa-Jane had married Coningsby-James Erskine, a younger son of a cadet branch of the Scottish earls of Mar and Kellie.²²⁵ Perhaps the new Mrs. Erskine had run into a few of the problems new housewives were cautioned about in household manuals.

As the book makes clear, the law was weighted heavily in the employers' favour. The terms for each position were typically described to servants at the time they were hired. The moment a servant was hired, his or her whole time and complete obedience were owed to the employer.²²⁶ Savvy servants could negotiate some wage protection when hired, as employers were not allowed to deduct the cost of laundry or breakages from a servant's wages unless it had been explicitly stated at the time of hiring.²²⁷

²²¹ *Ibid*, xv.

²²² *Ibid*, xix.

²²³ *The Law Times*, vol. 26, February 2, 1856, 215.

²²⁴ *The Law Times*. vol. 115, 148 and 294.

²²⁵ Edmund Lodge, *The Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*. (London: Hurst and Blackett, Publishers, 1877), 401.

²²⁶ Baylis, 2.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 3 and 24-25.

Servants were to be hired for year-long terms with suitable lodging and board, and their wages were to be paid quarterly.²²⁸ This runs directly counter to the suggestion in *Cookery and Domestic Economy* that servants be hired for month long terms. The study households employed for year-long terms with quarterly wages.

The law was no more favourable to servants leaving one position than it was to them when they entered a new position. Baylis pays close attention to the giving of ‘characters’, references provided by employers for servants who were applying to new positions. While employers were not legally obligated to provide one, they are cautioned that failing to do so might lead to the dismissed servant tricking his or her next employer into hiring him or her under a false character.²²⁹ If a character was given, it should be a verbal one or a private letter between the former employer and the potential employer, if a letter was given to the servant he or she could alter or falsify it.²³⁰ While a servant could negotiate concessions on relatively minor issues, by and large the employers held the legal advantage as they were the ones who decided the parameters of the job, including its performance requirements, wages and overall work environment.

The 1875 book *Manners of Modern Society: Being a Book of Etiquette* is attributed to Eliza Cheadle. The focus is on the mistress’s behaviour towards other people. This provides a contrast to household manuals which describe the correct behaviour servants should show towards their employers. This inversion helps to understand service from an outsider’s perspective. Akin to *The Book of Household*

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 12.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

Management the housekeeper is to be familiar with the tasks of every department.²³¹ If she does not employ a housekeeper, the mistress should be sufficiently knowledgeable with the household tasks to be able to detect when any of the servants have not done their work properly. The servants were to be invisible to the family while going about their tasks.²³² The same had been said by earlier authors, although it was implicitly stated through the precise times given for working in the upper rooms while the family was either eating or otherwise engaged out of the bedroom. Likewise, the emphasis on getting their work done in the morning meant that servants could spend the afternoons at tasks that kept them out of the public rooms being used by the family during that time.

The Langdale family of Houghton Hall outside of Market Weighton are unique in this study as the only Catholic family.²³³ Able to trace their family back to the early sixteenth century, the Langdales had a long history in the area. Following the Catholic Emancipation Act which granted Catholics the right to sit in both houses of Parliament, Charles Langdale the-then owner of Houghton, was elected to Parliament as a Whig MP for Beverley from 1832 to 1835.²³⁴ He stood again in 1837 for Knaresborough, was elected and served until 1841, refusing afterwards to stand for another election.²³⁵ His wife Mary died on September 25, 1857 after which Charles spent more time in his London house than at Houghton. The combination of death and absence explain why a member of the household found it necessary to record the Hall rules and regulations for the staff sometime around 1860. The only servants described in it are the lower maid

²³¹ Eliza Cheadle, *Manners of Modern Society: Being a Book of Etiquette*. (London: Cassell Peter & Galpin, 1875), 107.

²³² *Ibid*, 107.

²³³ Jessie Sykes did convert to Catholicism after her separation from Sir Tatton, but the Sykes family remained Anglican.

²³⁴ Martin Craven, *The Langdale Legacy: Catholicism in Houghton and Market Weighton* (Kall Kwik: Hull, 2007) 21-22.

servants of every department: the kitchen maid, the scullery maid, the dairy maids, the laundry maids and the housemaids. Beyond mentions that certain tasks require permission from the housekeeper, there is no mention of the upper female servants whatsoever. The male servants appear in a similarly passing fashion, with one mention of the butler's room and one mention of the gardener.²³⁶ This document is a fascinating window both on how much work the oversight of the servants entailed for the lady of the house and the day-to-day running of a country house.

Unlike the other books in this chapter, the Houghton Hall manuscript allows us to see what servants' tasks really were in a real Yorkshire country house rather than how they were supposed to be in a hypothetical house that employed all possible types of servants. The document opens with a timetable for all service members. The "House or Angelus bell" was to be rung at 6am in the summer and 6:30am in the winter to wake the household. Breakfast was at 8am, with prayers at 8:30am at which "all [were] to be punctual."²³⁷ At one o'clock luncheon and the servant's hall dinner was served. The servants were then allowed leisure time until 2pm, at which point they all had to be back on duty. Tea was served at 4pm and supper at 8. At 9 were the "public night prayers." All of the maid servants were to be in bed by 10pm, with the added injunction "No maid to go into the Servants hall after night prayers" reflecting the Victorian fears that young single women be seduced by men.²³⁸ All the servants were to attend the daily prayers, with the exception of the laundry maids who were excused on washdays. Servants were to be as invisible and unobtrusive as possible at all times, with no loud singing or talking

²³⁵ Ibid, 22.

²³⁶ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²³⁷ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²³⁸ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

in the hallways, however they were allowed to sing while working if they were in their own “localities.”²³⁹ The strict timetable for the whole staff helps the family to anticipate where servants should be and when, giving the family stricter control and helping the servants to remain ‘invisible’ as Cheadle recommends.²⁴⁰

The kitchen maid’s duties are the first ones described. Her work combines some of the cleaning tasks that prescriptive authors assigned to a scullery maid. At Houghton Hall, the kitchen maid is to clean the kitchen and larder, then to clean and light the kitchen fire and stove. Her cooking duties were: make the manservants breakfast, pluck the poultry and game, prepare the household bread (but not bake it) and “attend[ed] to the making [and then delivery] of the Poor’s soup.”²⁴¹ The kitchen maid took the nursery breakfast tray up and brought it down when the children and nursery staff were finished, but she does not seem to have cooked their meal.²⁴² Aside from food preparation, she washed her own clothes and the kitchen linens “before” six a.m. on wash day.²⁴³ Doing the mid-range food prep and dealing with less formal meals in addition to light cleaning is in keeping with prescriptive literature’s treatment of the post as an intermediate one, above the scullion but inferior to the cook.

The scullery maid at Houghton Hall had only one food preparation task which was helping churn the butter if the dairy maid was busy.²⁴⁴ Her first duty was to ring the “House” bell at 6 in the morning during the summer and 6:30am in winter, presumably to wake the whole household and not just the servants. From then on, her workday revolved

²³⁹ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁴⁰ Cheadle, 107.

²⁴¹ Anon, DDLA 38/28. The Poor’s soup was distributed to the poor on the estate by the Langdales as a form of charity.

²⁴² Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁴³ Anon, DDLA 38/28. Emphasis in original.

around cleaning and lighting hearth fires. First she cleaned the scullery and lit its fire, then did the same in the storeroom before moving on to wash the dishes. Then she cleaned the butler's room, and the pantry as well if it was Saturday. Following the servants' breakfast, the scullery maid would clean the servants' hall and part of the back passage. If need be, she would also clean the office. Cleaning out the boiler used to make the Poor's soup was another of her tasks. Assisting with the household laundry was to be done before six in the morning, so that it would not interfere with her bell ringing. During the day she was to wash her own clothes and the dishcloths.²⁴⁵ A daily work round more focused on cleaning than on food preparation is in line with all the prescriptive works, highlighting the fact that it was an entry level position.

Houghton Hall employed a dairy maid, a service position that appears in only a few household manuals. Despite the title, most of her work did not involve dairy work, but included other food preparation tasks. The dairymaid's first task was to "prepare" the dairy kitchen, she churned on Mondays and Fridays. Like the scullery maid she helped with the household laundry until 6 a.m and washed her own clothes during the day. She "wait[ed] upon and attend[ed] to the Storeroom".²⁴⁶ The bake house was as much her responsibility as the dairy because she cleaned it and baked the bread prepared by the kitchen maid as well as any other dish that required blacking. It was she, rather than the kitchen maid or scullery maid, who cleaned the regular china. With the help of another unspecified maid, the dairy maid cleaned the manservants' rooms, then cleaned the staircase and "shoe hole."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁴⁵ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁴⁶ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁴⁷ Anon, DDLA 38/28. The purpose of the 'shoe hole' is not clear, it was probably an under-stairs closet.

The laundry maids were to take their breakfasts and teas in the laundry room while the rest of the servants ate in the kitchen, reflecting the laundry's remove from the main service hierarchy. Unlike the kitchen and house staff room, the laundry was to be shut down for supper. If work needed to be done after supper, the housekeeper had to give her permission. As laundry work was not overly loud, the last rule shows the concern that laundry maids might use the laundry as a place to bring men, either male servants or outsiders, after regular hours. The scullery and dairy maids along with the under house maid were supposed to help with the regular washing. If the Langdales had many guests, a washerwoman could be hired to augment the workforce. Unlike the other servants whose tasks were largely the same every day, the laundry maid followed a weekly routine. Monday was for collecting and sorting the dirty laundry and starting on any item that needed special treatment. Tuesday was the start of the "general wash."²⁴⁸ On Wednesday the clean but wet clothes were run through the mangle. By Wednesday evening all the drying lines were to be taken down, so the clothes must have been taken inside and rehung if they were still damp. The clean clothes and linens were to be delivered to the house no later than 1:00pm on Saturday, after which time the laundry was cleaned.²⁴⁹ Also on Saturday morning the under laundry maid would help the house maids clean the family bedrooms.²⁵⁰

The house maids were subjected to the greatest number of rules and regulations. That the maids whose work takes them from the private rooms of the backstairs to the family's own rooms would be subject to more regulation is hardly surprising. Houghton

²⁴⁸ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁴⁹ Anon, DDLA 38/28. The phrasing implies that Houghton's laundry was in a separate building outside of the main house.

²⁵⁰ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

had an upper housemaid and an under housemaid. While the two perform the same duties of scrubbing and dusting, the rooms they clean within the house differentiate the positions. The upper house maid was to clean the drawing room then lay its fire, clean front hall and stairs in addition to the back stair case and landing, but only dust the library. The under house maid cleaned the chapel and sacristy, laid the fires and cleaned both the schoolroom and the sitting room, swept some of the back passages but she only cleaned the library grate. As sweeping the ashes up and scrubbing then blacking the andirons was a messy job, the seemingly arbitrary division may have been to even out the number of grates the upper housemaid had to scrub versus how many the under housemaid did. As each service rank was a step away from the more contaminating dirt, it makes sense that Houghton's upper housemaid would have to clean fewer grates even if the number of prestigious rooms under her care had more fireplaces than the under housemaid's rooms had. This division of labour follows that of earlier authors as well, and is closer to the *Servant's Practical Guide* upper housemaid, with more 'straightening' tasks as opposed to housework ones.²⁵¹

The same division of labour prevailed in the upstairs bedrooms and nursery as in the library; the under house maid doing the grates and the upper house maid dusting and sweeping. After both house maids had cleaned the family rooms, the under house maid had to fill the coal boxes. Both were responsible for disposal of the ashes. In her best uniform by tea time, the upper house maid would be required to wait on any visitors staying at Houghton Hall. Later in the afternoon she would straighten up the drawing room while the family and guests were dressing for dinner.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

²⁵² Anon, DDLA 38/28.

Servants at Houghton were expected to pitch in and help in other departments once their own work was done. The house maids and laundry maids were required to help with the household needlework on Thursday afternoons. The dairy maid plucked game if the kitchen maid was too busy, likewise the scullery maid helped with the churning during the busy harvest season when men could not be spared. If the Langdales had hosted a dinner party, afterwards the housemaids were to help the kitchen staff clean the fine china and silver. The kitchen maid is explicitly not to be sent to the garden for any tasks.²⁵³ This blending of tasks, and its consequent blurring of department lines, is barely present in prescriptive literature where authors portrayed an idealised and clearly delineated system.²⁵⁴ The reality of workloads and household budgets led to Shibden Hall's servants performing multiple tasks, such as a groom who also waited on the table.

All of the cleaning, sweeping and dusting was done every day, other tasks were assigned to specific days or only sporadically required. Rooms that were not being used were only cleaned once a week. The maids had to spot clean the carpets as needed. On Mondays, both housemaids had to help with the household mending. On Tuesdays the upper house maid washed her own clothes and the under house maid helped with the general laundry. If any visitors were staying, the upper house maid cleaned, laid and lit their fires as well as brought their water ewers. Both house maids were responsible for making sure the window mechanisms were in working order, and shutting any windows before the household retired for the night; the windows were allocated based on which rooms each maid cleaned.²⁵⁵ Both were responsible for ensuring that "rolls of dust should

²⁵³ Anon, DDLA 38/28.. Presumably the kitchenmaid is singled out for this rule rather than any other maid servant because Langdale had a kitchen garden.

²⁵⁴ Anon, *The Servants' Guide and Family Manual*, 77 and 95.

²⁵⁵ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

never be allowed to collect anywhere.”²⁵⁶ As with servants ‘pitching in’ in other departments, the acknowledgment that certain tasks could only be performed on certain days was largely absent in prescriptive literature. Only in the later edition of *The Book of Household Management* does an explicit reference to polishing silver on Saturday appear.²⁵⁷ This is part of larger trend towards authors providing more accurate depictions of households, and likely a reflection of the increasing difficulty in finding servants in latter part of the century. As Houghton Hall was clearly well staffed, the idealisation of the daily timetables provided by the Adams and Mrs. Beeton become clearer.

Based on those job descriptions, Houghton Hall had the following servants: one housekeeper, a laundry maid and an under laundry maid, a scullery maid, a kitchen maid, a dairymaid, an upper and an under house maid, and at least one nurse. A cook must have been employed as well, because neither the kitchen maid and dairymaid actually cook any meat. Mentioned in passing are a gardener, a carpenter, a valet and a ‘man’, presumably an odd-job man. This a good sized staff with fourteen mentioned servants, putting it on the larger end of staff size among the study’s main country houses. The labour divisions are equivalent to those espoused by concurrent prescriptive authors, with the addition of required religious services. This requirement probably limited potential staff to co-religionists, however given the anti-Catholic sentiment of the times it may have inspired those who were working there to remain longer than they would under an employer of a different religion.

The Houghton Hall strict daily timetables resemble the ones prescribed by the household management books. The tasks are depicted in similar terms as well. This set

²⁵⁶ Anon, DDLA 38/28.

of rules differs in the specificity of the ‘extra’ tasks and who they are assigned to because they describes an actual working house while the other books leave the distribution of such tasks undefined. Overall, there is little difference between the labour divisions and tasks each book or manuscript describes. The four processes of food preparation, housecleaning, child rearing and laundry all seen as an interlocking whole by those books that covered all of them. The overall labour divisions echo those laid down in *The Complete Servant* which were adhered to by subsequent authors.

The continuity in the positioning of each job within the larger service hierarchy is vital because it shows a common understanding of this hierarchy across the classes. Servants were an essential facet of country house life, both for their labour and as supports of their employer’s social standing in the region. The authors in this chapter clearly recognize the importance of servants as indicators of social class as shown by their use of formality to delineate tasks. Kitchen labour was divided by the formality of the meal, rather than stages of preparation. At the beginning of the study period, the housemaids portrayed as doing different tasks depending on their rank within the service hierarchy. Later in the century, the housemaids all performed the same tasks, but the formality of the rooms under their individual care determined how high their job position ranked within the department. Utilising social formality as a divider of service roles was an innate component of service in the country houses studied here.

²⁵⁷ Beeton, n.d., xv.

4.

Recruitment and Retention

As was seen from Houghton Hall's careful job descriptions and rules on when and where to perform tasks, the daily round of cooking and cleaning was expected to run like a well-oiled machine, creating the least amount of disruption possible. An employer's first step in creating this environment was careful staffing selection. Anne Lister, Mary, Lady Sykes, and Mary Pennyman were all closely involved and personally concerned with the staffing of Shibden Hall, Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall, respectively. While country houses in general were magnets for girls and women seeking to go into service, the houses in this study were quite selective in whom they employed. All of the families could afford to hire experienced servants, and all were willing to pay the necessary wages to retain them.

The tasks of identifying potential servants, hiring them and retaining their services were important steps in domestic management for the Lister, Sykes and Pennyman ladies. Hiring was the foundation of the domestic machinery that supported the country house and all its inhabitants. The task was more complex than the prescriptive literature suggests because domestic service included reciprocal duties this literature does not mention. The recruitment methods, reciprocal duties and servant migration patterns will be compared with those given in prescriptive literature and historians' own finding on country house service.

The ladies of Shibden, Sledmere and Ormesby recruited using a mixture of friends, family and the servants themselves to identify potential new servants. The ladies favoured previous experience over local ties among the servants they recruited. All three Yorkshire

families included in this study retained a hierarchy of male and female servants, whose numbers varied significantly depending on the stage in the family life cycle, wealth and house size. In this study Shibden Hall had the fewest servants and Sledmere House had the largest number; Ormesby Hall fell between the two.

Lower servants could be recruited via public venues. In Market Weighton, the town outside of Halifax where she had grown up and where her father and sister lived for a time, Anne Lister observed in 1818 “Today, what they call the statutes- for hiring servants- the town full of people & stirrings.”²⁵⁸ Popularly called ‘mop fairs’ these were occasions where servants seeking positions would congregate in the market square, usually carrying some tool such as a mop or wooden spoon to indicate which position they wanted or had experience in. These fairs typically included some form of entertainment in which both sexes could mix without the oversight of either parents or employers.²⁵⁹ Prospective employers went and chose new staff, hiring for a year. Events like this tended to be geared towards the lower positions in the service hierarchy and agricultural service. There is no indication Anne hired servants for Shibden Hall from events like this, nor did any of the other houses in this study.

A few years after Anne observed the fair at Market Weighton, concerted and organised efforts to stop such gatherings were being undertaken, including a campaign supported by the Sykes family to ban them in the East Riding of Yorkshire in the 1850s and 1860s.²⁶⁰ The campaign sought to replace the traditional hiring fairs with a system like

²⁵⁸ Whitbread, *I Know...*, 69.

²⁵⁹ Moses, 41.

²⁶⁰ Gary Moses, “Religion, Rural Society, and Moral Panic in Mid-Victorian England,” in Judith Rowbotham and Kim Stevenson, eds., *Criminal Conversations: Victorian crimes, social panic, and moral outrage* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 46. It should be noted there is no evidence that any of the household servants were hired from such fairs which attracted locals. Census returns indicate that even

the one used for country house service in which a servant had to produce a character reference to be hired, a change which would place power in the hands of the former employer.²⁶¹ Although these fairs were almost exclusively geared towards farm servants, the feelings of the reformers echo the concurrent and paradoxical view of all domestic servants as simultaneously innocent young people in danger of moral corruption and people whose lack of long term ties to the area or their employer's family made them agents of corruption.²⁶²

The women in this study did not rely on "mop fairs", and recruited different servants in different ways. These ladies recruited servants through trusted friends and family members, thereby ensuring that any servant who might be morally suspect or corrupt would not be hired. They actively asked their circle of friends and social peers to recommend potential servants. In that type of circle, recommendations came from a person already familiar with the prospective employer's household and requirements. This prevented the difficulties that might accompany recruiting via a less reliable source, such as an advertisement placed in the newspaper. It was to the employer's benefit to cultivate any trustworthy staffing sources by reciprocating when a friend was looking to fill a post in their own household. Anne Lister canvassed her acquaintances when her friend Sibella Maclean was searching for a governess.²⁶³ Recruitment through social peers also allowed a much wider catchment area than local advertising or word of mouth. Anne Lister's first lady's maid, Margaret Macdonald, was originally from Oban, Scotland. Macdonald came

the lower house- and kitchen- maids came from farther afield, so the Sykes' involvement in these campaigns most likely reflects estate worker recruitment rather than indoor servants.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 44.

²⁶² Ibid, 48.

²⁶³ Anne Lister to Sibella Maclean, Monday 23 February, 1824, SH7/ML/134.

to Anne though the recommendation of Sibella Maclean who had familial and marital ties to Scotland.

Ladies relied particularly on their friends when searching for suitable upper servants. These posts carried greater responsibility, and were also an additional expense for employers. Hiring an upper servant also introduced in the house a potential intruder on the family's social space. A favourable character for a potential new hire from a trusted friend carried more weight than a character came from a stranger or a recommendation from a lower servant. When looking to staff positions that had more responsibility, Anne Lister relied on recommendations from friends. As mentioned in the introduction, Anne had social aspirations without the income to support them before her union with Ms. Walker. To that end, it is important to note *which* of her friends she wrote for assistance when looking to fill certain posts. One of most aristocratic women in Anne's circle of friends was Sibella Maclean, and it was to her that Anne wrote looking for a lady's maid. Anne replied to Maclean's favourable description of Margaret MacDonald, "Is she not, unless her health be very good, ten years too old? Do tell me honestly your opinion. You know I am a novice in these matters."²⁶⁴ Another well connected friend, Lady Vere Cameron, sent Anne an unsolicited recommendation for a gardener.²⁶⁵

For the less skilled positions, Anne searched and hired closer to home. She asked her sister Marian if any of her servants might have a brother who could work as a footman cum groom at Shibden.²⁶⁶ Harriet Baxter, a lower maid hired in 1822, was from

²⁶⁴ 1826 March Mon. 6, in SH:7/ML/E/9. Dates are formatted in the same way as Anne Lister recorded them.

²⁶⁵ Lady Vere Cameron to Anne Lister, 10 August 1836, SG:7/ML/949.

²⁶⁶ Thursday 25 May [Halifax] [1820] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 127.

Whitchurch outside of Stockton-on-Tees.²⁶⁷ Six months later, another local girl, Bridget Whitehead of Hopton near Mirfield, became a housemaid at Shibden Hall.²⁶⁸ On the recommendation of Marian, Anne hired Martha Booth, the daughter of one of Shibden Hall's renters, as a housemaid. Martha herself had ambitions of becoming a cook and a post as a maid of all work at Shibden would have been an excellent entry position.²⁶⁹

Sledmere upper servants were recruited in the same manner. Mary Sykes needed a new housekeeper, and she reached out to at least one family member, Mrs. Egerton, to help her find potential candidates.²⁷⁰ Mrs. Egerton recommended one Mrs. Bloor, whom Mary hired once Mrs. Bloor's then-employer gave her a good character.²⁷¹ While her daughter Sophia does not record how Mary found all the new servants she hired, she does refer to Mary assiduously checked the references of potential servants. Once Mary had found a suitable servant, she gave two weeks' notice to the one to be replaced.²⁷²

Unfortunately none of Mary Pennyman's personal papers survive so reconstructing which avenues she used for recruitment is difficult. The census returns for Ormesby Hall do give the ages and birthplaces of the servants. The census, coupled with the wage books the servants had to sign, makes it possible to draw the profile of the servants recruited. The average age of the of Ormesby's servants was 26, without a great deal of difference between the men and the women. Based on their ability to sign their names, the overwhelming majority of the servants were literate. In fact, only two servants appear to have been illiterate or semi-literate. The hand that signs for Helen Gibbs wages is much

²⁶⁷ Wednesday 13 November [Halifax] [1822] in Helena Whitbread, ed. *I Know My Own Heart: The diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840*. (New York University Press, NY, 1988), 226.

²⁶⁸ Wednesday 26 March [Halifax] [1823] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 242.

²⁶⁹ Anne Lister to Ann Lister, 13 September 1828 in SH7/ML/270.

²⁷⁰ Katherine Sykes to Christopher Sykes, Saturday [otherwise undated], DDST 1/3/1/4.

²⁷¹ Sophia Sykes to Christopher Sykes, undated, DDST/1/3/1/4.

more steady and clear than the one that signs her departure and very uncertainly records “Left”.²⁷³ She was likely literate to the extent that she could write her name. Only Mary Law signed with a small cross mark rather than her name.²⁷⁴ Female country house servants tended to be older because they were expected to be experienced. They were also expected to provide their own uniforms, which meant that many girls worked in smaller middle-class houses to save up the money necessary to buy the material for the uniforms which, in turn, pushed back their starting age in country house service.²⁷⁵ Combined with the findings that servants in wealthy urban areas came from further afield than did servants working for less well-to-do employers, it would appear that girls and young women wishing to enter country house service may have begun their careers in the houses of wealthy middle-class urbanites.²⁷⁶

Open solicitation by potential servants for positions in the country house was considered a grievous misstep. Anne Lister records two instances of this, once by a girl looking to become Anne’s lady’s maid and once by a footman. The girl had heard of the opening in Shibden’s service from the sister of Anne’s lady’s maid, Elizabeth Wilkes Cordingley. She presented herself to Anne while the latter was out examining Shibden’s estate lands. Anne huffed “At all ye girl had no manners would not have done for me any where or in any place.”²⁷⁷ Anne Lister was no less affronted when a potential groom/footman approached her for a position as well. Prior to hiring George Playforth on her sister’s recommendation, Anne had enquired about a potential applicant named

²⁷² Sophia Sykes to Christopher Sykes, undated, DDST/1/3/1/4.

²⁷³ Wages Book 1883 to 1893, Ormesby Hall.

²⁷⁴ Wage Book, U/PENN 5/3/3.

²⁷⁵ Gerard, 171.

²⁷⁶ Pooley, 415.

²⁷⁷ 1828 Oct wed 1[1829] in SH:7/ML/E/11.

William Cawood whom a Miss Marsh had highly recommended. Anne decided against him and wrote Miss Marsh to say Mr. Cawood would not be needed. Somewhere along the line Mr. Cawood was not informed and he made the trip to Shibden only to be turned away.²⁷⁸ Anne was not sympathetic, recording in her diary, “What could I do? I told the man how uncertain the thing was...& if he thought it worthwhile to inquire after such a place, as he must do after others...”²⁷⁹ Personally importuning a potential employer undermined the employer’s social authority; the servant was taking it upon themselves to disrupt the proper social boundaries. Ideally, a servant would show deference to his or her employer and not approach or address them unless asked. Such disruption, however well-intentioned, did not bode well for their future in such a highly status conscious institution as the country house.

There are differences in the recruitment methods used by those ladies and the ones advocated by prescriptive authors. They clearly preferred using known contacts, usually friends but occasionally servants themselves. Given the importance placed on ‘characters’ in prescriptive literature, surprisingly few requests survive, either from the hiring employers to the potential servant’s former employer, or requests from servants themselves to either Anne Lister or the Ladies Sykes for such documents. In fact, it would appear that the labour pool these women were drawing from was fairly restricted. All three women did have contacts beyond Yorkshire who could recommend potential servants, so containment was not so much geographic but social. Recruitment practises tried to ensure that only servants who were experienced and could be trusted were hired.

Once the staff had been recruited, the focus shifted towards retention. Domestic service was a contractual relationship, so wages played an important role in a servant

²⁷⁸ Whitbread, *I Know my Own Heart*, 144.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 144-145.

remaining in service in a given place. As prescriptive literature illustrated, the labour division and individual job tasks remained stable across the century. This uniformity translated into fairly standardised wages based on the employer's social and economic standing. None of the families in this study appear to have ever lost servants over wages, so it can be assumed that all three families paid the going wages for each position. The wages at Shibden Hall were commensurate with the Lister's social position in the Yorkshire lesser gentry. In 1826, Margaret Macdonald was hired as the upper female servant at £15 per annum, paid quarterly.²⁸⁰ Two years later Catherine Cameron, also hired for the upper maid position but less experienced, was hired at £10 per annum.²⁸¹ Mary Pennyman had no difficulties staffing Ormesby Hall in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, so the wages paid by the Pennymans must have been in line with those offered at other country houses in Yorkshire.

For the governess who stood outside the main service hierarchy, wages were less uniform and employer expectations were more varied. Charlotte and Anne Brontë apparently felt the wages they were paid were insufficient; this may be why both *Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey* are paid more in their fictional governess posts than their respective creators were. In addition, their duties to instruct and care for their charges directly conflicted with the traditional parental right of disciplining children. Aside from the variation in wages, the governess's ability to remain in one family depended on how successful she was at negotiating this discipline paradox.

Outside of wages, the factors influencing staff retention were frequently less concrete. The issues can be categorised as employer-based, servant-based and job-

²⁸⁰ 1826 March Tuesday 28 in HS:7/ML/E/9.

²⁸¹ 1828 October Wednesday 1 in SH:7/ML/E11.

related. Employer-based issues include family life cycle and lifestyle. As the employee and resident in a house that did not belong to them, servants had no alternatives except leaving if they disliked their employer's lifestyle or personality. But they could equally be influenced by positive reports of the family or work conditions. Thus servant-based retention factors are more ephemeral and difficult to quantify. Job-related retention was largely dependent on opportunity for advancement. The individual tasks of each department were uniform across the century, so if one housemaid disliked scrubbing floors, giving notice at one country house to enter the service of another in the same role was not going to mean fewer floors to scrub. Promotion also meant many of the same duties, just in different areas of the house or different food groups to prepare. All three factors were present at all times in each of the country houses of this study.

The systematic overhaul of Sledmere's servants under Mary Sykes is a prime example of an employer-based lifecycle change. Hoping to impress potential suitors so that the six younger ladies Sykes could go on to become ladies of their own country houses, Mary set about improving Sledmere. These changes upset the ranks of the longer serving servants. Mary's daughter Sophia wrote to her brother Christopher Sykes while he was away at Cambridge, "Mama has engaged a cook, & the House keeper comes tomorrow."²⁸² In addition to a new housekeeper and cook, Mary replaced all the lower servants; daughter Katherine wrote "All the various under ladies have gone except one."²⁸³ The process was not without its hitches though, Mabel Wilson "said she would not stop [i.e.: stay at Sledmere] an hour longer than her time [of employment]."²⁸⁴ Another servant, "Anne Hisp[?]" sent in her resignation this morning as she could not bear the new housemaid being

²⁸² Sophia Sykes to Christopher Sykes, undated, DDST/1/3/1/4.

²⁸³ Katherine Sykes to Christopher Sykes, Saturday [otherwise undated], DDST 1/3/1/4.

²⁸⁴ Katherine Sykes to Christopher Sykes, postmarked September 4, 1848, DDST 1/3/1/4.

equal in rank with herself.”²⁸⁵ The changes to Sledmere’s domestic service affected all of the servants, and those like Ms. Wilson and Anne who felt like their positions were being altered in ways they deemed unfair, did not stay. This rank consciousness was an intrinsic part of country house service and created the hierarchy that was so important to backstairs life.

Like the other employers, Anne Lister encountered at least one servant who did not particularly like his job. George Playforth had been hired as a sort of ‘man of all indoor work’ and arrived on June 19, 1820 for a year long term.²⁸⁶ George was likely the brother of one of Marian Lister’s servants in Market Weighton and had come to replace a departing servant.²⁸⁷ He was expected to work as both footman and groom but disliked this double workload, leading Anne to acerbically note he “does not like to bring breakfast in.”²⁸⁸ Playforth continued to vex Anne in small details, not leaving keys where she had asked him to and not polishing the silver up to her standards.²⁸⁹ Anne tolerated these minor faults for close to a decade, finally writing in her private code “*George drinks, too, I see, & this & his vulgarity will surely make me get rid of him.*”²⁹⁰ Yet it was another month until she finally decided to give him notice.²⁹¹ That she patiently put up with Playforth’s various snubs of her authority rather than replace him outright suggests that Anne found the process of searching for and hiring a new servant more troublesome than making do with the one she already had.

²⁸⁵ Elizabeth Sykes to Christopher Sykes, DDST 1/3/1/4.

²⁸⁶ Monday 19 June [Halifax] [1820] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 129.

²⁸⁷ Thursday 25 May [Halifax] [1820] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 127.

²⁸⁸ Wednesday 13 November [Halifax] [1822] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 226.

²⁸⁹ Friday 27 June [Halifax] [1823] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 258 and Sunday 7 February [1830] from personal correspondence with Helena Whitbread, respectively.

²⁹⁰ Sunday 7 February 1830 from personal correspondence with Helena Whitbread. Italics are used to denote the particular passage was written in Anne’s private code.

²⁹¹ Tuesday 9 March 1830 from personal correspondence with Helena Whitbread.

Rumours about potential employers could dissuade servants from working for a certain family. It was public knowledge in Halifax that Anne Lister was not like other women. Her family standing protected her social prominence and influence, which allowed her relative freedom in her sexual expression. The extent to which her fellow Haligonians were able to articulate what exactly they felt was ‘off’ about Anne Lister is impossible to ascertain. Whilst out walking one evening, Anne was verbally accosted by three men “At the top of Cunnery Lane, as I went, three men said, as usual, ‘That’s a man’ & one axed (sic) Does your cock stand?’”²⁹² Anne was not about to let innuendo and aspersions about her sexuality and lifestyle negatively influence her behaviour but rumours may have deterred potential servants from seeking work at Shibden Hall. Such rumours seem to have influenced Margaret Macdonald while she was employed at Shibden. Macdonald was the first lady’s maid Anne hired after she inherited Shibden in 1826. By 1828, Anne was wondering if Macdonald might be better off working in another house. In a letter to her aunt Ann, Anne mentions that Macdonald is “ashamed” of having her friends know she works at Shibden Hall.²⁹³ Although Anne does not mention it explicitly, perhaps Macdonald’s discomfort had to do with the general suspicion over Anne’s sexuality. Anne was away from Shibden when Macdonald, departed in 1832, and advised her aunt to write to either the Norcliffes, wealthy and well-connected family friends near Malton, or Marianna Lawton, Anne’s former lover who had made an advantageous heterosexual marriage, for help in finding a replacement. For the immediate future, Anne suggested enquiring among their neighbours for aid, including asking a former servant back temporarily.²⁹⁴ While the four year gap between the first rumblings of discontent and her

²⁹² Whitbread, *I Know My Own Heart*, 48.

²⁹³ Anne Lister to Ann Lister, 13 September 1828 in SH7/ML/270.

²⁹⁴ Anne Lister [Hastings] to Ann Lister, March 23 1832 in SH7/ML/562.

eventual departure hint that Macdonald overcame whatever embarrassment she had about working at Shibden Hall, Anne dropped a hint that her departure was not necessarily a detriment to the environment at Shibden

McD's [MacDonald's] cleverness in the lady's maid way is not so great as to leave you [aunt Ann] no hope of meeting with the like again. Her forte is in nursing and care- and surely our parish is not deficient in these joined to respectability and a comfortable degree of proper manners – an “affected, self-opinionated, doubting, contradicting person” [likely Anne quotes from her aunt's letter] requires a monstrous deal to make up for so much of the disagreeable.²⁹⁵

The atmosphere of the house could also affect retention. Sir Tatton II and Jessie, Lady Sykes' servants bore the brunt of their increasingly strained marriage. As tensions in the house rose, Jessie remarked on the impact it had on the servants, “ “[t]he confusion here is dreadful, ... all the servants quite demoralised... I can do nothing! Gotherd is in a fiendish temper...”²⁹⁶ The sad nature of their marriage was dragged into the open by Jessie's very public trial in 1895. Accused of forging her husband Tatton's signature on cheques used to pay her ever-mounting gambling debts, Jessie's testimony in her own defence sheds some light on Sledmere's domestic management. She claimed Tatton “...shirked responsibility for the payment of almost all expenses necessary...” to maintain Sledmere and their London house.²⁹⁷ This statement must have given any servant or potential one reading the trial coverage in the paper severe reservations about working for Sir Tatton Sykes II at Sledmere. The veracity of Jessie's statement was not the issue, the implication that wages were perhaps not paid regularly or on time, or were lower than average would have affected the Sykes' ability to attract new servants.

²⁹⁵ Anne Lister [Hastings] to Ann Lister, March 23 1832 in SH7/ML/562.

²⁹⁶ Sykes, 213.

²⁹⁷ Sykes, 229.

A dull workplace is not usually thought of as a disincentive to remain, but clearly it could be. The former housekeeper at Sledmere, Mrs. Baines wrote Mary Sykes “Amelia Gorey [?] will not remain for any wage...I am very sorry. You see, I thought she [Amelia] was sure to stay at all events 2 years. They are so bad to meet with.”²⁹⁸ Mrs. Baines attributed Amelia’s departure to the fact that no company were staying at Sledmere, making for a rather boring time. It is not clear which type of servant Amelia was, perhaps a housemaid who would have found the different tasks and the servants who travelled with their employers a welcome change in routine; or maybe she was the new cook Jessie employed for whom preparing large elaborate meals for company would be an opportunity to showcase her skills. Most likely Amelia was a housemaid who was using service as a means of earning enough money to be able to marry. Guests at country house parties would bring their valets and lady’s maids with them. These extra servants would be accommodated in the service wing with Sledmere’s regular servants and they all would dine together in the servants’ hall. Not only would all the extra faces bring some excitement into a repetitive work environment, but they also provided more potential suitors than Amelia would find working for a family who never or rarely entertained.

Former servants who had left the family’s employ but settled nearby were also affected by job attrition at the country house. They were called upon when extra help was needed. Elizabeth Wilkes Cordingley is a prime example. She was working as a lady’s maid at Shibden Hall from at least 1821. Anne appears to have highly trusted her and entrusted her with the care and supervision of the other servants whether they happened to be ill or inept. After she left Anne’s employ, Cordingley remained in the Halifax area and helped out in 1823 when Harriet Baxter left for another post thereby leaving Shibden short

²⁹⁸ Mrs. Baines to Mary Sykes, February 11, no year given, DDST/1/3/1/6.

staffed.²⁹⁹ Even as late as 1830, Anne thought about sending for Cordingley when she despaired over another lady's maid uselessness.³⁰⁰ Along the same lines, the Pennyman's former governess Miss. Irons escorted one of the children back to school after the holidays four years after she left the family's employ.³⁰¹ Keeping in touch with former servants helped solving short term staffing problems.

As with the case of Cordingley, a departed servant who was reliable could find him- or herself recalled to lend an extra pair of hands when needed. Higgs and Anderson found that many people listed as "servants" in the census were in fact relations to the head.³⁰² Some of them may have been people like Cordingley who casually worked for their former employer. This gave them the freedom not to live with their employers- but on the other hand, we do not know how they supported themselves when not needed at the "big house". It is impossible to ascertain exactly how many servants continued to work for former employers in this way, but in light of Higgs' discovery such work patterns were probably not uncommon.

Searching for a maid in 1828, Anne Lister described her ideal servant: "I want a quick steady clever person, good instruction for a good place, but who would learn any thing and clean a pigsty if I asked her."³⁰³ In the country house, harmony was dependent on both the upstairs and the downstairs inhabitants carrying out their tasks effectively. Besides the tasks of each job were unspoken duties were rooted in tradition. Duties between the 'upstairs' and the 'downstairs' residents of the country houses in this study were supposed to be reciprocal as well as beneficial. Country house service (be part of a domestic team,

²⁹⁹ Thursday 27 February [Halifax] [1823] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 233

³⁰⁰ Tuesday 2 March 1830, I am indebted to Helena Whitbread for this reference.

³⁰¹ James Worsley Pennyman Account Book, 'Education' 1881, Ormesby Hall.

³⁰² Higgs, 250. Anderson, 264.

serve a high ranking employer) broadened the servant's range of workplace skills. In return, upper servants displayed greater loyalty towards their employer, but this was motivated by a desire to preserve their employers' social position. Servants had as much interest in preserving their employer's reputation and standing as the latter did

The servant's position on the domestic service ladder, and the nature of the tasks she had to perform, dictated her social proximity to the lady of the house. It is no coincidence that the most detailed information for all the staff in this study relates to the upper servants, those women with whom the ladies interacted the most. Anne Lister, the Ladies Sykes, the Ladies and later Mistresses Pennymans hired experienced servants and consequently expected these women to possess more skills than younger untrained servants. Anne was most concerned with hairdressing.³⁰⁴ In her letter of engagement to Margaret Macdonald, Anne suggested that she take a few hairdressing lessons before arriving at Shibden and unexpectedly offered to reimburse Macdonald for the cost.³⁰⁵ In order not to appear overly generous, Anne ends with the not too subtle "I trust we shall find your dress always neat and becoming."³⁰⁶ Anne was very conscious of social place and mores, and she did not want Macdonald to read too much friendliness into her paying further training and reimbursing her travel costs. The servant-employer social distance still stood even if unusual and seemingly personal actions were taken, such as reimbursement for training.

³⁰³ 1828 October Wednesday 1 in SH:7/ML/E/11.

³⁰⁴ Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain how keen on being well coiffed Anne was. Her only portrait shows a dark haired woman against a dark background wearing dark clothes. Her hair is arranged in sausage curls on either side of her head, and appears to be pinned up in the back

³⁰⁵ Tuesday 28 March in HS:7/ML/E/9.

³⁰⁶ Tuesday 28 March in HS:7/ML/E/9.

Employers expected their servants to reinforce social hierarchies through dress and behaviour. Servants were expected to dress and behave in ways that clearly displayed their lower social standing within the country house and society as a whole. None of the Sykes women nor the Pennyman women in this study specifically record providing their female indoor servants with uniforms. But the photograph of Sledmere's staff clearly shows the lower female servants wearing identical clothing. From the 1840s to the end of the century, dress bodices remained form fitting, making alterations difficult. This likely meant that newly hired female servants had to sew their own uniforms instead of wearing hand me downs. The expense may have had to be covered out of the servants wages. Anne Lister did not require uniforms for female servants at Shibden Hall but she was at pains to make potential servants understand that the lack of uniforms did not mean they could wear whatever they pleased. Social distinction between the servant's clothing and her employer's had to be preserved, particularly when the servant would be seen out around Halifax with Anne Lister and therefore publicly associated with Shibden Hall. George Playforth's somewhat bedraggled appearance elicited a comment from Anne in her diary, although she put it down to his having travelled overnight.³⁰⁷ Even though it was not explicitly included in the job description, employers wanted their servants to look like servants. The difference in appearance helped to maintain the proper social distance within the house, making individual maid servants look like identical interchangeable clones to outsiders and even to family members.

Duty cut both ways, and employers did have to provide certain services and cover extraordinary expenses as well. Cooking implements and utensils, cleaning tools such as brushes, all the furnishings of the servants' hall and bedrooms were completely covered by

³⁰⁷ Monday 19 June [Halifax] [1820] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 129.

the employer; so were schoolroom supplies. Equipping the work areas was so basic that an employer's failure to adequately do so would have made it difficult to retain servants. In some circumstances, 'extras' like medical care and mourning clothes in the case of a death in the employer's family, were also provided. Nineteenth century etiquette demanded elaborate mourning rituals for those who could afford them. When a family member passed away, the surviving family members would 'go into mourning' which required wearing all black clothing for a specific time period.³⁰⁸ When Anne's uncle Joseph died, the Shibden ladies "bought for our own 2 women servants 17 ¼ yds (the cook being so big takes 9 ¼ yds)" of fabric suitable mourning fabric, while her uncle James did likewise for the men.³⁰⁹ All the female servants would have received a length of the same type of material used by the ladies of the house, but of lesser quality. In addition, the servants were expected to sew their own dresses. By providing mourning fabric for the female servants, the employers were still able to ensure that proper social distances were maintained even when all the residents were dressed in the same colour.

Another expense paid by employers was medical care for ill servants. Anne Lister records several instances of this, and she does not resent the expense nor see it as an extraordinary measure. When the house maid Betty fell ill, Anne called in a local apothecary to apply leeches and bleed her.³¹⁰ However, she would only provide care up to a point. When a different housemaid came down with rheumatic fever, Anne sent her back to her family in Mansfield, escorted by Elizabeth Wilkes Cordingley, Anne's lady's

³⁰⁸ A detailed chart with the timeframes and dress requirements of late Victorian mourning, appears in Flanders, 378-383.

³⁰⁹ Anne Lister, Monday 10 November [Halifax] [1817] in Helena Whitbread, ed. *I Know My Own Heart: The diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840*. (New York University Press, NY, 1988), 21.

³¹⁰ Whitbread, *I Know*, 144.

maid.³¹¹ It was to the benefit of the employer to have a servant able to return to work as soon as possible. Paying to feed and house a worker who was unable to work was not economical in the long run at any level of domestic service. Unless there was a local pool of proven reliable temporary help, sending a servant home to recover was also impractical. Anne Lister and Mary Pennyman both hired temporary help when one of their servants was incapacitated.

The boundary between duty and personal loyalty could become indistinguishable for many long-serving servants. The most detailed mentions about the servants that served Anne Lister during her time at Shibden Hall concern her various upper female servants. Elizabeth Wilkes Cordingley worked as the upper female servant at Shibden Hall from at least 1821. Anne appears to have placed a lot of trust in her. When asked by her lover Maria Barlow whether her family knew about her sexual orientation, Anne replied that her family and friends are “all in a mist about it” but by contrast Cordingley knows that “that I [Anne] have my own particular ways.”³¹² While her fellow Haligonians knew that Anne Lister was a very peculiar individual, the exact knowledge of what she did with other women behind Shibden’s doors remained a secret thanks to the discretion of Cordingley and her fellow servants. None of the ladies in this study dismissed servants for indiscretion so far as can be known. Discretion was a duty that benefited both; by not revealing scurrilous events to the general public, the servants secured their employers trust and the family’s public reputation. Employers typically rewarded trustworthiness with career

³¹¹ Saturday 6 December [Halifax] [1823] in *I Know My Own Heart*, 316. As rheumatic fever was not contagious, the reason for sending Bridget home is unclear. Perhaps Anne did not want to have to pay medical bills from a long convalescence, or perhaps Anne felt it would be more restful for Bridget to recuperate at home.

³¹² Whitbread, ed. *No Priest But Love...*, 37-38.

promotion or glowing character references if promotion was not possible within the country house.

Employers' failure to adequately carry out unspoken duties resulted in distressed and alienated servants. Several such failures occurred at Sledmere. Tatton Sykes II suffered from some form of mental illness characterized by strong mood swings and compulsive behaviour. In October 1864, without informing any other member of his family or staff, Tatton took his valet Richard Wrigglesworth and went to the United States. Wrigglesworth wrote to Mrs. Baines, Sledmere's housekeeper, "I dare say you and Miss Sykes will blame me for not letting you know Sir Tatton's [sic] plans before he left England..."³¹³ The intended recipient of the letter shows an interesting power dynamic between the 'upstairs' and the 'downstairs'. Firstly, the letter shows that at Sledmere, housekeeper expected to be as familiar with family members' plans as the family members themselves, potentially even to the exclusion of some of the family members. While Wrigglesworth does mention that Tatton himself is also writing a letter to Sledmere, his letter is not addressed to Mary directly which suggests that any concerns about the household filtered to Mary through Mrs. Baines, even if the news could be classified as an emergency.³¹⁴ This distribution of power is underlined by Wrigglesworth three days later "...I told him [Sir Tatton] I had rote [sic] to you [Mrs. Baines] to tell Miss Sykes [about Sir Tatton's strange departure]..."³¹⁵ The gender divide implicit in the midcentury household manuals is put into practise in an interesting way here. Mrs. Baines has greater authority over the male servants than Mary Sykes, even when it comes to critical information about where a family member has disappeared to. That Wrigglesworth felt it was either improper to write Mary directly, or that the news might be softened coming

³¹³ Wrigglesworth to Baines, October 8, 1864, DDST 1/3/1/3.

³¹⁴ Wrigglesworth to Baines, October 8, 1864, DDST 1/3/1/3.

³¹⁵ Wrigglesworth to Baines, October 11, 1867 [although misdated as 1847], DDST 1/3/1/3.

from Mrs. Baines instead, speaks to the limits of the lady of the house over male employees. Both Mrs. Baines and Wrigglesworth were long-standing servants of Sledmere House by the time of this above incident. Mrs. Baines had been working for the Sykes family since at least 1851, when the census lists her as working for Sir Tatton Sykes I.

The case of Jessie, Lady Sykes illustrates the reciprocal nature of duties within the country house. Only eighteen when she married thirty-eight year old Tatton Sykes II in 1874, she was eager to make her own mark as Sledmere's new chatelaine. Until then, Tatton's sister Mary had been in charge of managing Sledmere's domestic affairs, assisted by Mary Baines, who was the housekeeper when Jessie arrived. Sledmere had at the time an antiquated drainage system dating back to the mid-eighteenth century, permeating the house with an unfortunate odour of raw sewage which likely gave Jessie the impression the housemaids and kitchen staff were not very efficient.³¹⁶ A possible combination of an inexperienced girl wanting to make her mark on the household and the misconception the staff were incompetent may have led to Jessie wanting to replace the staff, including Mrs. Baines and Ann Beckley, the cook. Whatever the cause, Jessie abruptly fired both Beckley and Baines. Baines wrote to Mary Sykes hoping for a sympathetic ear and possible intercession on her behalf. Her letter partly ran

I have had a letter from Lady S. this morning. When I tell you I am sure you will think with me. It is very strange, she writes to say that their[sic] is a House Keeper also a cook coming down the 1st January and that Beckley and me have to give all to them and leave...³¹⁷

But for unclear reasons, Tatton had forced Mary to leave Sledmere before his new wife took over the management of the house. Mary had gone to live with her other brother Christopher and had neither the power to get Jessie to reconsider nor the standing to do so.

Besides being upset at losing her place in a family for whom she had worked for at least twenty-three years, Mrs. Baines was offended by the manner in which Jessie fired her. When leaving a position, servants were typically required to give a month's notice; from this it can be inferred that employers should also give a month's notice barring exceptional circumstances such as theft. Although the letter is undated, the phrase "does not mind for a day or two to suit our convenience [in leaving Sledmere]" points to a very sudden dismissal.³¹⁸ The short notice must also have stung, given the long time Mrs. Baines had spent with the family. Although such dismissals were within the rights of the employer, this one contravened the unwritten rule of behaviour towards a long serving servant like Mrs. Baines as well as a lack of respect for the older woman's circumstances.

During Tatton II and his wife's extensive travels, the servants would be put on 'board wages' and the housekeeper left in charge. A combination of rank and absence combined to make Jessie appear much less involved in the domestic workings of Sledmere than her predecessors. In one of her diaries, Jessie recorded "Morning wrote letters & saw servants."³¹⁹ By contrast, she had quite a close relationship with her lady's maid Gotherd who accompanied her on all her trips abroad and at home. The bulk of Jessie's diaries were written while she was travelling with Tatton, likely to help her pass the time. Gotherd appears quite frequently in Jessie's entries, accompanying her mistress on walks and excursions. On at least one occasion Jessie incurred Gotherd's disapproval: "Gotherd v[er]y tiresome got it into her head that M. Dorval & I were flirting & was v[er]y impertinent to me in consequence. When we got to Constantinople she made a regular scene, it was most unpleasant & [illegible] ridiculous was vy[very] angry & much

³¹⁶ Sykes, 152. It would take fifteen years before the sanitation problem was remedied.

³¹⁷ Mrs. Baines to Mary Sykes, Saturday, DDSY 1/3/1/1.

³¹⁸ Mrs. Baines to Mary Sykes, Saturday, DDSY 1/3/1/1.

upset.”³²⁰ That Jessie did not fire Gotherd shows that she was more willing to tolerate criticism of her behaviour from a servant close to her than she had been when she dismissed Mrs. Baines and Ms. Beckley. While Jessie had significantly between the two events, the difference in employer-servant relationship between Jessie and her lady’s maid and the earlier one with Sledmere’s cook and housekeeper is intriguing. Prescriptive literature may have grouped the lady’s maid, cook and housekeeper together among the upper servants, but as mentioned previously, the lady’s maid stood apart because the nature of her job brought her into closer contact with her employer. Here, this difference is particularly visible: Gotherd provided Jessie with the welcome company and support that Tatton did not, whereas Jessie had not developed a close relationship with either Mrs. Baines or Ms. Beckley. Jessie was willing to tolerate Gotherd’s outbursts because the lady’s maid was a vital source of emotional support to her.

Personal incompatibilities with her husband also took their toll on Jessie and she turned to alcohol and gambling for solace. Gotherd must have found her job increasingly difficult and upsetting, but her commitment to Jessie remained strong. Gotherd was forced on occasion to hide Jessie’s perfume to prevent her from drinking it when no other alcohol was at hand. If Jessie was particularly drunk, Gotherd would hide her stays so that she could not leave the house and publicly embarrass herself.³²¹ Wrigglesworth’s and Gotherd’s actions prevented their employers’ dysfunctions from becoming public. Despite their efforts, these preventive measures may not have been entirely sufficient to maintain the family’s public standing in Yorkshire. The 1881 to 1901 census returns show a dramatic jump in the distance from servants’ birthplaces to Sledmere which suggests that

³¹⁹ Diary May 1883-14 April 1887, DDST/1/2/2/2.

³²⁰ Diary May 1883-14 April 1887, DDST/1/2/2/2.

³²¹ Sykes, 223.

potential servants were aware of existing problems and as a result the Sykes were finding it difficult to recruit servants within the county.

The servant's birthplaces reflect their employer's recruitment strategies. By hiring on friends' recommendations, ladies not only made it easier to verify character letters from a previous employer, but the travel distance between the hiring house and the servant's former place was shorter than if they were using agencies which were largely London based. This allowed for a quick and smooth transition for both employer and servant. This system was not fail proof, as servants could choose whether or not they wanted to work for the enquiring lady. Refusals could be based on any number of reasons, but rumours or reports of poor working conditions and difficult employers would make finding new servants an extremely difficult task. The prospective employer would have to considerably widen their recruitment scope, going beyond those servants who were nearby and search among those servants who were too far away to have first- or second-hand knowledge of the working conditions or employers. Such appears to be the case with Sledmere House in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The major change at Sledmere between 1871 and 1881 was the 1874 marriage of Tatton Sykes II to Jessica Cavendish-Bentinck, called Jessie. From the beginning the new Lady Sykes exercised her prerogative as lady of the house, and this was followed by a drastic widening of Sledmere house's recruiting area between the 1871 and the 1881 census. Table One below shows the average distance from the servants' birthplace to Sledmere as recorded in the censuses. In 1881 more servants than in the previous returns were born outside of Yorkshire, and this was true of lower and upper servants.

By comparison, the recruitment distance at Ormesby Hall was influenced more by the servant's age. The older the Ormesby servant, the greater the distance from their birthplace; It is exactly the opposite at Sledmere . Jessie, Lady Sykes was therefore not seeking more experienced servants when she was chatelaine but instead was hiring younger servants from further afield. The sudden more than doubling of average distance so soon after Tatton II and Jessie's marriage may be a consequence of Jessie's abrupt dismissal of Mary Baines and Anne Beckley. Once her behaviour had become common knowledge in the vicinity potential servants looked for work with other gentry families where they expected greater job security. In the two subsequent censuses, the average age rises along with a slight reduction of the average distance from birthplace. The greatest reduction in average age occurred between the 1891 and 1901 census; by 1901 Jessie was no longer living at Sledmere and consequently had little impact on hiring.

Those Yorkshire households' experience parallels the one of the Lancasterian ones studied by Pooley. Pooley's wealthiest urban Lancaster employers employed more servants from rural areas than servants who had been born in Lancaster, and less affluent families had more servants native to Lancaster.³²² In the market town of Crickhowell, the majority of servants of both sexes came from outside the town and its immediately adjacent parishes.³²³ Servants in this study overwhelmingly had birthplaces significantly distant from their workplaces, which support Pooley's findings that wealthier employers attracted servants from farther afield than their less well-to-do counterparts. This is likely because wealthier employers were able to pay higher wages to secure the services of more experienced servants, in turn expecting the better service such servants could give them.

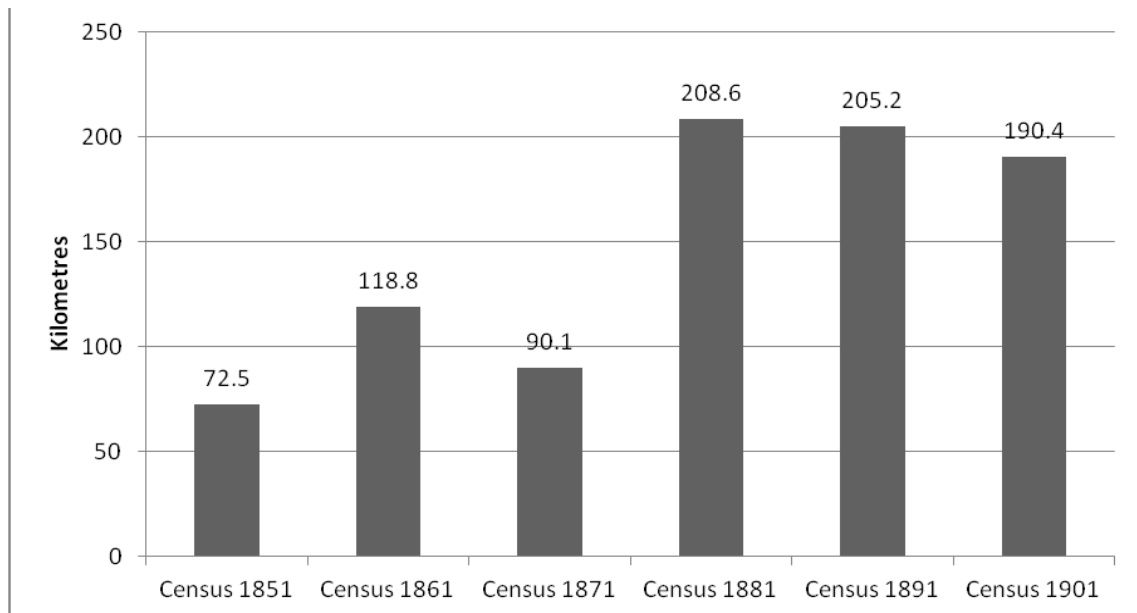
³²² Pooley, 415.

³²³ Gant, 25.

The absence of a positive relationship between age and distance from hometown among Sledmere House servants was surprising. The Sykes could certainly afford experienced servants, so it was improbable that this shift was due to difficulties finding experienced servants. As suggested, it may have to do with rumours being spread about the difficulties in the Sykes' marriage or about the abrupt dismissals of two long standing servants. Or perhaps Jessie, Lady Sykes, was looking for servants who were closer to her own age as a way of changing the social face of Sledmere to one she felt more comfortable with. Either way, she had a decisive impact on Sledmere recruiting area.

The ladies of these houses' tendency to seek out experienced servants via a network of trusted friend had an impact on the profile of the servants working for them. The requirement that they have previous experience meant female servants at these country houses were older than inexperienced girls; the majority being in their late teens to mid-twenties. The sudden decline in the number of servants older than twenty-five is reflective of the temporary nature of domestic service in working class women's lives, a phenomenon noted by other authors.³²⁴ The wider the geographical range of the lady of the house's social circle, the further afield the country house drew servants from. This draw could be influenced by the reputation of the country house and its family, so a family whose reputation might be less than stellar could compensate this with a

³²⁴ McDermid, 255.

Figure 1: Average distance from birthplace to Sledmere House (Km)

geographically wider network. Most importantly, the full hierarchy of servants described in prescriptive literature were not employed by any of the main houses in this study. Instead each country house employed the number and variety of servants needed by the family at that point in their lifecycle. Sledmere House had the largest indoor staff, but did not staff the basic position of kitchen maid for the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Pennymans let go of the nurses and governess as their children grew, but otherwise consistently maintained the same level and variety of staff. The hierarchies at each major country house did not allow for much advancement, although at the larger houses like Sledmere and Ormesby interdepartmental transfers were possible.

But servants also had duties to each other, and while these did not take precedence over those towards their employer, the reasons for adhering to them were more pressingly evident. As Anne Lister's previous quotation on page 98 shows, servants with a questionable ability to fit into the country house's workforce would be looked upon unfavourably during the hiring process. This had as much to do with the employer wanting

to avoid trouble as it did with the difficulties such a servant would cause in the servants' hall. Each level was responsible for making sure the one beneath them adequately performed their tasks. The hierarchal nature of service meant that shirked duties by one servant created more work for the one below which in turn bred discontent. Discontent in the servants' hall spread very easily to the family rooms, and if the employer found fault with the servants, she was well within her rights to replace them. Catherine Cameron had first been mentioned to Anne Lister in 1828, by Anne's friend Anne Belcombe at whose house Cameron had worked as a lower maid.³²⁵ Given the timing it could be that Anne had put out feelers to replace the unhappy Margaret MacDonald. Anne Lister was unsure about hiring Cameron from the beginning, settling on her only because she believed the other candidate was too proud to scrub floors, "if I do not t[ak]e Caroline Cameron I might do worse & perhaps not better..."³²⁶ It would appear that Cameron did quite well as a housemaid as Anne makes no complaints about her work. However Cameron was woefully lacking in the skills Anne looked for in a lady's maid, especially in hairdressing. Anne discovered this when she took Cameron with her on a trip to Paris in 1830. As a result, Anne informed Cameron that if she did not learn to do hair, she would enlist the help of her friends Mariana Lawton and Mrs. Belcombe to find Cameron a new place. Unlike with MacDonald, Anne would not pay for Cameron to take lessons, but would "raise her wages if she could dress my hair & suit me better."³²⁷ Upon returning home to Shibden, Anne made do with MacDonald until she too left. Once again Cordingley stepped in to fill the gap but departed again in 1835. By this point, Ann Walker was also living at Shibden and it seems that she and Anne shared Ann Walker's lady's maid. Proactively replacing

³²⁵ September 30 [possibly misdated by Anne Lister as the immediately previous page is dated October 1] 1828 in SH:7/ML/E/11.

³²⁶ Friday October 10 1828 in SH:7/ML/E/11.

servants whose behaviour or lack of skills was likely to cause problems among the other servants ensured less stress in the long term for the servants which translated into a more harmonious work environment.

Duty cut both ways. The ladies in this study provided their servants with extramunetary benefits that were designed to maintain the status barriers within the country house: fabric for uniforms and mourning clothes, cost- but not labour free laundry, reimbursement for specialised training costs at certain positions, medical care to help the servant return to work. While the last benefited the employer by keeping an experienced servant in the household workforce, the others enforced the visual and labour divisions within the house. Employing large household staffs was a signifier of power and standing within the local community and shire as a whole. By maintaining such staffs, the ladies in this study were publicly advertising their position in the social hierarchy. When they failed to do so, either through abrupt dismissal or poor behaviour or other contraventions, their behaviour could have a negative impact on their social reputation as well as the reputation of their workforce and country house as a workplace.

On the obverse side of duty, were the unspoken duties the servants provided outside of their regular jobs. All servants were hired with the expectation that they would perform the work assigned to them. For the lower servants, the hours of work alone appear to leave them little time or energy to exceed the expectations placed on them. Furthermore, they could find a new position with relative ease if they were unhappy with their present one. The upper servants, and most particularly the lady's maids and valets whose duties brought them into close personal contact with their employers every single day had both the opportunity to exceed expectations and to be seen firsthand and remembered by their

³²⁷ January 1830, personal correspondence with Helena Whitbread.

employers for their exceptional service. The actions of Mr. Wigglesworth and Gotherd, the discretion Elizabeth Cordingley showed regarding Anne Lister's sexuality, Helena Pike's more than a quarter century of service to Mary Pennyman are all examples of duties beyond those described in the basic jobs descriptions of the prescriptive literature. All of these people were upper servants, a valet and lady's maids whose jobs brought them into daily personal contact with their employers. Whether or not their employers were grateful for the exemplary service was not recorded in any of their surviving papers, so what the employers thought of these actions is unknown. However they cannot have been completely ignorant of the services rendered; certainly Wigglesworth, Gotherd and Cordingley could have quit their posts if they found their employers' behaviour and demands to be abusive. These actions were still bound by class conventions however; Wigglesworth did not inform his fellow servants at Sledmere of Sir Tatton's impending North American trip because Tatton had requested his silence. Gotherd and Wigglesworth's desire to protect their employer's reputation shows an understanding of the public role a servant played for their employer's family. Privy to the family's secrets through the nature of their work, servants' discretion was highly prized by employers and indiscretion could be grounds for dismissal. The servants were not only status symbols to society in the locality and beyond, the servants were also status guardians.

The aforementioned employers had more realistic expectations of servants than the authors of prescriptive literature did, especially Samuel Dunn who believed female servants should uniformly display the nine virtues of obedience, respectfulness, kindness, diligence, honesty, truthfulness, modesty, patience and thankfulness.³²⁸ Those employers settled for servants who were obedient, truthful, discrete and showed them outward respect. Their

recruiting methods were also more personal than the ones advocated by the prescriptive literature, and they placed less importance on paper characters and more on word of mouth. Anne Lister and Mary and Jessie Sykes, recruited based on the candidate's experience and positive reference from a source they knew and trusted. However, living in rural Yorkshire placed them in a smaller labour pool than if they were living in an urban centre, and this may have forced them to make do with less than suitable servants like George Playforth rather than go searching for a servant who was a better fit.

Unlike London-based Mrs. Disraeli, for whom a great number of potential replacement servants were readily available, and who, therefore, could afford to dismiss servants for mistakes or personality quibbles that seem trivial, the ladies in this chapter had to be more circumspect. Given her smaller pool of immediately available labour, Anne Lister put up with George Playforth significantly longer than Mrs. Disraeli did with Richard Mitchell, an under butler who lasted less than a week after some "...impertinence about some waistcoats."³²⁹ The practise of recruiting based on the suggestions and recommendations of their friends did not completely prevent these women from accidentally hiring incompatible or incompetent servants, but it probably reduced the frequency of such events. This type of recruiting guarded against criminal servants or those with poor or forged character references, which helped ensure a higher standard of employee.

None of the women in this chapter, Anne Lister, Mary or Jessie, the Ladies Sykes recruited their Yorkshire servants from agencies, reputable or otherwise. Instead, they and their friends and acquaintances created their own labour pools from which they drew most of their servants. As prescriptive books were written either for readers who already had

³²⁸ Dunn, 8.

³²⁹ Horn, "Mrs. Disraeli and her servants...", 45.

servants, or for servants themselves, there are very few specific mentions of how a reader would recruit staff. Isabella Beeton did suggest “friends and acquaintances” along with tradespeople as sources for servant recommendations, but does not mention family members.³³⁰ Given that a family member would likely have judgement trusted by the employer, Beeton is probably assuming that family members will be asked. Conversely, it may have been seen as bad form to poach servants from a family member, as staffing was obviously a time consuming process. Surprisingly, it is the legal reference book *The Rights, Duties and Regulations* that gives a list of servant training schools in London.³³¹ Although Baylis includes this list to inspire his poorer readers to send their female children to these schools, the list also provides a valuable resource for readers who were looking for servants. The women in this study did not hire from London servant schools, nor did they hire from local servant schools so far as is known.

By privileging previous experience and vetting by reliable sources when hiring servants, the ladies of this study effectively created their own small labour pools. Jessica Gerard noted that inexperienced servants found country house service difficult to enter because “...[it] demanded higher standards and better qualifications, but also because the landed classes and their servants had their own networks, newspapers, and agencies.”³³² This echoes the findings here that the ladies looked for experienced servants who were known to their wider circle of friends and kin, and in doing so created their own labour network. The impersonal nature of census returns prevents knowing how employers found servants, but the returns do show how far servants migrated from their hometowns.

³³⁰ Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management*, (London: S. O. Beeton, 1861) online, The Gutenberg Project. Accessed December 17, 2011.

³³¹ Baylis, 57-63.

³³² Gerard, 169.

The distances Shibden and Sledmere's servants travelled from their birthplaces supports some historians' findings but challenges others. Frank Dawes claimed that the daughters of estate workers usually began their domestic careers at the estate country house, but this is clearly not the case for Sledmere, nor as will be seen, was it the case for Ormesby Hall.³³³ In national sample, Jessica Gerard found that 13% of lower country house servants were born on the estate.³³⁴ Complicating matters is the finding that between 1850 and 1890, servants were among the most frequently mobile workers.³³⁵ So some of Sledmere's servants may have originally started their careers at their neighbourhood country house thereby entering the labour pool, and then moved on once they gained experience. That few servants came from neighbourhood, particularly after Tatton II and Jessie's marriage, could be either a reflection of local knowledge about the state of their marriage, or Lady Sykes own hiring preference for more experienced servants. Shibden Hall by contrast hired more locally, with Martha Booth being the daughter of one of Anne's renters.

While all the prescriptive authors exhorted potential servants to be discreet, none of them stated what exactly the servant should be discreet about. The closest any prescriptive authors comes to discussing implied duties is Samuel Dunn's *A Present...* with its discussion of the virtues of honesty and respect. As servants' work made them privy to all sorts of personal information about their employers, prescriptive authors obviously trusted the servants to know what information or gossip should not be spread around. This silence exists precisely because these implied duties are amorphous, changing from family to family.

³³³ Franks Dawes, *Not in Front of the Servants: Domestic Service in England, 1850-1914*. (London: Wayland Publishers, 1973), 105.

As prescriptive books were meant to show the smoothest possible running of a household, events that disrupt day-to-day operations were not discussed. Mourning and ill-health were two such events and their absence from prescriptive literature created an equal absence in historians' studies of domestic service. Information about how these issues affected both employers and servants feature more prominently in servants' memories and employers' letters than in historians' studies of service. The closest a historian comes to discussing mourning clothes is Theresa McBride's mention that "cast-off [employer's] clothing" was considered non-monetary compensation by female servants.³³⁶ None of the prescriptive manuals mention whether a servant should don mourning clothes if one of their own relatives died. As their employer's preferences took precedence over their own family connections, servants were unlikely to be allowed to wear mourning clothes during working hours. When maidservant Hannah Culliwick's aunt died, she only trimmed her bonnet and dress with crape and borrowed a friend's old dress to wear when she was off work.³³⁷ The death of an employer might lead to the dissolution of a household, which might involve letting go some servants, who in turn would not need mourning clothes.³³⁸ Having to let go the domestic staff was the reality for most middle-class families, hence they would not need advice on buying mourning clothes for their servants. For the families here, complete dissolution of a household was unlikely at this level unless the house was passing out of the family, so servants were typically kept to keep the country house running. For those servants that were kept, dressing them in mourning clothes when a member of the employing family died was a visual expression of power and standing.

³³⁴ Gerard, 170.

³³⁵ Gant, 23. The other two are members of the armed forces and skilled non-manual workers.

³³⁶ McBride, 59.

³³⁷ Flanders, 345.

³³⁸ Pamela Sambrook, *Keeping their Place: Domestic Service in the Country House* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 103.

Upon the death of the fifth Duke of Buckingham, his housekeeper wrote his secretary that each maid should have two mourning dresses made, one bonnet, one “shawl” as well as gloves, and ribbons, all in black.³³⁹ That Anne Lister bought cloth to outfit several of Shibden’s servants following the death of her uncle Joseph Lister who did not even live at Shibden, shows how important servants in mourning wear was to gentry families.

Health care is also ignored. In his legal handbook, Baylis says the employer is legally obligated only for “suitable board and lodging.”³⁴⁰ Pamela Horn claimed that employers were not under any obligation to provide medical care.³⁴¹ As for the servants, they could leave of their own volition on account of personal ill-health or exhaustion.³⁴² Collections of servants’ recollections show that actual employer responses varied, from the Duke of Portland calling in a doctor when one of his maids became anaemic, to the Baroness Luca’s complete refusal to rehire an ill housemaid, to a family accommodating a long-serving but nearly blind under-butler.³⁴³ While no legal obligation may have existed, providing at least basic care would be wise because a servant that recovered quickly was one who could be back at work sooner.

³³⁹ Sambrook, *Keeping their Place...*, 103.

³⁴⁰ Baylis, 2.

³⁴¹ Horn, *The Rise and Fall...*, 159-160.

³⁴² Gerard, 179.

³⁴³ Sambrook, *Keeping their Place*, 207-211.

5.

Domestic Hierarchies

As the prescriptive literature showed, domestic service was conceived of, and treated, as a hierarchy throughout the century. This hierarchy was expressed in the way work was organized and the staff deployed, but also, and more subtly, in the spatial layouts of the houses. The relationship of service room placement to domestic hierarchy has not been examined by historians. They have looked at the changes undergone by one country house over a period such as Sambrook's study of Dunham Massey, and at the evolution of various rooms such as bedrooms and kitchens like Marc Girouard's *The Victorian Country House*, but how the house influenced the inhabitants' movements and room usage has been ignored. Architecture partly reflected norms about social hierarchies within the house and partly perpetuated them. Work was defined both in terms of the tasks and in terms of the locations where they should be performed. Service hierarchies were fixed – but individuals could climb up their rungs. Knowing who did which job and what avenues for promotion existed is necessary to understand the actual lives of the servants. One member of the staff crossed both social and architectural boundaries: the governess. Her liminal place in the physical and industry organisation of the country house was the result of a paradox in her duties. Both components were part of the larger whole of gentry domestic service, and as such are necessary to understanding how such service differed or did not differ from prescription.

Peter Thellusson purchased the “...the extensive Brodsworth estates...” in 1761.³⁴⁴ When he died in 1797, his will bequeathed roughly £100 000 of his approximately

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

£700 000 fortune, to family members; the remainder was to accrue interest in trust until the death of any of his sons, grandsons or great-grandsons who were alive when he died.³⁴⁵ In 1856 when the last of the grandsons passed away, the fortune was split between two heirs: Frederick, the fourth Lord Rendlesham and a descendant of Peter Thellusson's eldest son, and Charles Sabine Augustus Thellusson, who was the eldest son of Peter's eldest grandson.³⁴⁶ Charles also inherited Brodsworth Hall and its estates. As the father of six surviving children, perhaps Charles found the existing Hall too small and too old. In any case, the old Hall was demolished and the current Hall raised and outfitted between 1861 and 1863. This rebuilding makes Brodsworth crucial to space and place because it shows how nineteenth-century country house owners expressed domestic social hierarchy.

1. SPACES AND PLACES

Implicit in hierarchy were concerns over distantiation, both social and physical. By looking at other country houses in Yorkshire such as Brodsworth Hall outside of Doncaster, Harewood House near Harrogate and Nostell Priory near Crofton in West Yorkshire in addition to the main houses in this study, the dialogue between 'space and place' and between family and servants can be understood. In the context of this argument and the work as whole, 'space' means the work and social uses of the rooms within the country house whereas 'place' is understood to mean the physical location of the workspaces versus the rooms for the country house family's own use. The interior division of rooms and passages as well as the exterior differences in architecture and placement between the main house and the servants' quarters are visual indicators of the difference in significance. Social distantiation was most explicitly outlined in the prescriptive literature

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 2. Peter Thellusson stipulated that if none of these heirs survived him, the fortune was to be used towards paying off the National Debt.

examined, in which each service role was clearly outlined and situated within a hierarchy. First, the physical distance and differences are examined.

Country houses were first and foremost expressions of dynastic power. These buildings were the public representation of the owner's family's political, economic and social dominance over the local area. Although the families all considered the country houses their *home*, the ever present domestic staff meant these were not truly private homes. Yet this did not stop them from trying to create a sense of privacy by controlling where the servants were found via room placement.³⁴⁷ To create a sense of privacy the rooms within the house were strictly divided between the 'family' rooms like the main bedrooms, libraries, parlours and dining rooms, and the 'service' areas which included the kitchen, the laundry, and the servants' bedrooms.³⁴⁸ In physically restricting the servants within the house, a psychological distance between the two groups was also created.³⁴⁹ Servants' crossed the boundaries between the spaces during the course of their duties, but these crossings were carefully defined by times of day, routes within the house and clothing.

The social places were further differentiated in the building's layout. Houses built in the early eighteenth century like Harewood House and Nostell Priory both put the domestic departments at ground level. From the outside the family's visitors ascended a staircase to

³⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

³⁴⁷ Sambrook, *A Country House at Work...*, 197

³⁴⁸ Colloquially the terms "upstairs/downstairs" are used to differentiate between the two types. However only in two houses in this chapter does the floor plan follow this layout, Harewood House and Nostell Priory. Therefore the terms 'family' and 'service' are used here. As a rule of thumb if a servant could linger in a given room during work hours and not be considered out of place, that room is considered part of the service rooms.

³⁴⁹ Mclsaac Cooper, 290.

the second floor³⁵⁰, entering the house without having to pass through the work areas at ground level. Inside the ground floor, the ceilings were lower than in the rest of the house, but windows fairly adequately illuminated work surfaces and areas. When approaching Nostell Priory the view was of the upper, or family floors of the house atop the service level, making it a visual reaffirmation of the social ladder. The dressing of the exterior stone on Nostell is different on the two parts, with the lower level stones appearing rougher than those on the upper two stories.³⁵¹ By contrast, at Harewood House the ground level of the house is invisible to those approaching it via the driveway.³⁵² The windows to the service rooms can only be seen at the back of the house. At Shibden Hall, the service rooms were integrated in the rest of the house, although Anne Lister had grandiose plans for renovating the existing house which never came about. Sledmere had a service wing that was torn down in 1948. It may have been situated across from the stables.³⁵³ Brodsworth Hall was built between 1860 and 1863 with a service wing facing north-west and jutting out from the main body of the house.³⁵⁴ This wing was built of the same colour stone as the rest of the building but was much lower and lacked a balustrade running along the roof edge like the main house. At Ormesby Hall, the service rooms were located in the old Hall and were not even connected to the main house until the late nineteenth century. At all these Yorkshire country houses social rank was displayed to the most casual passerby who might never enter the building.

³⁵⁰ Called the second floor in North America, where the floor at ground level is the first. In Britain the floor at ground level is called the ground floor and the next floor above the first floor, and so on.

³⁵¹ Sophie Raikes and Tim Knox, *Nostell Priory and Parkland* (Swindon: BAS, 2001), front cover, and author's personal observations.

³⁵² Anon, *Harewood House: A Guide* (Leicester: Raithby Lawrence, n.d.), front cover and author's personal observations. This refers to the house guidebook purchased on site in 2008 and still current.

³⁵³ A caption to a photograph of the back paddock in the old coach house at Sledmere notes the stables can be seen on the left "and the servants quarters, demolished in 1948, right."

³⁵⁴ Please see Appendix B for the floorplans of both Brodsworth Hall and Ormesby Hall.

The dichotomy between public and private does not apply well to the country house as a whole. Firstly, although it was a family home the house itself was a public dynastic symbol rather than a private retreat. Secondly, when visitors entered the house as guests, the door they came in determined which part of the house they saw. Guests of the family would not have been invited or even welcome in the servants' rooms and wings. Likewise, if the servants were allowed to have guests visiting, the house family would not have wanted these guests to tour the family part of the house. In a sense, the service rooms were the most private parts of the house than the family rooms, as not every member of the family would have reason to go there and even fewer members the public would have seen them.

Domestic service was a complex domain; cleaning had several meanings beyond the removal of grime. Dirt is a condition of life and has been with humans since the dawn of mankind. It found its way into houses and kitchens, onto skin and under fingernails. Cleanliness is a relative concept and is unique from housework, for example soil in a garden is useful and not considered 'dirt' until it is tracked through the house. Cleaning methods are reactionary, removing matter that has a correct place but has become misplaced either through its use or through the actions of other people. Coal dust on the mantelpiece is the end product of a fire to heat a room, a wine stain on the tablecloth is the result of a diner spilling his or her drink. Particularly prior to the widespread acceptance and understanding of the germ theory of disease, cleaning methods were as much about defining appearances as about cleanliness. The act of cleaning was thus an act of defining boundaries within the otherwise homogeneous environment of the country house.

Dirt was hierarchal, with human filth being the lowest and most degrading to clean and metal tarnish being the least.³⁵⁵ This dirt hierarchy was the basis for the indoor service ladder, with each rung being a move away from dealing with the filthiest and most degrading. The prescriptive authors and works in the third chapter reflect this hierarchy in the way they organise the different service positions, with the scullery maids referred to as having the hardest job. As will be seen in the Ormesby Hall case study, the position with the highest turnover, the scullery maid, was also the position that dealt with both household and kitchen dirt. All service positions dealt with ‘matter out of place’; the governess shepherded the children through the liminal place between toddlerhood and adulthood, cooks completed the last stages of transforming raw foodstuffs into an edible meal. Lady’s maids might have to wash their lady’s feminine garments, a very personal type of soiling that was not even meant to be mentioned in polite discussion. Such displaced matter was still several grades higher than simple dirt because the children, food and menses had all come from or were destined to enter the employer’s physical body. The departments whose work had the closest contact with dirt were situated the furthest from the family areas of the house.

Ormesby Hall is unique in this study for having the servants’ quarters completely separate from the main house. Shibden Hall was too small for such remove and Sledmere House had a servants’ wing that was connected to the main house. While the ‘new’ Hall is set in such a way that it blocks view of the old Hall to those coming up the west carriageway, the old Hall appears the larger of the two buildings from the outside. This is not the case, as the old Hall is actually built around two courtyards. The old wing of

³⁵⁵ One could extend the argument outside the house as well, running from animal dung to garden weeds instead. However livestock were never expected to become continent in the same way babies and young

Ormesby Hall is an especially good example of how these meanings were made explicit through placement and architecture. The layout of the domestic departments reflects each department's proximity to the family's daily life.

The laundry is the best example of this. Dividing the inner courtyard from the outer courtyard with a scrub room directly attached, the Ormesby laundry is almost a wing unto itself.³⁵⁶ Unattached to the laundry but part of the same dividing space are the Ormesby larders, which needed to be separated from the heat of the kitchen to keep the contents from spoiling. The windows on both sides face the two enclosed courtyards with estate workshops rimming the outer one and the domestic departments the inner. Traditionally a grey area of service because its duties were both intimate yet removed, laundry workers handled some of the most private family possessions in the forms of bed sheets and smalls. Yet the need for constant heat and adequate drying space typically located the washing rooms outside of the house and this outside of the immediate supervision and control of the lady of the house. Laundry workers were considered a different breed than housekeeping and kitchen staff, and this is reflected in the lesser attention the prescriptive literature paid to them.. When the laundry department was treated by prescriptive writers, it lacked the carefully delineated ranks of cooking and housekeeping with the workers being all being called simply 'laundry maids'. Traditionally the laundry was the only department where a married woman whose husband did not work on the family estate could find work, although all the Ormesby Hall and Sledmere House laundry maids listed in the census from 1861 to 1891 were unmarried. Anne Lister refers to giving her stays to a 'Davis' for cleaning, a notable use of the servant's last name considering that Lister refers to her upper

children were. As well, most of the estate workers lived in their own homes and thus had more personal freedom than the indoor servants.

³⁵⁶ Raikes, map on inner cover.

servants by last name and her under servants by their first names. The separation of the laundry also gave the employers some reassurance against the possibility that some of the housekeeping or even cooking servants would see evidence of their employer's physically intimate affairs. While this may have been a false hope given that housemaids made the beds, and lady's maids and butlers had extensive access to their employer's bedrooms in their daily duties, it at least gave an appearance of privacy.

Ormesby's kitchen is on the south east side of the wing; one side faces onto the inner courtyard and the other has windows looking out on to the back park. This allows for much more natural light to flood in towards the work surfaces. The kitchen may be in the same place it was when the old hall was first built because as late as 1853 it still contained "an open roasting fire and spit" at one end.³⁵⁷ The risk of fire was always a factor when the locations of kitchen were planned; the devastating 1911 fire at Sledmere began in the kitchen chimney.³⁵⁸ Aside from safety concerns, Victorians were not fond of food smells drifting into the other rooms of their houses and those who could afford it put their kitchens in basements and other closed off parts of the house.³⁵⁹ The servant rules at Houghton Hall specifically forbade removing beer or ale from the servants' hall because "...it smells so disagreeably."³⁶⁰ Given that the old wing remained completely unconnected to the new house until the late nineteenth century, the Pennymans must have put up with a great number of cold and lukewarm dishes at mealtimes. Brodsworth Hall is an interesting exception, built between 1861 and 1863; its kitchen is at the centre of the house. It stretches two stories tall, likely both to channel cooking smells away from the other parts

³⁵⁷ Raikes, 23.

³⁵⁸ Sykes, 1.

³⁵⁹ I am indebted to Caroline Carr-Whitworth for providing me with copies of Brodsworth's floorplan with the various uses of each room labelled.

³⁶⁰ Langdale Servant Booklet, DDLA 38/28.

of the house and an attempt to mitigate the risks of fire. Excepting the nursery, all other service departments are in the service wing previously discussed. In Brodsworth's case the kitchen placement was more for the benefit of the employer's family than for consideration of the servant's convenience.

The nursery was a grey area between the family rooms and the service rooms. On the one hand, it produced the dirtiest work for the laundry in the form of soiled diapers and dirty clothing. On the other hand, its inhabitants were members of the employer's family and thus were socially superior to the servants who worked the nursery. The placement of the nursery within the house reflects this tension. At Brodsworth the nursery and governess's bedroom are in the north-east corner of the main wing, whereas the rest of the family bedrooms occupy the south-west and south-east sides of the house.³⁶¹ The service wing stretches from the north-west part of the house. Unlike the kitchen and housecleaning staff, the nursery positions ran in reverse order from the dirtiest and most disorderly to the least. The youngest children in the nursery were cared for by the most experienced nursery maid. The least experienced nursery maid would look after the bathing and dressing of the eldest child or children. Childcare and rearing were long term responsibilities whose outcomes were less immediately tangible than removing silver tarnish or baking a pie. Given the central importance of children in family affection as well as their importance in dynastic continuity, the nursery and particularly the schoolroom are the site of an interesting inversion of the space-place dialogue.

Before the children entered the schoolroom, social space was less of an issue because the servants were less discipliners than civilisers of the young children. The nurse, with or without nursery maids, had the task of toilet training the children, teaching them

how to eat properly, inculcating basic moral values like sharing and instilling the basics of good interpersonal behaviour.³⁶² As all the adults in the house, be they servant or family, were capable of doing these tasks, having the nursery staff impart these to the children was not an infringement of social boundaries. After the children had mastered these skills, they in turn produced less dirt and moved closer towards being socially acceptable members of the country house family and therefore closer to their final and ‘proper’ place within the family dynasty. When the children came under the tutelage of a governess the difficult question of discipline reared its head. As Lady Eastlake noted and *Jane Eyre* dramatised, the governess was socially closer to the family she worked for than she was to the other servants in the house. At Brodsworth, this proximity is underlined by the fact the governess’s bedroom is not in the service wing with the rest of the servants’ bedrooms but in the main house, albeit in the same north corner of the house as the nursery.³⁶³ In quite explicit terms of physical space, the governess is neither-here-nor-there between the two types of rooms. Governesses’ social place was similarly outside of both the service hierarchy and the family bounds.

The other female servants did not experience such tensions as those between the governess and her employers. The working relationship between maid servants and their employer was less fraught because it was based on inanimate dirt rather than children who would evolve across the social divide from being ‘matter’ out of its proper place to fully integrated members of the house family. At Ormesby Hall, the closer the department’s association with human filth, the farther its physical location from the family parts of the home. For housemaids whose work took them to all rooms of the house, the prescriptive

³⁶¹ Brodsworth annotated floorplan.

³⁶² Adams, 255.

³⁶³ Carr Whitworth, inside cover. See Appendix B.

authors of the first chapter universally recommended that they clean the family rooms in the morning and preferably before the family members came downstairs for breakfast. During the afternoon these maids were at the beck and call of the family members which meant that they would be required to enter the family rooms while the family and any guests were present. To maintain proper social space when the two groups were in the same physical space clear visual markers were employed: back corridors that let the servants access rooms without traversing the main 'family' hallways and uniforms to visually differentiate the servants from others in the house. Ormesby Hall has a narrower staircase for the servants' use that is built right beside the wider main staircase. The servants' staircase is also closer to where the servants would have entered Ormesby Hall before the old house where the service departments were located was attached to the newer Hall. Ormesby's housemaids could carry their coal scuttles and ash buckets up to the family bedrooms and back to the service wing during their morning chores without encountering any of the family. Aside from a narrow back passage allowing the servants to reach the dining room, the only concession the new house at Ormesby Hall makes towards the servants was giving each dressing room a door that opened onto the landing, thereby allowing access without having to traverse the bedroom. In all other architectural features, the new Hall was built as a private family home, with only minimal servant specific features incorporated into it.

The layouts of other Yorkshire country houses also diminish or eliminate servants' physical presence in the family rooms. At Brodsworth Hall, the servants' hallways are noticeably narrower than the family corridors. Heavy curtains were drawn across the corridor between the kitchen passage and dining room while the family meals were laid out so the servants could pass back and forth without being seen by the family and any of their

guests. At Harewood House the family rooms on the first floor all have a minimum of one exterior wall, with the exceptions of the galleries at either side of the house which have three exterior walls. Therefore Harewood's servants must have had to use windowless interior corridors that were sandwiched between the innermost walls, ensuring almost total invisibility within the family parts of the house.³⁶⁴

Two surviving photos, one picturing some of Sledmere's staff and the other, Ormesby's kitchen are examples of the interplay between servants and their place in the country house. Pictures of servants followed certain conventions which tended to emphasize their place in the structure of the country house as a whole.³⁶⁵ Group photos were taken outside where there was sufficient light and space to allow the photographer to stand far back enough to fit everyone into the frame. Technological necessity aside, the photos were not taken at a studio because firstly it would involve having a large number of the house staff away from work for several hours and, more subtly, it removed them from the house itself with its close associations to the country house family themselves. The lower female staff are almost always shown wearing their afternoon or best uniforms, the ones they would wear after having done the dirtiest of their tasks in the morning. These uniforms tell any casual observers exactly who the photo's subjects are.

The Sledmere photograph, from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, shows some of the servants outside.³⁶⁶ The servants are posed outside of the back door, in the

³⁶⁴ These corridors are not specifically mentioned in Harewood's guidebook and only appear as unnumbered and unnamed blank spaces on the visitor map. However a visual inspection of the State Dining Room shows interior doors which can only open onto these corridors. *Harewood: A Guide*, 45.

³⁶⁵ See particularly the group photographs in Pamela Sambrook, *Keeping Their Place*, 108/109.

³⁶⁶ The photograph is reproduced in Sledmere's old stable as part of an exhibit on Sledmere estate. A caption notes the butler in the photo is Broadway and the housekeeper Mrs. Tracey, The date is assumed by the fact that both a George Broadway, butler, and a Bridget Tracey, housekeeper, are listed in the 1881

front row from left to right are a footman, a butler identified as George Broadway, a housekeeper identified as Bridget Tracey, another female upper servant who is likely the cook.³⁶⁷ In the back row also left to right are six maidservants, one lower unliveried male servant, most likely a valet as he is wearing a formal jacket and vest and two more maidservants.³⁶⁸ Tatton and Jessie Sykes obviously mandated a uniform afternoon or best dress for the maid servants, as they are all wearing white dresses in the same style and starched white caps, possibly made of lace. The colour alone makes the dresses out as the afternoon dresses worn when the maids' work would bring them into contact with the family and guests in the more public parts of the house. Also such a light colour would be completely impractical for scrubbing floors and sweeping up ashes, two tasks that were to be done before the family came down for breakfast. Altogether the Sledmere photo conforms to the dictates of servant photography discussed above: the servants are outdoors, they appear in their best uniforms and are arrayed in such a way that their rank within the service hierarchy is clear to the observer.

For photographs of servants taken indoors, the backdrops are more explicitly service related. The Ormesby photo was taken in the late nineteenth century and shows two women, possibly the cook and a kitchen maid, preparing food at one of the worktables in

census, as well as by the style of dress the maid servants wear. The caption states that 16 servants worked at Sledmere when the photo was taken however only thirteen servants appear in the picture.

³⁶⁷ Footmen were ceremonial servants above all else and as such their physical appearance affected their job prospects. The ideal footman was quite tall, preferably over six foot. Even allowing for gender differences, the unidentified footman in the photo was definitely tall as he is a full head taller than all the standing maidservants.

³⁶⁸ If this man was a valet, then the unknown female upper servant may be Jessie's lady's maid Gotherd. The unknown male servant is positioned well away from the footman and the butler, who are both on the far left of the photo. Seated directly in front of the unknown man is the unknown upper female servant, a positioning that would suggest the two of them worked in roughly the same department, in close personal service to their employers. Furthermore, the lady is dressed in a black dress without an apron, a piece of clothing necessary for working in the kitchen. All of this is conjecture, it is most likely that the unknown lady is in fact the cook and that Gotherd was working with Jessie when the picture was taken.

the centre of the kitchen.³⁶⁹ Servants posing indoors are almost exclusively shown in kitchens or laundries. These two areas were explicitly service related in a way that a picture of the parlour or hallway were not. The kitchen and laundry reflected on the employer as well. These two departments underwent the greatest technological change during the nineteenth century, particularly the kitchen. Showing either a kitchen or a laundry room with the most up-to-date implements was a status statement on the employer's behalf. Rooms such as the servants hall, or the butler's pantry or housekeeper's room do not seem to figure in pictures as much, likely because their equipment was more likely to be too common for the viewer to place them and because none of those locations underwent significant technological changes. Thus the photo of Ormesby kitchen and its two denizens is more than just an old picture; it is a snatch of the dialogue between employer and employed, explicit duties and implicit places.

2. CAREERS AND THE SERVICE LADDER

In a workplace riddled by social place markers, the differences between the domestic places occupied by the nursery, the kitchen and housecleaning staff, were replicated in the profiles and careers of the servants. Country house service had unique aspects that affected the age of the servants, the geographical draw of each house, and job progression.

As already shown, the ladies of these country houses sought to recruit experienced servants. The paramount importance of familiarity with the work not only helped the new hire quickly find their place in the work rhythms of a new country house but it created minimum disruption among those already living at the house. The more senior servants on the domestic service ladder did not need to spend much time training the new woman

³⁶⁹ Raikes, 22.

which meant their own work was less disrupted. The less disrupted the higher servants were, the lesser the impact on the family's daily domestic life. A harmonious transition was in the best interest of the entire household.

The tasks of each position were structured in such a way that a person's work experience in one department was cumulative, with each position's duties clearly leading into the next higher post. Prescriptive authors plainly laid this path of promotion out by structuring their department chapters from lowest to highest post or vice versa. Training was geared towards advancement within the house, not towards helping a servant hone her skills to depart for a new country house. Within the country house, housecleaning, the kitchen and nursery all had their own career ladders. Transfers and promotions from one service branch to another occurred only at Sledmere and Ormesby, which had a sufficient variety of positions to allow it. Shibden Hall was a smaller manor house, and the various service positions were often merged. Thus, the lady's maid also was part housekeeper, the maid was responsible for keeping both kitchen and Shibden clean and the groom waited at the breakfast table. The blending of positions was both economical and efficient. When Anne's first arrived at Shibden, the indoor staff consisted of three female servants: a cook, an upper maid and a lower maid and three male servants performing both indoor and outdoor duties. The upper female servant's duties most closely resembled a lady's maid, and the lower maid's job appears to have been largely housework. Ann Walker had her own lady's maid who moved into Shibden with her.

On the recommendation of her sister Marian, Anne hired Martha Booth, the daughter of one of Shibden Hall's estate renters, for the position of housemaid. Martha herself had ambitions of becoming a cook and a post as a maid at Shibden would have been

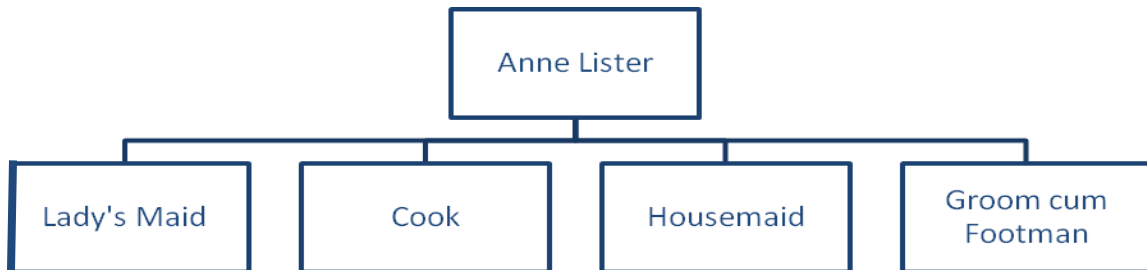
an excellent entry position, the service positions at Shibden Hall were polyvalent.³⁷⁰ This allowed servants to broaden their range of skills and facilitate their transfer to positions in larger households; on the other hand, it made retaining staff over long periods difficult. When Anne and her sister Marian Lister hired servants, they did so to fill vacancies rather than with long term development in mind. Servants who remained several years at Shibden were undoubtedly the most desirable to have but given the dim prospects of promotion, any ambitious lower servant would eventually leave.

Domestic service at Shibden Hall under Anne Lister was less hierarchal than at the other houses in this study. Without a designated housekeeper, Anne supervised her servants herself. The service positions at Shibden Hall combined tasks that prescriptive literature typically assigned to different positions, which means the titles of the female servants are not as exact as at Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall. The housemaid probably helped the cook as needed, and the lady's maid could act as a stand-in for her mistress as when Anne wondered about sending Cordingley back to Halifax from Paris to help her overwhelmed aunt back at Shibden. The single layer of servants gave Anne Lister tighter control over each servant and helped keep wage costs low. The small staff was sufficient for the maintenance of social standing: the three women proved that Anne could afford better than just a maid-of-all-work, and it include the socially important manservant whose wages were higher and for whom employers were taxed separately. For the servants it meant a greater variety of tasks than they might otherwise perform in country houses with stricter role demarcation. Servants working at Shibden did not have a service ladder to ascend so any chance of gaining experience or higher seniority meant leaving Shibden Hall.

³⁷⁰ Anne Lister to Ann Lister, 13 September 1828 in SH7/ML/270.

Compared to the other country houses in this study, Shibden Hall would have seen a greater staff turnover in all positions than houses with a more stratified domesticity.

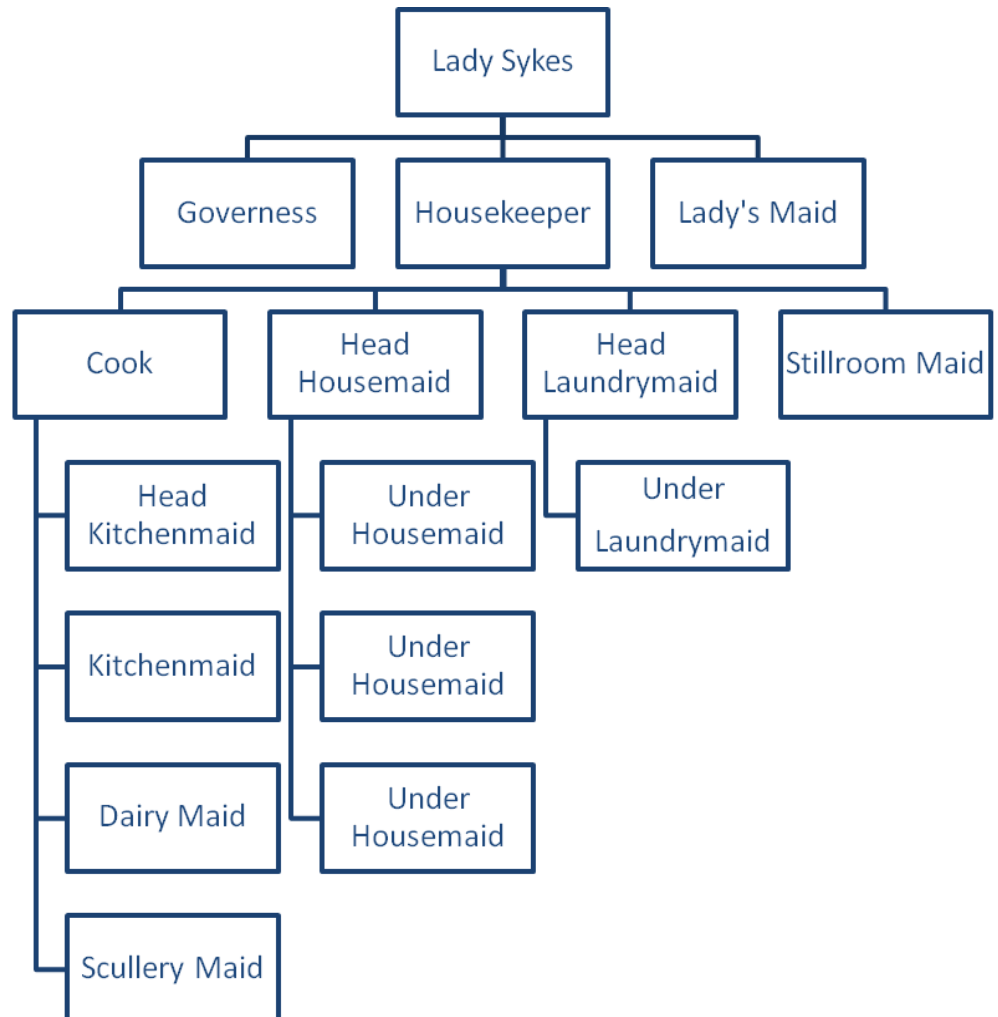
Figure 2: Shibden Hall Service Positions



Sledmere House boasted the largest and most specialised indoor staff. By using the occupations recorded in the census returns of 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901, the service hierarchy can be reconstructed. The 1861 census is the basis for Figure 3, as it uniquely differentiates between the upper and lower servants and it shows Sledmere House staffed at closest to full capacity. The dairymaid is included in the kitchen staff because her duties were part of the food preparation for the household. Following the trend of prescriptive authors, the stillroom maid is placed as a subordinate servant to the housekeeper.. The 1861 census records a position of ‘under stillroom maid’ but no ‘head stillroom maid’ and in subsequent census’s only a single woman is labelled as a stillroom maid which implies that there was only ever one stillroom maid at a time employed at Sledmere. There are four lady’s maids listed in the census, one for each of the daughters living at home and one, the eldest Mary Baines, who likely served the late Lady Sykes who had passed away in February. The close personal nature of the lady’s maids’ tasks meant their immediate supervisor would have been the lady they were assigned to work for. In this case, at least three of them were working for the daughters of Tatton I and his wife

Mary: Elizabeth, Emma and Mary. While each was the immediate supervisor of their own lady's maid, all the lady's maids were overseen by the lady of the house as she was ultimately responsible for her daughters while they lived at home.

Figure 3: Service Hierarchy at Sledmere House



The only possible female indoor servants absent from the chart are a nurse and nursery maids. All the other servant positions appear in the subsequent census returns to 1901, the only difference being variations in the number of servants in each post. As the 1861 census records six adult members of the Sykes family at home, more staff was needed than in later years when only Sir Tatton II, his wife Lady Jessie Sykes and their son Christopher were in residence. Subsequent returns include a stillroom maid, dairy maid and

scullery maid but no kitchen maids. Housemaids likewise decrease in number but are never fewer than two. Although none of the enumerators for the 1871, 1881, 1891 or 1901 census differentiates between the housemaids, one of them must have been the head housemaid. Laundry maids likewise fluctuate in number, with only one recorded in the 1871 census but two in all later censuses. The fluctuation in staffing levels of the housemaids and laundry maids reflects family size. Fewer housemaids were needed if fewer family bedrooms were in use. Two women were probably the minimum needed to run the laundry for a country house the size of Sledmere. The masses of bed linens, tablecloths, cleaning rags, and family clothing alone would require the labour of two people to see that everything was properly soaked, washed, starched, ironed, folded and returned every week. Some country houses such as Houghton Hall required the female servants to wash their own clothes on specific mornings before the laundry was used for the household laundry. It is not known if Sledmere required their female servants to do this, or if the Sykes deducted money from the servant's wages towards washing as was the case for Charlotte Brontë.

The total absence of kitchen maids from the census returns after 1861 is startling. Sir Tatton II's disinclination towards entertaining would have meant fewer fancy meals would need to be prepared.³⁷¹ Certainly their consistent absence over a period of forty years is more than just fluctuations in staffing levels. Without kitchen maids, the scullery maid would have had responsibility for food preparation beyond preparing the vegetable dishes. Added responsibility does not change the fact that the scullery maid is an entry level position in country house service; the women who worked in that capacity at Sledmere ranged in age from sixteen to nineteen. The redistribution of labour does not

³⁷¹ See the previous chapter for Lady Jessie Sykes' comments on Sir Tatton's parsimony regarding household expenses. It could be that he simply decided kitchen maids were too expensive and their work should be divided between the cook and a scullery maid.

seem to have affected the dairymaid, as this position consistently appears in the censuses. Sledmere's dairymaids were older than scullery maids as well, ranging from twenty-four to forty-four years old. The older ages and consistent inclusion in the census returns underline the importance of the position at Sledmere. Milk and milk products spoiled easily if they were not carefully prepared so the older age bracket compared to the scullery maids who traditionally prepared foodstuffs with less chance of spoilage reflects the greater experience the position required.

There is one female servant at Sledmere whose career trajectory can be traced. The 1851 census lists Mary Baines as simply 'house servant'. Her age, recorded as forty-three, and the fact that she is the third servant listed vouch for Ms. Baines having been an upper servant.³⁷² (In fact, the governess is the only female servant whose occupation is specified, emphasising her liminal status between family and servants.) The 1861 census records Anne Evans as housekeeper and Mrs. Baines as one of four lady's maids.³⁷³ Given that she was fifty-three at the time and only Tatton's three daughters were living at Sledmere at the time, this is an interesting post for her to have held. It may be that Mrs. Baines had been lady's maid to Mary Sykes (née Foulis) who had passed away that February, only a couple months before the day of the census in early April. It is an interesting career progression to have gone from lady's maid to housekeeper within three years, not the typical path of under-housemaid to upper-housemaid to housekeeper described by prescriptive authors. Mrs. Baines' close relationship with the Sykes family is preserved in a family photo showing an older woman seated with a younger boy and miscaption "Mrs. Baines nurse"

³⁷² 1851 census, Sledmere parish. H.O. 107/2366, pg. 515. All servants appear in the order recorded by census enumerators.

³⁷³ 1861 census, Sledmere parish. RG 9, volume 3610, pg. 6.

beneath.³⁷⁴ The photo was obviously taken before 1886, as the woman's skirt looks more like the style popular in mid-nineteenth century. Possibly whoever put the album together in the 1880s remembered that she had been a servant and assumed she worked in the nursery because of the boy in the picture with her. Mrs. Baines' career at Sledmere came to an end under Lady Jessie Sykes, an event that was discussed in the previous chapter.

Ormesby Hall's female servants also followed the hierarchal structure. The full complement of staff is shown below in Figure 4. As in the discussion of the census returns for Sledmere when two or more women are recorded as having the same job title, one is assumed to have been the head of the department and the others, her subordinates. As the size of the Pennyman family fluctuated certain types of servants such as nurses and governesses, came and went. As at Sledmere, some of the upper servants served the Pennymans for many years. The 1861 census lists James White Pennyman, his wife Frances, their son James Stovin Pennyman, his wife Mary and their two children James aged four and Alfred age 2 all resident of Ormesby on census night. To serve them there was one butler, a footman, a groom, a housekeeper, one laundry maid, two housemaids, a cook, one kitchen maid and two nurses. A decade later the 1871 enumerator notes the Pennymans are away at York. Left at Ormesby are a husband and wife team in their thirties, James and Mary Hance who are the butler and housekeeper. Beneath them are one laundry maid, two housemaids, two women both confusingly listed as "kitchen maid, Cook, etc" and one footman.³⁷⁵ These two censuses cover the years when there were children in the family. The only categories of servants absent from the 1871 census who had been working for the family in 1861 were the nurses and groom. As the two

³⁷⁴ Photograph album, circa 1886, DDST 4/1/1/1.

³⁷⁵ 1871 Ormesby Census, RG 10, reel 447, pg. 72.

Pennyman boys were in their early teens, they no longer required nurses. By 1865 at least James Stovin Pennyman paid Miss Grant £30 per annum for “Education” services.³⁷⁶

While the subjects Miss Grant was teaching are unknown, she was decidedly better paid than either of the two Brontë sisters had been twenty years before.

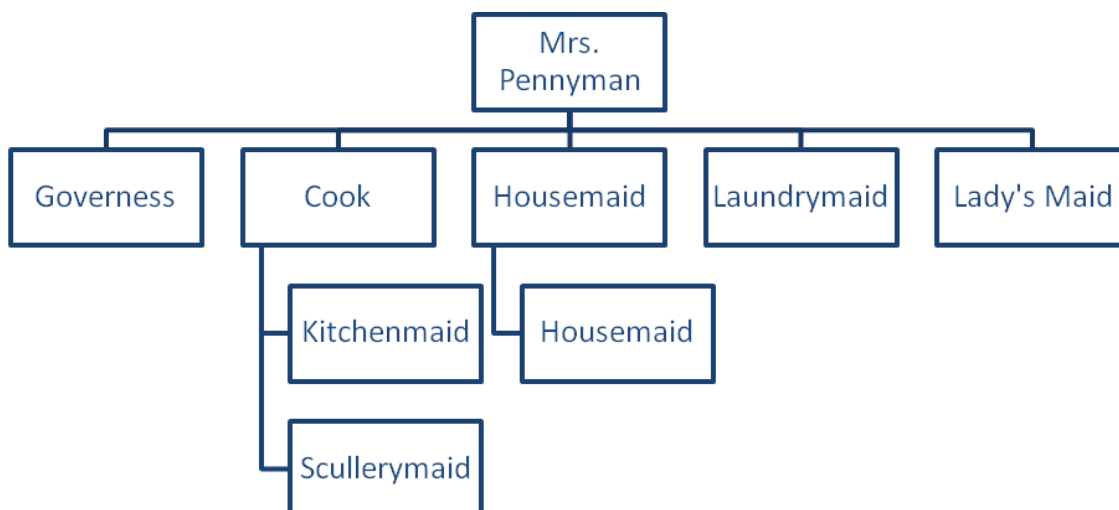
Mary Pennyman acted as housekeeper after her children left the schoolroom, so the flow of authority is closer to the one at Shibden Hall than at Sledmere; there was no one between Mrs. Pennyman and her upper servants. This also elevates the housemaids within the service hierarchy as the head housemaid would have reported to Mrs. Pennyman directly rather than through a housekeeper. The number of laundry maids fluctuated, with the 1881 census recording two and all other censuses showing only one. Ormesby Hall’s laundry was large in comparison to the servants’ quarters, but the family and number of servants meant less dirty laundry than at a larger country house like Sledmere. Possibly the Pennymans employed a married woman who lived in her own home and commuted to Ormesby Hall to help with the laundry and therefore she did not appear in the census.

Age had an impact on who worked in what departments and at which jobs in these country houses. The scullery maid was the youngest regular female employee at both Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall. The census returns for Sledmere House consistently record scullery maids to be under twenty years of age. The eldest servants are usually the upper servants such as the housekeepers and cooks; those women stayed in service as a lifelong career. The age of the lady’s maids depended on the age of the lady they served. As lady’s maids were expected to be companions to their employers, the two tended to be around the same age. For the majority of young women, domestic service was a stopping point between the end of their formal education and marriage. Domestic service in a

³⁷⁶ James Stovin Pennyman, Expense Ledger 1865-1883. Ormesby Hall.

country house offered these women the opportunity to meet members of the opposite sex outside of the social circles they had grown up with. For those ambitious enough to climb

Figure 4: Service Hierarchy at Ormesby Hall



even a few rungs of the service ladder, service offered a chance to live in new places which also widened the pool of potential marital partners. Attrition caused by women leaving service to get married affected the average age of the female servants in this study with very few lower servants older than thirty. Age is less important in the profile of male country house servants for several reasons. First, men had more career options; those who choose service were choosing it over other potential fields rather than because it was their sole option. Secondly, the difference in physical strength between a young man and young woman of the same age negated the need for a new footman or hall boy to have to develop the muscles necessary for lugging a coal scuttle or turning a mangle. Lastly, male servants did not have to leave their positions if they married because their working life was not inconvenienced by pregnancies or nursing duties. In this survey only one married woman was employed as a housekeeper while her husband was the butler at Ormesby Hall. The only widow listed in the census returns is Helena Pike, Mary Pennyman's lady's maid. The

domestic staff at the two larger houses shows that older and more experienced servants were more likely to travel greater distances from their birthplaces to find work.

3. GOVERNESSES

No service position has received as much scholarly attention as the governess. Victorian commentators saw her, both in real life and in fiction, as both a figure in need of charity and a danger to middle-class society. As an unmarried middle-class woman who was working to support herself, the governess contravened concepts of the proper 'place' for middle-class women: married and not working for wages.³⁷⁷ Historians have taken the same stance and overwhelmingly focussed on those who worked in middle-class households. M. Jeanne Peterson coined the term 'status incongruence' to describe the governess's place within middle-class households.³⁷⁸ Succeeding historians have kept to Peterson's focus on governesses in the middle-class and the class contravening aspects of their work. Examining the how gender ideology played out in mid-Victorian life, Mary Poovey noted the sexual danger she presented: a woman equal in birth and education to the type a middle-class man would choose to marry, but whose wage earning placed them with less "morally reliable" working-class women.³⁷⁹ But in the country houses her status as an employed woman without familial support would not have been so incongruent, as the governess was still from a social class below her employer's. Governesses in upper-class homes have not received such sustained scholarly attention, rather they turn up as individuals in studies such as Ruth Brandon's *Governess* which uses the biographies of

³⁷⁷ M. Jeanne Peterson, "The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society," Martha Vicinus, ed. *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 5-6.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

³⁷⁹ Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 128.

individual governesses to trace the history of the field from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1860s. By using individual histories, Brandon was the first to discern the difficulties between the governess and her charges' mother, difficulties that could develop into the power struggles examined here.³⁸⁰

While most of the domestic service positions fit into a neat hierarchy, the governess did not. She was a liminal figure in the country house, neither a part of the service hierarchy nor accepted as an equal by her employers. No department hierarchy existed for her, she had no direct subordinates who might be training for her position or to whom she could delegate lesser tasks. Prior to her employment, she had received some professional training but not the on-the-job type training of the rest of the servants.³⁸¹ In the country house, the governess was not perceived as a social threat because her social origins were still inferior to her employers'. Her contemporaries assigned her both legally and socially to a position between employers and regular domestic servants. In her review of *Jane Eyre*, Lady Caroline Eastlake says that a governess "is a being who is our equal in birth, manners, and education, but our inferior in worldly wealth."³⁸² Speaking about the governess's position in relation to the other domestic servants in the house, prescriptive author and lawyer Baylis says legally "[a] governess, though she live[s] in the house, does not come under that denomination [menial servant]."³⁸³ In day-to-day practice, neither statement was as clear cut as either Lady Eastlake or Mr. Baylis make them sound. The public perception of the governess evolved from one of a servant with a place and a clear

³⁸⁰ Ruth Brandon, *Governess: The Lives and Times of the Real Jane Eyres* (New York: Walker and Company, 2008), 10-11.

³⁸¹ Christina de Bellaigue "The Development of Teaching as a Profession for Women before 1870," in *The Historical Journal* Vol. 44, No. 4, Dec. 2001, 967.

³⁸² Caroline Eastlake, "Vanity Fair – and Jane Eyre," *Quarterly Review* 84:167. (December 1847), 153-185. Retrieved February 1, 2011, from <http://faculty.plattsburgh.edu/peter.friesen/default.asp?go=252>

³⁸³ Baylis, 2.

role within the house to a woman who was outside of all social norms of her class. In private however, it was issues of power that were the most debated and contentious.

The governess's separate status is underlined in *The Complete Servant*. In the introduction, Sarah Adams claims that she invited a former employer, specifically a lady "OF HIGH RANK" to write the section on governesses.³⁸⁴ It is the only section that is written by a 'guest' author.³⁸⁵ Entitled "The Governess, or Gouvernante", this section covers all the aspects of the post including recruitment, wages, qualification and behaviour. *The Complete Servant* assigns this post the widest range of wages per annum, between 25 to 120 guineas, the equivalent of £26.25 to £126 in 1825.³⁸⁶ The Adams use as an example a gentry family with an income of £800 to £900 per annum, and a country house staffed with all possible servants. Their "female teacher" is paid 30 guineas per annum, or £31.50 p.a., the highest remuneration of any of the female members of staff listed.³⁸⁷ Regardless of the governess's abilities, her wage could rise if she stayed for "certain great lengths of service" as a type of old age insurance. However, most governesses did not stay long at their posts as shall be seen. Furthermore, the schoolroom was equipped by the house owners with furniture and some teaching aids such as a globe and blackboard, but not much beyond that. Housemaids were not expected to come equipped with their own brushes nor were the kitchen staff expected to provide their own cooking utensils. The

³⁸⁴ Adams, v. Capital letters as in original.

³⁸⁵ See the prescriptive literature chapter for discussion about the possibility that Samuel and Sarah Adams are actually a single person. Likewise, the language, syntax and grammar in the governess section does not differ from that used throughout the rest of the book, once again implying one author for the work entire, rather than an author of a different education level unique from the Adams.

³⁸⁶ Adams, 272.

³⁸⁷ Adams, 7. The rest of the servants and their wages in guineas per annum are as follows: housekeeper, 24; lady's maid, 20; head nurse: 20, second nurse: 10; nursery maid: 7, upper housemaid: 15, under housemaid: 14, kitchen maid: 14, upper laundry maid: 14, under laundry maid: 10, dairy maid: 8, under dairy maid: 7, stillroom maid: 9, scullion: 9, French "Man-Cook": 80, butler: 50, coachman: 28, footman: 24, under footman: 20, groom: "His Liveries and a Gratuity", lady's groom: 12, head game keeper: 70 plus

governess however was expected to come prepared with all the necessary teaching books she would require, and all the essential knowledge.

The governess was expected to have certain qualifications. Women who had studied at seminaries or boarding schools that educated girls for the purpose of becoming governesses, and “the unsettled daughters of respectable families of moderate fortune” were judged as the ideal candidates.³⁸⁸ These same standards were current for at least twenty years, to when the Brontë sisters worked and wrote. Employers could find potential governesses through newspaper advertisements, agents, and by letters of enquiry to the aforementioned training schools. Given that the position involves teaching young children, a governess was supposed to have good temper, good manners and be well behaved; in addition she needed a “genteel exterior”.³⁸⁹ Oddly enough given the details the book provides about each service position, no explicit mention is made of governess needing to enjoy the company of children or to have aptitude for teaching. Significantly, the governess is not required to sew any of the household linens, nor is it her responsibility to clean the schoolroom. For *The Complete Servant*, the governess’s work was completely removed from any of the labour that constituted housework. The importance of the governess’s position lay in the education she was to impart to the children rather than any physical labour and this was also the defining issue of her limbo within the country house: she was a servant who did not engage in physical labour.

The paltry educational requirements were: a “thorough knowledge” of English to write “graceful” and accurate letters, be “moderately acquainted” with French; know

lodge, under groom keeper: 1 guinea per week therefore approximately 52 per annum, gardener: 40, assistant gardener: 12 s per week, works out to 4 guineas per annum. (84 shillings=£4.20=4 guineas)

³⁸⁸ Ibid, 272.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 272.

something of Italian and musical theory; not “be ignorant of” arithmetic; and “not omit to introduce” both geography and popular science.³⁹⁰ Basic competence on the piano, the steps of fashionable dances, ability to execute both plain and fancy needlework and an introduction to elegant literature rounded out the list.³⁹¹ It is strange that the ‘lady’ who allegedly penned the governess chapter in *The Complete Servant* did not give any indication how or from whom girls would learn household management skills. This silence hints that governesses were not thought capable of grasping the complexities of running a country house, or that by virtue of their station in life they had had no experience and no understanding of how to do so.

Governesses did not have a service ladder on which to progress up. Unlike the kitchen-, house-, dairy or nursery maids the governess had no opportunities for internal advancement. Accordingly, the social level of the family who first employed them determined the level of their subsequent positions. The easiest way for a governess to experience variety in her work was to search for subsequent positions where the children were older or younger than those she had been teaching. Both Charlotte’s and Anne’s governessing careers began in families with very young children. Both women moved on to families with older children, even if in Charlotte’s case the second set of children were only slightly older. Teaching younger children may seem easier than older ones, as younger children still saw adults as authority figures and were less likely to be oppositional. The change in routine as well as authority figure would have been difficult for some children, leading to discipline problems.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 272-3.

³⁹¹ *Ibid*, 273.

Outside of the schoolroom, the governess was expected to know her place with the family as well as with the other servants. The Adams allow that she may mingle with the family members she is not instructing, but “she must, of course, not make herself too familiar with the domestic servants.” On the other hand, she should not infringe on the “domestic privacy, and personal independence” of the family.³⁹² If she managed to successfully navigate this social tightrope, a former pupil might remember her in his or her will should the governess outlive them.³⁹³ Even allowing for the longer lifespan of women, this was a faint hope.

When *The Complete Servant* describes the governess’s position, it sounds like someone who had no experience of having worked as one. Anne Jameson, née Brownell, the author of *Winter Rambles and Summer Travel in Canada* and *Characteristics of Women*, a study of women in Shakespeare’s works, worked as a governess during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The daughter of an Irish miniaturist, Jameson was sixteen when she took her first post as a governess with the family of the Marquis of Winchester.³⁹⁴ Later, she worked as a governess for Edward Littleton, later Baron Heatherton, from 1821 to 1825, at the same time *The Complete Servant* was published (in 1825). Jameson was not convinced that governessing was either a long-term career or an emotionally fulfilling job. In her memoirs she writes, “...the best preparation is to look upon the occupation to which you are devoted (I was going to say *doomed*) as what it really is, - a state of endurance, dependence, daily thankless toil; to accept it as such courageously and meekly, because you must, - cheerfully, if you can; and so make the best

³⁹² Ibid, 275.

³⁹³ Ibid, 275.

³⁹⁴ Jameson, Anna Brownell in Sidney Lee, ed. *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. XXIX Inglis – John. (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1892), 231.

of it.”³⁹⁵ She left governessing to get married, but unfortunately the marriage was unsuccessful. After a mutually agreed separation, Jameson turned to writing to support herself and never went back to governessing.

The writings and personal letters of the Brontë sisters, particularly those of Charlotte and Anne, are among the best sources for the work and lifestyle of the Yorkshire governess. Both Charlotte and Anne had worked as governesses in Yorkshire, and governesses appear as central characters in some of their novels. Carolyn Steedman claims that fictional characters do have historical existence, and as such can be used in historical analysis.³⁹⁶ Characters like Jane Eyre and Agnes Grey are about “...real historical processes experienced in actual social circumstances...”³⁹⁷ While mad wives locked in attics and chance reunions with favoured curates are fictional plot devices to take the respective characters to the apex of their plotlines, Jane Eyre and Agnes Grey did the same work in the same conditions that real governesses did. It is in this work, informed by Charlotte and Anne Brontë’s own experience, that the characters’ values as historical sources lie.

The Brontës lived in the small village of Haworth where their father Patrick was perpetual curate. Their mother Maria died when Charlotte and her siblings Maria, Elizabeth, Branwell, Emily and Anne were still young. The two eldest sisters died after contracting a respiratory illness while at The Clergy Daughters’ School in Cowan Bridge, an event that Charlotte incorporated into *Jane Eyre*. A consequence of their father’s small income, all three of the surviving daughters were forced to earn their livings and each

³⁹⁵ Anne Jameson, *Memoirs and Essays*. (London, 1846), 259, quoted in Ruth Brandon, *Other People’s Daughters: The Life and Times of the Governess* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2008), 217.

³⁹⁶ Steedman, *Master and Servant*, 196. Steedman employs Nelly Dean of *Wuthering Heights* as a method to understand late eighteenth century domestic service in the Pennines.

trained to be a teacher, although Emily never actually worked as a governess. To discover which subjects the sisters were capable of teaching, one can look at an advertising bill for their failed attempt to set up “The Misses Brontë’s [sic] Establishment” at the parsonage. For £35 per annum including board, students would be instructed in “writing, arithmetic, history, grammar, geography and needlework”; for an additional £1 s1 per quarter French, German and Latin could be taught and a further £1 s1 per quarter bought instruction in music and drawing.³⁹⁸ The scheme failed when no pupils applied, and Charlotte and Anne turned to governessing instead.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) is best known for her novel *Jane Eyre*. Her early experiences as a student, teacher and later governess influenced her writing, particularly *Jane Eyre* published in 1847. Charlotte and Emily had accompanied Maria and Elizabeth to The Clergy Daughters’ School, which was intended to train girls from the poorer clergy to become governesses. Following the deaths of his elder daughters, Patrick Brontë brought Charlotte and Emily home and oversaw their education there. At fifteen, Charlotte was sent to Roe Head School, again with the idea that her education would suit her to become a teacher or governess. The curriculum at Roe Head was French, geography, grammar and politeness.³⁹⁹ Following her graduation, Charlotte stayed on as a teacher, a position that granted first Emily and then Anne study there tuition-free. She and Emily did attend the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels to improve their French, adding cachet to their governess credentials by being able to claim they had learned French from native speakers. Following another brief stint as a teacher, Charlotte took up her first governess post in May 1839.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 197.

³⁹⁸ Katherine Frank, *A Chainless Soul: A Life of Emily Brontë*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), insert.

³⁹⁹ Lyndall Gordon, *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 38.

Charlotte was ill-suited to be either a teacher or a governess because she disliked the company of children. Nonetheless, there were no other socially acceptable jobs open to a woman of her social standing so she was left to get on with governessing as best she could. Charlotte's first job as a governess was with the Sidgwick family of Stonegappe House, four miles from Skipton in Yorkshire. At the time, she was hired to teach two children, Mathilda then six and a half, and John Benson Jr. then 4 years old.⁴⁰⁰ At Stonegappe, her days were long, "[t]he children are always with me, and more riotous, perverse, unmanageable cubs never grew."⁴⁰¹ Charlotte was expected to both teach and amuse the children even while the family was on their holidays.⁴⁰² In a letter, Charlotte touches upon a problem that appears in firsthand sources on governesses: who was in charge of disciplining the children. First, she attempts to correct Mathilda and John Benson herself but the children ignore her. When she complains to Mrs. Sidgwick, she receives "only black looks... and unjust partial, excuses" that exonerate the children.⁴⁰³ As mentioned above, discipline was a grey area in the governess-employer relationship, possibly made even greyer here due to parental partiality.

While Mrs Sidgwick may not have appreciated Charlotte's attempts at securing her pupils' obedience, Charlotte did not welcome Mrs Sidgwick assigning work to her during her little free time. The governess's only task is teaching in *The Complete Servant*, and as the prescriptive literature chapter showed, sewing the household linens became the task of the housemaid and the housekeeper later in the century. Thus Charlotte complains that Mrs Sedgwick is only concerned with "how the greatest quantity of labour may be squeezed out of me" by having her do the household sewing when she was not teaching. She laments to

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 75.

⁴⁰¹ Smith, ed. *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Volume 1, 1829-1847*, 190-191.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 193.

Emily at home in Haworth “...that a private governess has no existence.... While she is teaching the children, working for them, amusing them, it is all right. If she steals moment for herself, she is a nuisance.”⁴⁰⁴ Charlotte lasted only two months with the Sidgwick family.

After a brief spell at home in the parsonage at Haworth, Charlotte took up her second and last governess post in March 1841, instructing the two White children, a girl aged 8 and a boy aged 6, of Upperwood House, Rawdon, some 6 miles from Bradford. The salary was £20 per annum but £1 per quarter was deducted for laundry, leaving Charlotte with a salary of £16 p.a.⁴⁰⁵ Charlotte found the White children to be better behaved than the Sidgwick children; being older than her previous charges they needed less ‘mothering’ which suited Charlotte.⁴⁰⁶ As with the Sidgwicks, Charlotte was expected to do some of the household sewing. More objectionable than the sewing that occupied her evening hours was being pressed into performing other servant’s tasks. Charlotte writes Ellen Nussey:

During the last three weeks that hideous operation called “A Thorough Clean” has been going on in the house- it is now nearly completed for which I thank my stars- as during its progress I have fulfilled the twofold character of Nurse and Governess- while the nurse has been transmuted into Cook & housemaid.⁴⁰⁷

Spring cleaning aside, Charlotte appears to have better tolerated this governess post.

However she left after nine months to attempt to open the failed school with her sisters.

Although Jane Eyre’s actual work as a governess is not described in detail, Charlotte does provide some information on recruitment, duties and relationships with other servants at Thornfield Hall which reflect real life practices. Wishing to leave Lowood

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 190.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 191.

⁴⁰⁵ Gordon, 90.

⁴⁰⁶ Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, May 1841. Haworth Parsonage.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

School where she has been a teacher since finishing her own education, Jane Eyre advertises in a local newspaper

A young lady accustomed to tuition... is desirous of meeting with a situation in a private family where the children are under fourteen' (I [Jane Eyre speaking as narrator] thought that as I was barely eighteen it would not do to undertake the guidance of pupils nearer my own age.)' She is qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, Drawing, and Music' (in those days, reader, this now narrow catalogue of accomplishments would have been held tolerably comprehensive).⁴⁰⁸

Jane is offered a position at £30 p.a. provided that she forwards a character reference.⁴⁰⁹ Jane has much the same credentials as Charlotte did, although the position offered to her has a salary nearly twice as high as what Charlotte earned at her second governess post. Jane's wages are similar to the ones listed in *The Complete Servant*. The difference between real and fictive wages for the equivalent credentials is probably due to Charlotte's employers being unable to pay more, and Charlotte taking the post they offered because of family necessity following the failure of the sisters' school venture.

The age gap that Jane stipulates in her advertisement is an issue that experience real world governesses would appreciate, but something easily overlooked by those who had never worked as or with a governess. The necessity of an age gap, both for disciplinary reasons and to avoid having a pupil who was already better educated than the governess, reappears in *Agnes Grey* but is not mentioned in any of the other sources consulted. This silence probably has to do with the authors of prescriptive literature not having any direct experience working as a governess, and quite possibly an equal lack of experience employing them. In light of this, it is significant that the only book that deals in depth with governesses was written by two purported servants, even if the female co-author Sarah

⁴⁰⁸ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London: Penguin Group, 1994), 117.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

Adams had never worked as a governess or teacher. The prescriptive literature showed how the authors felt things should be done, it did not deal with the nitty gritty details such as adaptations or shortcuts individual servants could develop in the course of their work. Specifying the age range of potential pupils was just that, an adaptation experienced servants used to help ease their workload, a method that Charlotte and Anne clearly recognised as useful. Unlike the Sidgwick children and the White children, the fictitious Adèle's discipline is entrusted completely to Jane.⁴¹⁰ While this is in stark contrast to what Charlotte and Anne had experienced, Jane Eyre's control and importance in the schoolroom is in direct contrast to her invisibility to those outside of it, and this is likely an accurate reflection of what happened in real life.

Outside of her responsibilities in Thornfield's schoolroom, Jane is socially isolated. Although Jane and Adèle dine with Mrs Fairfax in the housekeeper's parlour, Jane does not socialise with any of the other servants. As Charlotte herself was, Jane is pressed into assuming the duties of other servants when needed, such as helping the cook and the housekeeper.⁴¹¹ In her interactions with her social superiors, Jane follows almost to the letter the advice from *The Complete Servant*. During a house party at Thornfield, Jane only joins the guests when Mr. Rochester demands she does.⁴¹² Even when the guests obliquely ridicule Jane by making snide comments about the governesses they had known, Jane does not assert her own status as a feeling person with an identity independent of her job.⁴¹³

After Charlotte became a successful author, her publisher William Smith Williams asked her advice when his daughter Fanny was looking to become a governess. Charlotte

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 148.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 227.

⁴¹² Ibid, 235,

⁴¹³ Ibid, 246.

wrote Williams that the most important skills a governess could possess were teaching ones and the ability to enjoy the company of children.⁴¹⁴ She acknowledges that when a governess cannot teach her pupils because of the children's own poor behaviour, "[the governess] will wish herself a housemaid or kitchen girl, rather than a baited, trampled, desolate, distracted governess."⁴¹⁵ Charlotte's own experiences left her feeling completely defeated but her sister Anne's work as a governess was far more successful.

Anne Brontë (1820-1849) was the first of the sisters to start work as a governess. In April 1839, she started working at Blake Hall in Mirfield, the home of the Inghams. She found the position through a friend whose brother-in-law had baptised the Ingham children.⁴¹⁶ When she arrived the Inghams had five children, although Anne was only responsible for the two eldest, Tom, aged 7 and Mary, aged 5. Few of Anne's letters have survived, so it is through Charlotte that an impression of what Anne's first governess post was like can be derived. Anne's responsibilities was determined by the children's ages; she had nothing to do with the youngest children who were still in the nursery. As for Tom and Mary, Anne is to teach them to read but was unable to make headway because both "are desperate little dunces...sometimes they even profess profound ignorance of their alphabet."⁴¹⁷ Just like her protagonist in *Agnes Grey* and her sister Charlotte, Anne was explicitly forbidden from disciplining the children when they misbehaved.⁴¹⁸ Unable to make headway in such an environment, Anne left in December of the same year.

⁴¹⁴ Margaret Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume Two, 1848-1851*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 63.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid*, 64.

⁴¹⁶ Gerard, 175.

⁴¹⁷ Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Volume 1, 1829-1847*, 189.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid*, 189.

Her next governess position was initially more successful. Anne was hired in March 1841 by the Robinson family of Thorp Green Hall in Little Ouseborn. Her pupils were older, Lydia was fourteen, Elizabeth, thirteen, Mary, twelve and Edmund was eight.⁴¹⁹ When Edmund turned twelve his parents decided to hire a tutor to provide him with a better education than a governess could. On Anne's recommendation, the Robinsons hired her brother Branwell Brontë. Unfortunately, in a career shortening move, Branwell had an affair with Mrs. Robinson, which resulted in Anne abruptly leaving the Robinson's employ on June 18, 1845.⁴²⁰ Branwell was dismissed the following month. Despite the ignominious reason for her quitting, Anne must have made a good impression on the Robinson girls, as they wrote to her and visited Anne in Haworth afterwards.⁴²¹

Agnes Grey is a more realistic novel than *Jane Eyre*; there are no mad wives hidden in the attic and the central character, Agnes does not marry either of her employers. Unlike *Jane Eyre*, in which governessing is a plot device designed to bring Jane in contact with her future husband, in *Agnes Grey* governessing is the plot. Agnes's first governessing position is found through family connections.⁴²² Mirroring Anne's real-life experience, Agnes is in charge of three children under the age of ten but not allowed to punish them for their frequent misbehaviour.⁴²³ Caught in the conundrum of needing respect from the children but being prevented from taking steps to secure the same, Agnes is unable to teach the children and is let go on the basis of their lack of progress.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁹ Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1998), xii.

⁴²⁰ Gordon, 134.

⁴²¹ Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, viii.

⁴²² *Ibid*, 10.

⁴²³ *Ibid*, 22.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

Like Anne, Agnes' second governess position is more successful than her first. Trying to exert more control over the terms of her employment, Agnes places a newspaper advertisement stipulating a salary of £50 per annum and two months holidays a year in return for teaching Latin, French, German, singing, music and drawing.⁴²⁵ By emphasising these more advanced skills over basic literacy, Anne makes Agnes' target position one where the pupils are older and higher up the social ladder as singing, music and drawing are more accomplishments than education. Despite her ability to teach more advanced subjects, Agnes has Mrs. Murray, her next employer, values "unimpeachable morality, a mild and cheerful temper and obliging disposition" as the most desirable qualifications a governess should possess.⁴²⁶ Both Agnes' actual abilities and Mrs. Murray's preferred qualifications echo the ones in *The Complete Servant* from twenty-two years before. Qualifications aside, the same issue over discipline appears in the Murray household; Agnes is forbidden from correcting her pupils' bad behaviour.⁴²⁷ As the Murray girls are older, Agnes is more at their mercy than she was with younger pupils. The girls dictate when lunch should be served and eaten and when they feel like studying.⁴²⁸ As the girls grow however, Agnes' job shifts into that of a chaperone, accompanying the eldest two on calls around the estate.⁴²⁹ This career progression is not mentioned in *Jane Eyre* nor in *The Complete Servant*. Charlotte left governessing before her charges grew too old for a governess, and the Adams' speak of the governess as though she spent entire career working in the same conditions and teaching the same employer mandated subjects in every single position she held.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid*, 43.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, 44.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, 52.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid*, 55.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, 67.

In 1861, *The National Review* ran an article asking “Why are Women Redundant?” The author defined redundant women as middle-class women who were single and engaged in paid labour. Governesses were considered redundant women by virtue of their being largely middle-class single women employed in other people’s houses. These women were “...more or less well educated, spending youth and middle life as governesses, living laboriously, yet perhaps not uncomfortably, but laying by nothing and retiring to a lonely and destitute old age.”⁴³⁰ By contrast, female servants were considered functional because “...they are attached to others and are connected with other existences, which they embellish, facilitate, and serve.” Their servitude meant that “no portion of their sex is more useful or worthy.”⁴³¹ The author does acknowledge that governessing is a devalued job, and blames the majority of governesses for being less educated and qualified than they make themselves out to be.⁴³² Given the absence of qualifying examinations, and the resistance some governesses had to implementing them, unqualified governesses were a problem.⁴³³ The lack of standardization would only be adequately addressed once girls’ education moved out of private homes and into the more formal public schools. As formal education for young women became more widespread during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of governesses steadily declined.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ W. R. Greg, “Why are Women Redundant?”, *The National Review* (April 1862), 436.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, 451.

⁴³² *Ibid*, 457.

⁴³³ Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume Two, 1848-1851*, 64. Charlotte’s aversion to credentialization is twofold: firstly, governesses are already underpaid as most of their knowledge is not required for their posts, and secondly, that “moral impassibility” is a greater requirement for being able to get through their careers. (Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams, M. Smith, ed., 65.) As moral fibre is an individual trait that cannot be quantified, Brontë believes educational standardisation would mean better (ie: more morally strong) governesses would be given the same rates as those ones who were morally inferior.

⁴³⁴ Brandon, 256.

As the number of governesses declined, so too did the debate on their proper place in society. Part of the governess's neither-here-nor-there status stemmed from an insidious fear of what she represented. In an age before old-age insurance, health benefits and limited liability, the fact a woman born to a class that would expect her to not have to earn her living, but was forced by circumstance to do so highlights the fact that reversals of fortune could happen to anyone. Among the gentry, the ladies were less likely to be victims of bankruptcies or other loss of property given that wealth was typically in the form of land, and even entailed, but primogeniture and laws of entail could work against them if they were widowed or their father passed away before they were married. But in reality, power struggles took place over a far more tangible issue, and this issue was not one that appeared in either the prescriptive literature or the public debates.

For Charlotte and Anne Brontë, the most intractable problem of their jobs, disciplining the children, was the very thing that was not even touched upon by writers' without first-hand experience of the occupation. In one sense, this reticence was understandable, as discipline was traditionally the preserve of the parents, a method of perpetuating power within the household. But the question of discipline obviously arises when the parents are not the ones spending the majority of the day with the children. While it seems logical that the person who has the day-to-day charge of the child should be the one in charge of disciplining them, in the case of the governess the reverse is true. If she took charge of disciplining the children, the governess would be stepping out of her social place in the house, a place which was inferior to that of her employers. This silent Gordian knot was at the heart of the governess's liminal position, neither servant who laboured at housework nor parental stand-in with the power to adequately discharge their responsibilities.

Hierarchy was inseparable from work within country house service, whether it is expressed in the architecture or the organisation of the staff. The domestic pyramid could be a tool for advancement as seen in the staff structures of Sledmere and Ormesby, or it could be an instrument of exclusion, in the case of the governess. Placing rooms nearer or further from the family part of the country house helped visually and psychologically underscore the differences between the departments, but it is difficult to tell whether the inhabitants were consciously aware of this differentiation. The servants were very aware of the structure and distribution of household labour because it structured their work days, the employers because they were the ones staffing the posts. The ladies adapted the staff structures laid out in prescriptive literature to their own financial and familial circumstances. Notably there are few extraneous servants in Shibden and Ormesby Hall, at this level there was not room in the budget for servants who did not actively contribute to the running of the household. In terms of the servants themselves, it was surprising that Sledmere did not follow the expected trend of servants' ages relative to their distance from their birthplaces. As speculated, this may have been more about the perception of their employers or with the new Lady Sykes restructuring Sledmere's service.

The governess did not fit into the domestic hierarchy, either architecturally or with the rest of the servants. The Brontë sisters' letters give testimony to the frustration of being on the periphery in such a strictly delineated environment. The experiences of their eponymous characters Jane Eyre and Agnes Grey are important to historical analysis because their authors explicitly located them within a certain temporal and geographic period, that of the private Yorkshire schoolroom during the first half of the nineteenth century. In doing so, the experiences of the two fictional governesses gain credence and relevance to historians.

The more complex domestic hierarchies of Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall reflect the same type of hierarchy described by the prescriptive authors. The kitchen and housekeeping promotion ladders are clear, moving from the lowest positions, scullery maid, under housemaid and under laundry maid, towards the upper ones such as the cook, the head laundry maid, and housekeeper. The Sykes and Pennymans made adaptations to these hierarchies to fit their family life cycle and their economic status. Prescriptive work assumed that family life cycle would partly determine what types of servants were employed. Obviously the Sykes and Pennymans made adjustments to their domestic hierarchies according to family lifecycle and house size, so the nursery was only fully staffed if young children were present, and the number of ladies maids varied depending on the number of daughters of marriageable age. Living year-round at Ormesby Hall after her husband inherited the family seat, Mary Pennyman managed Ormesby without a housekeeper. Jessie, Lady Sykes, who accompanied her husband Tatton II on his frequent long trips, employed a housekeeper.

Shibden Hall's hierarchy reflects both the lower income of its owner, and her personal life. Anne Lister adapts the separate service roles, thereby reducing her wage bill but also limiting the servants' opportunities for advancement. The employment of only a cook is both cost saving and a reflection of personal taste: neither her uncle and aunt, nor Anne herself, entertained guests regularly at Shibden Hall, and Anne's diaries and letters very rarely mention food or dining, so further kitchen staff would have represented an extravagant expense.

The real life careers of the Brontë sisters reflect the norms laid out in the Adams' *The Complete Servant*. Charlotte and Anne were the "unsettled daughters of [a] respectable

famil[y].”⁴³⁵ Comparing the advertisement for their failed school with the list of educational qualifications from the Adams’ work shows that their teaching qualifications were in line with public expectations. The sisters’ personal experiences, which they replicated to some degree in their novels *Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey* are shaded by their own personal views towards children and teaching

Historians have focused on the governess in the middle-class household, rather than the upper class country house. The focus on middle-class households has much to do with middle-class Victorian concerns over the figure of the governess. Jeanne Peterson was the first to use the term ‘status incongruence’ when describing the governess, and this term applies to the country house governess no less than the ones working for middle-class families. While her social origins and education placed her above the rest of the servants, the governess was not likely to have been perceived as any type of threat by gentry employers either because her very employment placed her socially beneath them.

⁴³⁵ Adams, 272.

6.

Evidence from the account books: Domestic service at Ormesby Hall

Throughout the nineteenth century there were complaints about servants being prone to job hopping and not remaining faithful to one family for long periods.⁴³⁶ This problem was particularly acute in York, with one fifth of the wealthiest families going without servants at one time or another at mid-century.⁴³⁷ To modern readers, these complaints seem part Victorian hypocrisy, part class snobbery and part labour market shift; servants were able to shop for better positions when demand outstripped supply. Between 1881 to 1911, the number of female servants did increase, but not as steeply as the increase in the number of families and in general population growth.⁴³⁸ Furthermore, the number of male servants declined absolutely during the period 1901 to 1911.⁴³⁹ This drop was thought to be most acute in the north of England, including Yorkshire.⁴⁴⁰ So there was a decline in the numbers of servants at the same time as there was a rise in the number of potential employers, which fuelled the belief that there were fewer ‘good’ servants.

One can look at the labour patterns at Ormesby Hall from 1861 to 1903 as revealed by their account books to assess the validity of this point of view. This case study will take into account the domestic service structure, the wages paid, the length of time servants spent in each position, and the distance the servants were from their birthplace or home.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁶ Horn, *The Rise and Fall...*, 25.

⁴³⁷ Schwarz, 253.

⁴³⁸ Mclsaac Cooper, 289.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*, 289.

⁴⁴⁰ Horn, *The Rise and Fall...*, 29.

⁴⁴¹ A couple of servants were hired before 1900 and worked into the early years of the twentieth century. Their dates of hiring include them in the duration of work analyses.

This analysis creates a full portrait of the labour relations that are otherwise only tangentially dealt with in more personal sources such as letters and diaries.

Ormesby Hall possess a wage book covering the years 1883 to 1893 and kept by Mary Pennyman, who was her own housekeeper. It is a purpose made book with columns for "Capacity, Wages per annum, When Due, Sum Paid, Date of Payment [and] Signatures." A later Ormesby wage book, covering the years from July 1893 to approximately 1925, exists in the Teeside Archives.⁴⁴² This later book includes addresses for some of the servants' next-of-kin. In both books, servants signed for their wages over postal stamps. These stamps were provided by the Pennymans if the servant wanted to send wages home; if they did the cost of the stamp was deducted from their wages and the balance mailed accordingly. If servants wanted to keep their wages, the Pennymans and other employers required them to void the stamp by affixing it in the wage book and signing over it. This voiding prevented the servants from hoarding the unused stamps and selling them. The entries in the latter wage book are not completely chronological; the first few pages contain the pay dates and signatures for one servant each but as the book progresses and servants leave and new ones are hired, new names and entries are recorded wherever blank space happened to be. Nonetheless it is a highly detailed and valuable resource. To avoid confusion the first wage book will be referred to as the 'Ormesby Hall Wage book, 1883 to 1893' and the latter as 'Teeside Archives Wage Book, 1893 to 1925'.

James Stovin Pennyman, Mary's husband, kept a less detailed account book between 1860 to 1896 where he records all the wages paid out each year among the other

⁴⁴² Time limitations prevented including the entire wage book to 1924 being analysed. Such an undertaking would be better suited to a PhD thesis.

estate expenses.⁴⁴³ He inherited Ormesby Hall in 1870 but had been living there and managing the estate accounts for some time before that. This study uses the years from 1865 to 1896 because the entries for 1860 to 1864 are not as detailed. Although the servants' last names are recorded, their positions are not given every year which makes it difficult to ascertain who held which position and for how long.⁴⁴⁴ In addition, it is a yearly accounts casting, so only if a servant stayed for the full year can their wages be accurately calculated. This makes calculating which wage bracket and consequently which position the servant was hired for difficult. However, the yearly structure makes figuring out how many years the servant stayed easier so one can calculate the duration of their employment.

In appendix D are the names, wages and duration of all the recorded female servants who worked at Ormesby Hall for the thirty-five year period. The Pennymans were prompt at paying the quarterly wages; every January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 or the next possible day if the family were not at home. This makes gauging the length of service term easier, as any final payment recorded on a date other than the regular paydays can be assumed to be the last day of service. If the servant had more than one entry on the same page, Mrs. Pennyman sometimes added "Left our service" and drew a line beneath the servant's last signature. Where it can be surmised based on the wages paid, the service position has been added in *italics*. Approximately one hundred and forty-one women passed through Ormesby's servant wing between 1865 and 1902. Wages per annum are given for 131 of them.⁴⁴⁵ For 83% of them, the capacity they were hired for is listed or can

⁴⁴³ This book is kept at Ormesby Hall and is cited as "James Pennyman, Account Book 1860 to 1896" here. Teeside Archives holds Mr. Pennyman's account books for his London house.

⁴⁴⁵ This number is lower than might be expected because not all servants remained for a full year. Particularly in James Pennyman's account book if the servant did not stay for a full calendar year, the amount they earned is impossible to state with any certainty. Also, some servants were clearly hired on an as needed basis and their wages reflect this.

be reasonably deduced based on their wages. The exact duration of employment and wages are present for 73 of the women. Nineteen have addresses listed for their next-of-kin.

The humane side of country house service can be glimpsed in these records. Annie Ellis working for six weeks to help Ms. Williamson while she recuperates from a broken leg is an example of an employer accommodating an incapacitated servant. In a unique case, domestic service was used as charity itself. Violet Slack began work in 1902, possibly as a kitchen maid, and Mrs. Pennyman records Violet's parents' address in Richmond, Yorkshire, as next of kin. Sometime later this address is crossed out and "Father and Mother, Police Station, South Bank" is written instead. Not much further down the page is "Esther Slack begins today at £12."⁴⁴⁶ Taken together, it would appear that Mrs. Pennyman hired Esther, who must have been quite young given that she was hired for the lowest position and that she was still living at home.

Taking on a girl left homeless when her parents were arrested was not just charitable, it was a continuation of an interesting form of recruitment. Hiring the siblings of servants already working at the country house occurs at all three major house in this study. From an employer's point of view, it was highly convenient: they already knew how industrious and diligent one sibling was and, it was reasonable to believe a brother or sister might be just as hardworking. Aside from the work done, it would also improve the morale of the currently employed sibling which might induce him or her remaining in the house's service longer. In addition to the Slack sisters, there were Edward and Louise Harding listed in the 1891 census, and both hailing from Darlington near Durham. From much further afield came sisters or cousins Louise and Mary Smith whose next of kin was in

⁴⁴⁶ U/PENN 5/3/3.

Burwash, Sussex.⁴⁴⁷ Compared to the number of servants as a whole who passed through Ormesby, three familial pairs is not many but it proves that the same variety of recruitment channels Anne Lister and the Sykes ladies used were used by Mary Pennyman.

Table 2: Domestic Hierarchy by Wage

Capacity	Wage Range (£/pa)	Mode (£/pa)
Scullery maid	10 to 16	12
Kitchen maid	13 to 18	18
Under housemaid	12 to 15	15
Housemaid	7 to 21	20
Under Laundry maid	12 to 16	12, 14, 16
Laundry maid	18 to 22	18
Nursemaid	14 to 20	14, 18, 20
Head Nurse	20	20
Cook	14 to 45	35
Governess	34	34
Ladies maid	16 and 25 ⁴⁴⁸	16 and 25
Dairy maid	11	11

In order to understand where newly hired servants fit into the domestic hierarchy, Ormesby's domestic service hierarchy can be recreated using the wages per annum (see Table 2). Dairy maid was the lowest position at £11 per annum, but this position was not always staffed. When fully staffed, the kitchen had a cook, a kitchen maid and a scullery maid. Despite a period of three months where three different cooks presided over the kitchen (Sarah Madson, Hannah Booth and Mary Ann Williamson), cooks stayed at Ormesby Hall for periods of several years. This in turn put pressure on any kitchen maid

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

who wanted to rise in the department: none of the cooks during this period were promoted from within. There are a few instances of a scullery maid being promoted to kitchen maid, but the majority seem to have left before being promoted.

The housekeeping department did not suffer from the same difficulties. Only on rare instances is a woman recorded as being “First” or “Second” housemaid. During the early years of this study, the dual position of cook and housekeeper appear in scattered places in the 1865 to 1896 account book but census returns from 1881 onwards only refer to cooks. Mary Pennyman was acting as housekeeper from that time so there was no chance that a housemaid could climb to the pinnacle of domestic service.

The laundry seems to have experienced none of this pressure. The wages there sit between those for the kitchen and those of the housekeeping department with the under laundry maids starting wage being the same as that of a scullery maid. The wages for ‘upper’ laundry maids remain £2 per annum below the wages for the housemaids.

Figure 5 measures the staff turnover across the study period. The higher the number of people at a certain wage level, the more women who worked at a position that earned that wage passed through Ormesby Hall’s servant quarters. As can be expected, the greater number of people earned the lowest yearly wage of £12, so that the positions of scullery maid and lower laundry maid saw the highest turnover. The next highest turnover is seen in the £16-20 per annum wage bracket, the same median wage as kitchen maids. Again, this high turnover can be the result of women who wish to progress in their departments leave Ormesby Hall in search of places with more prospects for promotion. Nursemaids whose employment was dictated by the age of the children in their care, left when the Pennyman

⁴⁴⁸ Helena Pike was Mary Pennyman’s lady’s maid and she earned £25 pa. By contrast, Marianne Simpson

children left the nursery. Among the middling wage earners, housemaids and laundry maids at the top of their wage bracket, marriage might have been as strong an inducement to leave as promotion. With the exception of a Mrs. Hance and a Mrs. Pike, married and widowed respectively, all of Ormesby’s female servants in the census returns were unmarried. Working in domestic service to save the money to get married was very common, and Ormesby was no exception. Positions with higher wages per annum saw fewer workers pass through. The upper servants like Mary Pennyman’s lady’s maid, the cooks, and governess worked for the Pennymans over longer periods of time. An exceptional case of an upper servant staying for a long time is Helena Pike, lady’s maid to Mary Pennyman, who stayed with her for at least twenty-four years.

Figure 5: Count by Wages, 1865 to 1903⁴⁴⁹

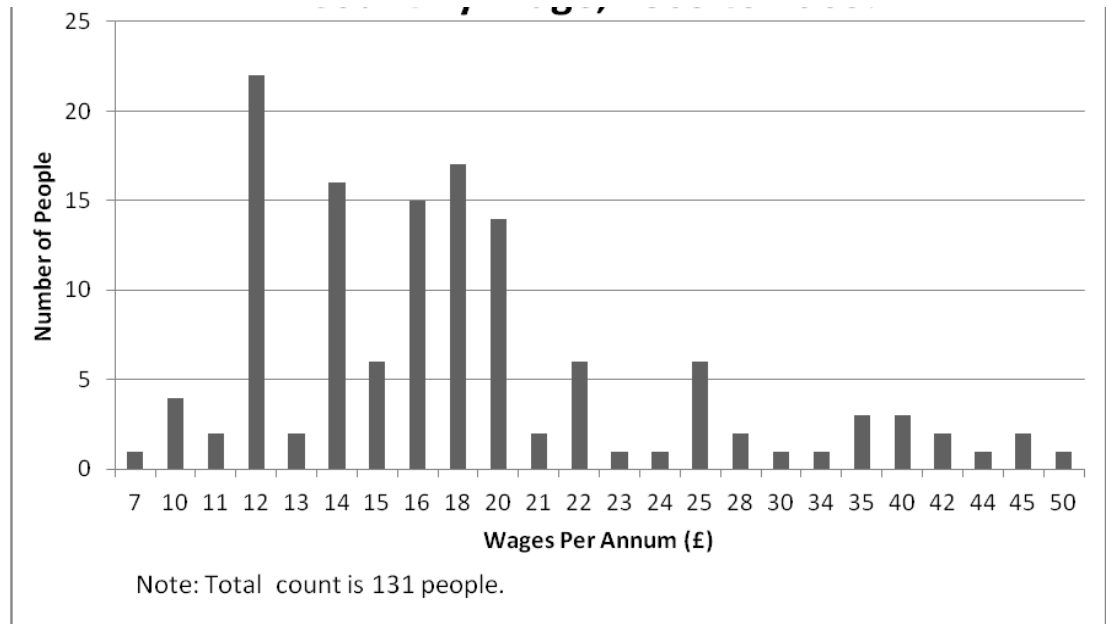


Figure 6 below shows the relationship between years of service and length of employment. [See appendix C for the raw data.] The legend squares represent the wages

earns £16 pa as Edith Pennyman’s lady’s maid.

⁴⁴⁹ A one time payment of 0 10 0 per annum has been excluded as anomalous.

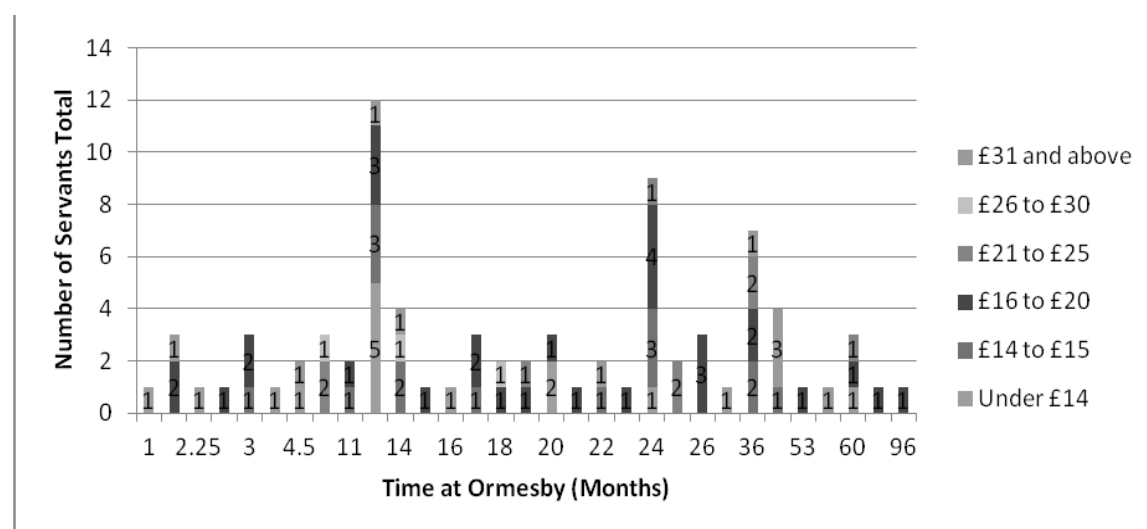
per annum.⁴⁵⁰ The spikes at one, two and three years of service supports the notion that servants were expected to remain a specific length of time in a position. In the case of Ormesby, such a time period would be a year based on the chart below. The Pennyman's did not hire their servants for a fixed number of months, all of the entries recording wages paid for servants departing between the usual pay days confirm that, as do the number of servants in the figure below who left within a year. As with the overall turnover chart, servants making £12 per annum departed most frequently after a year of service. At the two year mark, those earning £16 were the most likely to leave. The raise in overall income and the later departure date are a function of promotion. Even with promotion, attrition at yearly intervals was dependent more on hierarchy level, highlighting the above point that servants left to pursue higher positions in combination with higher pay.

When they did leave Ormesby Hall, the servants were not doing so suddenly and without notice. Only one servant, Harriet Hawley, is recorded as having given insufficient notice and according been docked £3 1 0.⁴⁵¹ Several instances of one servant leaving on the same day that another is hired at the same pay rate show that staff turnover was harmonious if frequent. Such smooth transitions demonstrate that Mary Pennyman had little trouble finding and securing new servants. The intangible aspect of a good work environment also seems to have been present. The majority of servants stayed for between one to two years, long enough to gain experience and a 'character' before moving on. This length of time recalls Mrs. Baines' surprised comment to Mary Sykes about a new servant not remaining at Sledmere for two years; it would seem to be an average length of time to

⁴⁵⁰ Servants who were promoted within the house are included. For example a person who spent one year at £12 per annum and was subsequently promoted to £14 per annum and left Ormesby after 6 months at that wage appears twice in the chart, once as a £12 per annum value and once as a £14 per annum value. As shown in the main chart above, promotion within happened so infrequently that it does not have a detrimental effect on the data spread.

remain in a lower service position. If the work environment had been untenable, there would be a much higher turnover rate at all levels, not to mention difficulties in recruiting staff.

Figure 6: Comparison of Wages per Annum versus Duration at Ormesby Hall⁴⁵²



That many of them were reimbursed their travel fare shows that Mrs. Pennyman recruited from well beyond the immediate locale of Ormesby and Middlesbrough. Using a combination of census returns and the addresses from the wage book, the distance travelled by the servants can be calculated. This is important because it allows the ‘draw’ of a country house on the domestic service labour market to be estimated. In other words, one can show how far people would travel to work in a country house belonging to an established gentry family. By measuring the radius and calculating the average distance, Ormesby Hall’s recruitment ‘area’ can be identified. The radius can also show how far afield Mary Pennyman looked for servants. If most of the servants came from within a smaller circle, then Mrs. Pennyman likely recruited her servants through letters and

⁴⁵¹ Wage Book, 1883 to 1924, Ormesby Hall.

recommendations from friends as Anne Lister did. If a significant proportion came from further away than Mrs. Pennyman may have been using a central registry service, the vast majority of which were based in London.

The addresses from the wage book may not be the servant's hometown. Indeed, as the distances in the census returns illustrate, servants could and did travel far from their birthplaces to find work. The importance of the wage book addresses lie in the fact that the servant considered that person their next-of-kin; it was the one to contact in case of emergency and the place they would go if they were unemployed. The servants are not assumed to have travelled straight to Ormesby Hall from either their hometowns or their family addresses. Lacking letters of character or referral requests from either Mr. or Mrs. Pennyman, there is no way to be certain where exactly the servants were working before they arrived at Ormesby. That being said, some conclusions can be drawn about servants who were born or whose family lived less than ten kilometres from Ormesby. As this is a walkable distance, it would be easy to visit family on days off, helping to alleviate homesickness. It is understandable that a girl or young woman just beginning in domestic service may want to be close to her family, as well as working in the larger community she had grown up in; these quiet support structures outside of the house could ease the transition into a new or first job. Both Charlotte and Anne Brontë chose their second governess posts positions at houses farther from home than their first ones had been.

Taking distance from hometown as proxy for experience, examining the census returns and the wagebook addresses supports the finding that country house employers preferred experienced servants. The first summary is of the 1861 census. Contrary to what

⁴⁵² Helena Pike is excluded from this count as her 288 months of service is clearly much higher than the rest of the staff.

can happen when working on the general servant population, there is no risk here of finding relatives of the heads of household listed as servants; those are identified as such – and there was no danger the enumerator would mistake a relative for a servant or vice versa.⁴⁵³ The 1861 census has the greatest concentration of servants whose hometowns are more than 100km from Ormesby Hall. Although the gender differences may be unique to Ormesby, overall specialist servants came were recorded as having birthplaces greater distances from their workplaces than did general servants working in smaller households.⁴⁵⁴ Interestingly, all but one of Ormesby’s far-travelled servants are men. In twenty years, this trend would be reversed and women would travel the farthest from their hometowns. For men domestic service was a career choice, one of many possible careers available to them. Indoor service positions for men such as footman, valet, and butler decreased in number across the century while outdoor and unliveried positions (i.e. gardeners and grooms) remained relatively constant.⁴⁵⁵ Women had fewer career choices open to them and domestic service was a better paying job than dressmaking or shop work, hence their greater numbers in the industry across the century.⁴⁵⁶

In terms of recruitment range this is expected to translate into shorter distances between a man’s workplace and his birthplace as listed in census returns. Although this could mean that they went further to find the position they were interested in. In her research, Jessica Gerard found that career servants, those who wished to spend their entire working lives in domestic service and who typically rose to the upper service positions, were the most mobile, travelling long distances in order to find a position and household

⁴⁵³ Higgs, 258; Anderson, 264.

⁴⁵⁴ Sambrook, “Servants, Family and Business...”, 28.

⁴⁵⁵ Schwarz, 245.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 253.

that suited them.⁴⁵⁷ For most men, working in service was a conscious career choice, thus the long distances between Ormesby Hall and the hometowns of Mistrs Richardson, Phulin and Cummings is not surprising.

Table 3: Ormesby 1861 Census

	Age	Birthplace	Distance	Position
Cornelius Richardson	39	Storton, Lincs ⁴⁵⁸	143.3km	Butler
Charles Phulin	20	Ekford , Stafford	210.5km	Footman
Henry Cummings	17	Preston, Lancs [?] ⁴⁵⁹	332.5km	Groom
Harriet Meek	40	Hardwot Nottingham[shire] ⁴⁶⁰		Housekeeper
Ann Frost	33	Ordy Lincolnshire ⁴⁶¹	178.1km	Laundry Maid
Charlotte Pickering	20	Marton Yorkshire	39.3km	House Maid
Elizabeth Crooks	20	Ormesby, Yorks.	0km	House Maid
Margaret Webster	20	Newby Whiske, Yorks.	32.5km	Cook
Ann Wright	19	Lackenby, Yorks.	3.7km	Kitchen Maid
Eliza Lascelles Coroburn	50	Durham, Bishop Wearmouth ⁴⁶²	41.5km	Nurse
Mary Anna Moore	20	Hovingham, York	42.5km	Nurse

As will be seen, the distance from birthplace for male servants greatly reduces as the century progresses, a possible effect of fewer young men entering service. In turn this may have lead Mary Pennyman to hire men that were available at the moment openings

⁴⁵⁷ Gerard, 178

⁴⁵⁸ In the 1861 census Cornelius Richardson's birthplace is give as 'Storton, Lincs', presumably Sturton by Stow in Lincolnshire. The distance estimated is from Sturton by Stow to Ormesby.

⁴⁵⁹ For Henry Cummings in the 1861 census his birthplace is listed as Preston but an inkblot obscures the shire name, which might be Staffordshire. There is no such place listed today in the Ordinance Survey so it may have been swallowed up by urban sprawl. There is however a Preston in Lancashire which is 132.5km from Ormesby.

⁴⁶⁰ Likewise in the same census Harriet Meek's birthplace of Hardwot, Nottinghamshire, does not appear on any maps today, nor does 'Hardwot' appear to be an abbreviation. There is a Hardwick, Nottinghamshire, a late nineteenth century planned community by the Dukes of Newcastle, but the census likely predates the park's construction. Consequently Meek was excluded from the total distance calculations.

⁴⁶¹ Ann Frost's hometown in the 1861 census is listed as Ordy, Lincolnshire, a misspelling of Orby, Lincolnshire. The distance calculated is the distance from Orby to Ormesby.

⁴⁶² Eliza Lascelles Coroburn gave her hometown as Durham, Bishop Wearmouth. Bishopwearmouth was a Pre-Conquest settlement on lands that were granted to the Bishop of Durham, part of modern-day Sunderland. For this reason, the distance calculated is from Sunderland to Ormesby.

arose, rather than continue to search for a more experienced servant and risk losing whoever was available immediately.

Below is a summary of the 1871 census return for Ormesby. Of all the census returns, this one boasts the lowest average distance from hometown of all the sources. Tellingly, it also has the youngest group of people of all the census returns as well. James and Mary Hance are unique in this study as a married couple both employed in the same house. Given their respective birthplaces are a fair distance from Ormesby, it is likely that they were married before they were employed. Mr. Pennyman records James Hance working as a butler for several years before his wife is hired as a housekeeper.⁴⁶³ As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mrs. Hance only stayed a few years before leaving, possibly due to pregnancy.

Table 4: Ormesby 1871 Census

	Age	Birthplace	Distance	Position
James Hance	33	South Dalton, Yorks.	85.3km	Butler
Mary Hance	34	Beverley, Yorks.	94km	Housekeeper
Hannah Reed	28	Osmotherley, Yorks.	21.7km	Laundry maid
Anne Cundell	23	Stockton on Forest	61.2km	Housemaid
Mary Harrison	22	Carlton, Durham ⁴⁶⁴	15.5km	Housemaid
Elizabeth Corner	22	Wilton, Yorks.	6km	Kitchen maid, cook, etc.
Elizabeth Meek	18	Eston, Yorks.	5.4km	Kitchen maid, cook, etc.
Thomas Abbey	16	Bolton Percy, Yorks.	76km	Footman

The 1881 census represents a high watermark in the number of servants at Ormesby

Hall on enumeration night. James Pennyman recorded no attrition during 1881, the only

⁴⁶³ See above main chart for the dates of Mary's service.

⁴⁶⁴ Since the 1871 census, Mary Harrison's birthplace of Carlton, Durham, has become part of Stockton on Tees, Yorkshire, and it is from Stockton that the distance has been calculated.

year in this study not a single female servant left and not a single new female hire was made. Given the high turnover, this must have been a welcome break for the Pennymans. Therefore, this return reflects a fully staffed Ormesby Hall with no children remaining in the house.⁴⁶⁵ Curiously, this census has a higher number of housemaids than any other but not a single kitchen maid. The census records one nurse, Ann Gurney, aged forty one. The only child listed at Ormesby on enumeration night is fifteen year old Edith Pennyman, too old to still require a nurse. Ms. Gurney is likely employed by Philadelphia Coltran, Mary ennyman's eighty-five year old mother who was visiting at the time.⁴⁶⁶

Table 5: Ormesby 1881 census

	Age	Birthplace	Distance	Position
Alice J. Iron	33	Bayswater, Middx ⁴⁶⁷	344.1km	Governess
Anne M. Wilson	30	Escrick, Yorks.	75km	Cook
Ann R. Gurney	41	Hammersmith, Middx	345.2km	Nurse
Helena Pike	38	Lerwick, Shetland Islands	622.7km	Lady's maid
Anne Manton	29	Kenilworth, Warw.	246.1km	Laundress
Mary Chappell	36	Kirklington, Notts.	161.8km	Housemaid
Margaret Mitchell	24	Fencote, Yorks.	33.6km	Housemaid
Marianne Scrimpton	20	Boroughbridge, Yorks.	53.8km	Housemaid
Mary Newton	20	Gunnarside, Yorks.	60.6km	Laundress
Hannah Smith	22	Balderton, Notts.	167km	Housemaid
James Hannah	19	Moor Monkton, Yorks.	60km	Footman
George Howard	16	Ayton, Yorks.	57.4km	Footboy

⁴⁶⁵ James Pennyman, "Servants Wages, 1881," Account Book 1865-1896.

⁴⁶⁶ Sambrook, "Servants, Family and Business...", 16, notes the presence of elderly relatives encouraged the presence of servants.

⁴⁶⁷ Alice J. Iron's birthplace of Bayswater, Middlesex, has been swallowed by London's sprawl.

The servants listed in 1891 (Table 5) all worked for the Pennymans as the family were entertaining no guests on census night. Overall, the table shows a continuation from the 1881 census in the average distance from home. Lower female servants once again included a kitchen-maid and a scullery-maid but the position of ‘footboy’ has disappeared. As for the distance from birthplace, the two manservants both hail from relatively close hometowns when compared with the much more distant hometowns of the female servants except for Frances Harding. The two Hardings, Edward and Frances, represent the recruitment practise seen in chapter four of hiring servants through trusted sources.

Table 6: Ormesby 1891 census

	Age	Birthplace	Distance	Position
Henry Kitson	22	Bishopton, Durham	16.5km	Footman
Edward Hardings	25	Darlington, Durham	24.6km	Groom
Helena Pike	45	Lerwick, Shetland Islands	622.7km	Lady's maid
Sarah Mason	30	Duffield, Derbyshire	177.2km	Cook
Alice Senior	24	Pontrefact, Yorks. ⁴⁶⁸	95.9km	Housemaid
Ada Sharman	20	Scredington, Lincs.	187.6km	Housemaid
Frances Harding	20	Darlington, Durham	24.6km	Kitchen maid
Elizabeth Cunningham	23	Preston Pans, Haddingtonshire ⁴⁶⁹	201.4km	Scullery maid

Those findings are corroborated by the data from the Teeside Archives Wage Book, 1893 to 1925 (table 6).⁴⁷⁰ It is not clear why the addresses were recorded, as the servants all signed over stamps when collecting their wages. Eight of the total nineteen have next-of-kin more than 100 km away, a slightly lower percentage than the 1881 and 1891 census records. Although not all of the servants’ jobs can be guessed from the wagebook, the

⁴⁶⁸ Housemaid Alice Senior’s birthplace is given as ‘Pontrefact’, Yorkshire in the 1891 census. This has been assumed to be a misspelling of Pontefract, Yorkshire, and the distance calculated accordingly.

⁴⁶⁹ Elizabeth Cunningham’s birthplace of Preston Pans, Haddingtonshire is today Prestonpans, East Lothian, a small town to the east of Edinburgh. The distance calculated is from Edinburgh.

comparative percentage in greater migration suggests that the wagebook servants furthest from their next-of-kin were upper servants. Although individual variations occur across the censuses, like scullery maid Elizabeth Cunningham working 201.4km from her hometown, Ormesby Hall does not support Jessica Gerard's national sample where less than 3% of upper servants were born on the employing country house's estate.⁴⁷¹ The findings do support her theory that career servants travelled further to find positions than did the majority of lower servants.⁴⁷²

Table 7: Distance from Next of Kin

	Address	Distance
Agnes Brown	Rexford, Relford, Refford?	unknown
Mary Annie Cole	Guisbrough	2.8km
Rose Curson	Eston, Yorks.	5.4km
Ellen Deal	Leiston, Staff.	318.6km
Margaret Martha Derwas	Alderbury, Wilts.	392.8km
Ada Fawcett	Nunthorpe, Yorks.	3.9km
Annie Kendrew	Londonderry, Yorks.	39.4km
Mary Jones	Aberystwith, Wales	304.4km
Mary Margerison	Harswell, York	81km
Sarah Jane Marston	Newcastle	56.2km
Margaretta Reynolds	Middlesbrough, York.	2.9km
Annie Saunders	Worcester,	269.9km
Mary Shaw	Great Ayton, Yorks.	6.4km
Violet and Esther Slack	Richmond, Yorks.	39.3km
Lizze Slater	Newcastle	56.2km
Ella Smith	Tewbury, Wors.	290.7km
Louise and Mary Smith	Burwash, The Weald, Sussex	498.5km

⁴⁷⁰ All from U/PEN 5/3/3

⁴⁷¹ Gerard, 170.

⁴⁷² Ibid, 178.

Mary Wakefield	Little Ponton, Grantham	192.7km
Mary Ann Williamson	Kirby Stephen	75.9km
Maud Young	Middlesbrough, York.	2.9km

The range of distances present in each one of these sources shows how trains made moving in between towns and cities in Britain faster and easier. Ormesby Hall had a railway siding not far outside the estate park called ‘Pennyman Sidings’ which facilitated the arrival of newly hired servants. More than ease of transport, it would seem that overall age with the corollary of work experience was the decisive factor how far a servant would go from hometown and family to seek employment. The census return showing servants with the youngest average age has the shortest average distance travelled. While exceptions do exist, such as Elizabeth Cunningham who was born outside of Edinburgh and was working as a scullery maid, distance correlated to work experience is the general rule.

Figure 7: Average Distance from Servant's Hometown or Next of Kin to Ormesby Hall

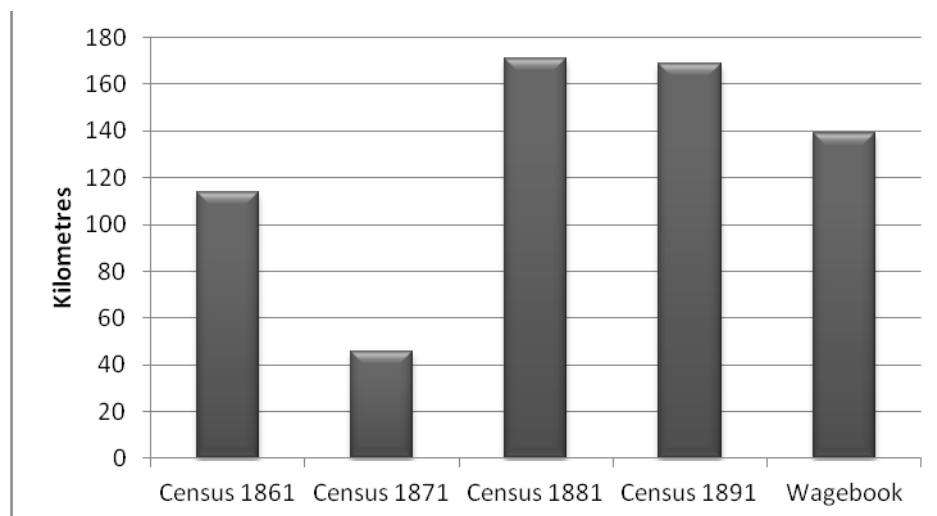


Figure 8 shows Ormesby Hall’s recruitment area. Surprisingly as many servants came from well outside Yorkshire as did those from within the 11km to 50km range. Applying the rule of experience with distance, one could state that Ormesby Hall was not

quite a 'starter' place for female domestic servants, but a good place for servants who already had some service experience and were looking to move higher still. The greatest distance column reflects the farther distances that upper servants such as Helena Pike and Alice Iron travelled. With both the greater skill base and work experience, the market for upper servants was geographically larger but the positions were fewer which necessitated more travelling.⁴⁷³ Ormesby had few upper service positions; its recruitment area is concentrated in a smaller area than a house with more staff. By and large, servants who worked at Ormesby Hall had been born or had family in Yorkshire. Given this draw, Mary Pennyman must have relied upon friends and neighbours, as well as servants themselves, to staff Ormesby Hall.

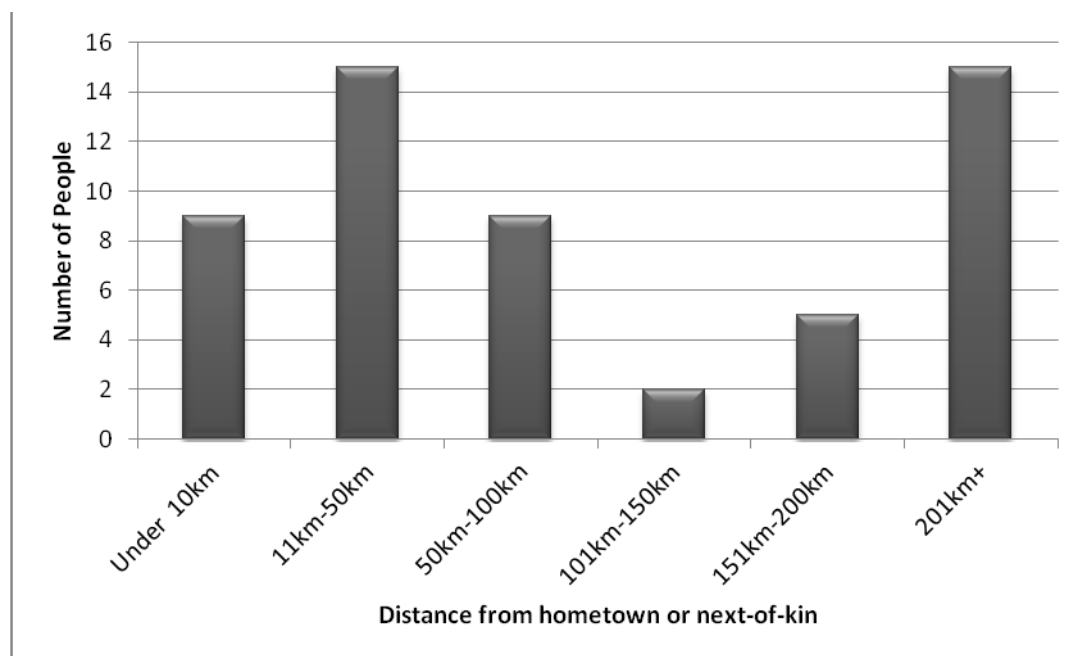
According to Siân Pooley specialisation rendered the servant's skills too unique to be easily transferable to a different house, and this resulted in a smaller labour pool for country house servants.⁴⁷⁴ Given the uniformity of the tasks in lower labour divisions such as housemaids and kitchen maids, this argument is more applicable to those slightly higher such as the stillroom maid, the dairy maid and the upper servants. But it does explain the wider geographic area Ormesby Hall's upper servants represent as their skills would be in demand by smaller number of employers. When analysing the staff by gender, the trend was for the men employed at Ormesby Hall to hail from towns and villages within a closer radius than did the women who worked there. The increase in the distance from hometown and kin is in tandem with the rising number of women employed in domestic service. More women in service meant there were more domestic service positions overall, which made it easier for women to find a new position if they wished to leave their current position.

⁴⁷³ Gerard, 176.

⁴⁷⁴ Pooley, 416.

Combined with the reasonable hypothesis that they started out close to home and every subsequent job was further away from their hometown and kin, the more experienced servants would be the ones who have travelled the greatest distance to Ormesby Hall.

Figure 8: Distribution of People and Average Distance Travelled



Overall, Ormesby Hall is line with historians' findings about other houses of similar social standing in staff turnover and staff migration. In comparison with the more than 200 male and female staff who passed through the London Disraeli household over a thirty-four year period, Ormesby saw 141 female servants in forty-two years.⁴⁷⁵ The numbers are closer than expected, given the differences in population (ie: prospective servants) and the different time periods of the two studies (London from 1838 to 1872 for Horn's Disraeli study, and 1861 to 1903 for this case study.) On the whole, it would appear that Mary Pennyman dismissed fewer servants abruptly than did Mrs Disraeli, as the majority stayed

⁴⁷⁵ Horn, *Mrs. Disraeli...*, 39.

the traditional full year before moving on.⁴⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, departures were most numerous among the lowest posts. In this specific case, the mobility has much to do with Ormesby's upper servants remaining in their positions for several years, thereby blocking upward job mobility for those on the lower rungs. The majority of servants probably moved on in order to find positions with more seniority, a migration seen in other country houses.⁴⁷⁷ The surviving sources for the other country houses in this study are too vague to determine whether the rate of staff turnover was either atypical or typical. Earlier in the century, the Adams' mentioned that remaining seven years with one employer was considered a long time. A study of census returns for an affluent Edinburgh area found only 9% of servants from the 1881 census were still working for the same employer in 1891.⁴⁷⁸ So by these measures the turnover at Ormesby could be considered average.⁴⁷⁹ Further long term case studies of individual country houses are needed, and these of course depend on the survival of multiple detailed wage books covering more than a decade. The case studies that do exist, such as Pamela Horn's study of Mary Anne Disraeli's wagebooks, do not include census information that would allow for analysis of the relation between migration distance and servant rank. As the findings in this chapter largely support previous findings in country house studies, it can be stated with reasonable certainty that further case study results would produce the same results.

The higher turnover rate in the lower service positions was related to the small size of the staff which prevented advancement to the upper service positions. The sharp differences in distance travelled imply that Ormesby Hall drew from two separate labour pools, the more localised north of England pool for lower servants and a nationwide one

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 41, 42, 43.

⁴⁷⁷ Gerard, 179.

⁴⁷⁸ Reid, 139.

for upper servants. It does not appear that any recruitment agency was used to find new servants; the sheer variety of hometowns and next-of-kin addresses represented at Ormesby are too numerous for one or even a couple of centrally located agencies to have regularly provided her with staff. Combined with the findings that Anne Lister and the Ladies Sykes canvassed their friends and social equals for servants, it is probable that Mary Pennyman did the same. This suggests two things about gentry country house service: that skilled employees were not thought to be among the type represented by recruitment agencies (and similarly, that the type of households likely to use such agencies did not require their servants to be as specialised), and an underlying assumption that only those who had experience with a country house could understand the qualifications its staff needed.

In conclusion, the Pennyman family maintained a small staff at Ormesby Hall with service positions focused more on day-to-day living than on display. Lacking any letters or reminiscences from the servants who worked at Ormesby Hall for this period, any personal reasons for leaving to work elsewhere are the realm of speculation. Mary Pennyman does not seem to have had any difficulties in attracting staff to work at Ormesby Hall, suggesting that for some Yorkshire employers there was not a serious labour shortage. Within the context of this study the Pennymans followed the same methods of recruitment as at the other houses. As the middle house in terms of income and size, Ormesby's staff is likewise midsized with more servants than at Shibden Hall but less than Sledmere House. The Pennyman's must have paid fair wages as the staffing levels did not fluctuate widely. On all the points except layout that the three houses can be compared, Ormesby Hall fits with other houses in this study.

⁴⁷⁹ Adams, 41.

7.

Conclusion

The women in this study, Anne Lister, the Ladies Sykes and the Pennyman ladies, tried to manage their servants to ensure the smoothest day-to-day running of their country house. All three of the main country houses, and Houghton Hall, adapted the service hierarchies described in prescriptive literature to fit their specific needs. Servants were recruited from known and trusted sources rather than impersonal agencies. The ladies expected servants, except those hired for the lowest positions on the service ladder, to already have experience. Once the servants had been hired, the architecture of the country house helped reinforce their inferior position to the employing family. However, the servants could and did expect their employer to conform to certain norms of behaviour, both in their personal lives and towards them. For their part, servants by and large respected the traditional hiring times (one year), but turnover was quite high among those in lower positions who left in search of promotion, or for a change.

Prescriptive authors' descriptions of service hierarchies remained constant across time and geography, with the dirtiest and most labour intensive tasks assigned to those at the bottom. The service positions and responsibilities for all possible servants were clearly delineated. Based on the Houghton Hall servant rules, Yorkshire country house service was divided along the same lines. The country houses with adequate resources like Sledmere House, Ormesby Hall and Houghton Hall, retained clear lines of promotion in individual service areas like the kitchen and in housekeeping. Anne Lister shows the flexibility needed to staff a house at the lower level of the gentry. While she could afford to hire male servants and have her own lady's maid, she could not offer top wages. Thus, she had to

make do with servants who may not have had the training she would have liked but who were willing to work for the wages she offered. Adaptations were also made for the sake of family lifecycle, and income. As books like *The Complete Servant*, *The Book of Household Management* and *The Servants' Guide* were intended to be exhaustive and include every permutation of servant, adapting the position guidelines to suit individual circumstances and incomes was to be expected. Middle-class housewives reading the same works would have reasonably expected to do the same.

It was not just employers who were the audience of prescriptive literature; servants were both subject and reader as well. Some of the works analysed here were explicitly targeting servants, such as the Adams' *The Complete Servant*, Dunn's *A Present to Female Servants*, *The Servant's Practical Guide* and Baylis' *The Rights, Duties and Relations of Domestic Servants...* while others include information, such as recipes, that were more useful to a servant than to an employer. Unlike reading material such as novels and their employer's personal papers, reading these books would not have been seen as subversive. Suzanne Beal argues that depictions in art of servants reading were interpreted as a sign of disobedience and rebellion against their employers.⁴⁸⁰ Showing a servant who was not actively engaged in the work they were paid to do was seen by nineteenth-century viewers as sign of social disorder within the house. As shown by the strict timetable at Houghton Hall, there was little time for recreational reading; therefore employers in this study must have seen reading during working hours as evidence of slacking off. Consulting books like those above to help them in their work, and even reading a religious tract like Dunn's during their off hours would not have the same sense of disobedience because the prescriptive literature endorsed the status quo. Anne Lister clearly felt that Shibden's

servants would read her private papers given the chance, so she invented her own code for the more private parts of her journals, including any criticisms the servants' behaviour.

When hiring servants to fill their service hierarchy, the ladies in this study drew from a geographically limited and class-specific labour pool. The recruitment practises created a self-defined labour market. Those ladies looked for servants among their social circle, which ensured any potential hire had good references. Even at the level of a small household like Shibden, there were two separate markets for upper and lower servants: local for the entry level posts and regional for the more skilled upper positions. Very occasionally, an unskilled local girl might be hired for a lower post as a form of charity. The greater distances between place of birth and employment among the upper servants of the two larger country houses, Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall, confirm the existence of these separate labour markets. These limitations made it difficult for any young woman looking to start in country house service to break into this labour pool. Whatever problems gaining entrance into the pool posed for potential country house servants, it clearly benefitted the ladies who drew from it, by filtering out ill-qualified staff.

Reflecting the employer's preference to hire experienced servants, the servants in this study were young adults and frequently more than a day's travel by foot from their birthplace or kin. The range of servants' birthplaces recorded in the census returns for Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall attest to the prestige of working at a country house, even ones owned by families with relatively low social and political standing. Only a very few of the female servants who worked for the Sykes and the Pennymans were born in the vicinity or in the nearest large town. Regional case studies by Sambrook of Staffordshire, Pooley of Lancaster, Gant of Crickhowell in Wales, and Kearey of Bethnal Green and

⁴⁸⁰ Beal, 79.

Rotherhithe show a relationship between a servant's distance from his or her birthplace and their employer's social standing. Servants who worked for wealthier employers came from further away, and those employed by shopkeepers or tradesmen were locally born.⁴⁸¹ This finding does not apply to the very few servants of both sexes who were locally born and worked either in the lower positions as at Ormesby Hall, or in departments with little avenue for advancement, as with Ann Walker's time as laundry maid at Sledmere.⁴⁸² Furthermore, Gant's study shows that roughly 60% of servants of both sexes had migrated from further afield than the parishes adjoining Crickhowell.⁴⁸³ During the mid-century, the male servants at Ormeby came from further afield than did their female servants; later census returns show the females coming from further. The difference between distance and gender in Gant's study versus this one may have to do with sample size. There were few male servants in Crickhowell, but they were not as much in the minority as they were in the country houses.⁴⁸⁴ Coupled with the older average age of all the servants, this shows that country house service was a field entered after a young person had developed the requisite physical strength and acquired the experience to perform the work required.

Although no primary sources were found from Ormesby Hall's servants, some conclusions as to their reasons for leaving the Pennyman's service can be drawn from other servants' autobiographies and memoirs. Louise Jermy worked at a variety of service jobs, and considered domestic service to be a "skilled trade on par with ...

⁴⁸¹ Sambrook, 24, and Pooley, 415, for wealthy employers. Gant, 25 and Kearey, 11.

⁴⁸² A completely different Ann Walker than the woman who was Anne Lister's partner!

⁴⁸³ Gant, 25.

⁴⁸⁴ Gant, 22.

dressmaking.”⁴⁸⁵ She worked for several employers, gaining confidence as she went along to accept only the posts she found satisfying.⁴⁸⁶ Certainly one maid left Sledmere because she did not find the place to her satisfaction. Confidence and satisfaction are impossible to measure in the impersonal sources of census returns and wagebooks, but both probably played a role in the turnover among servants at Ormesby Hall. The highest turnover occurred in the lowest positions that would have been staffed by less experienced and younger women. As they mastered jobs skills and grew more comfortable, moving on to other houses with better chances of promotion would be a natural career progression.

The potential presence of kin servants, women and girls listed in the census as ‘servants’ by occupation but having some type of blood relationship to the head of the household, was controlled for by examining only the returns for Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall, and leaving out the returns for other buildings on the estate. As shown, in the returns no kin servants were found, and all members of the Sykes or Pennyman family were clearly identified as such. Servants, such as Elizabeth Wilkes Cordingley, who returned on an as-needed basis may be one of the reasons behind the number of women enumerated as servants who had a blood relationship to the head of their household that Edward Higgs discovered in the census returns. Cordingley had been a servant to Anne Lister, had left Shibden Hall, and settled somewhere in the Halifax vicinity but continued to work as a servant when Anne Lister needed extra help, so it conceivable that whoever filled out the census return for her household listed her occupation as a ‘servant.’ Both Higgs and Michael Anderson’s general assumption was that ‘servants’ with blood

⁴⁸⁵ McDermid, 264.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 255.

relationships to the household heads were working as full-time servants either in their own houses or, in Anderson's case, were away from their live-in employment.⁴⁸⁷ It is probable than an unknown number of these kin-servants were engaged in the same part-time domestic work as Cordingley (as opposed to charring, which would be full-time but the workplace would vary day to day, much like today's housecleaners-for-hire) by periodically returning to work for former employers.

The placement of the service rooms in relation to the parts of the country house used by the family visually and spatially reaffirmed each servant's place within the domestic hierarchy and in relation to the employer's family. It is important to understand the influence the country house itself had on service because it was both internalised and widespread. Country houses across Yorkshire repeated and reinforced this dialogue of space and place, proving that it was common among this shire's upper classes. For the main families studied here whose country houses did not undergo rebuilding or renovation during the nineteenth century, the distance and divisions created were an intrinsic part of everyday life. Among those households such as the Sykes who had their servants wear uniforms, the social divide between family and servant was enforced even if the physical divide within the country house was permeable. As for the servants, the distance and physical separation between the service and family rooms should have helped create a sense of camaraderie. This bond was important as it fostered a sense of purpose and identity in a workplace where anonymity was enforced and daily tasks largely revolved around grime considered too dirty for others, such as their employers, to consider handling.

The country house and its estate gave the Listers, the Sykes and the Pennymans their elevated social status. Employing servants served to reinforce this position in the eyes

⁴⁸⁷ Higgs, 251. Anderson, 264.

of the outside world. With their careful ladders of departmental promotion creating a pyramidal upper class domestic service, prescriptive authors assigned each servant to a clearly delineated place within the servants' hall and the house as a whole. While some employers in the north of England found it difficult to recruit servants, it was not a problem for the women in this study.⁴⁸⁸ Certainly the prestige of working at a country house helped attract servants to Shibden Hall, Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall, and good wages probably went a long way to enticing servants as well. Adding to that, ladies deliberately sought out servants who would already know how their job and would fit into the larger machinery of the country house. A servant beginning her career as a scullery maid could see a clear path to promotion towards becoming a cook if she wished to become one. The unwritten duties of employer toward servant and vice versa helped maintain the employer's standing in the eyes of the outside world, buoying the family's standing within the circle of their social peers. By association, this standing improved the exclusivity of the country house as a workplace. All of these deliberate behaviours were unconsciously influenced by the architecture of the country house itself.

An area that was not covered by servant guides was the implicit duties between the servant and their employer. The employer's responsibilities reflected an impersonal upper class view of servants as anonymous employees. The providing of fabric for mourning clothes and medical care when a servant was ill maintained a visually uniform and productive workforce, which reinforced the employer's social standing and the servants' place as anonymous workers within the country house. While the lower servants had fewer chances for personal interactions with the ladies, the majority of Ormesby's lower servants respected the traditional year long hiring period before moving on. It was the upper

⁴⁸⁸ Pooley, 419.

servants in this study, with their more personal associations with their employers and longer periods with one family, who provided extra support when it was needed. Their actions, such as Gotherd preventing Lady Jessie Sykes from being seen drunk in public or Cordingley not spreading her knowledge of Anne Lister's sexuality, were a form of status preservation: the public disgrace of their employers would taint them by association. Both sides tacitly reinforced their own status in supporting the social position of the other.

By contrast with the other country house servants whose worth and place in the house as a whole was reinforced in literature, architecture and behaviour, the governess held an ambiguous position in a liminal space. Charlotte and Anne Brontë's letters and novels emphasize and dramatize these points. Though both sisters and their fictional protagonists experienced factors beyond their control that made governessing a difficult experience, these do not obscure the 'neither servant nor equal' conundrum at the heart of their experiences. Unlike the other servants whose jobs and physical proximity to the employer's family were based on the type of displaced matter they dealt with, the governess's sole responsibility was centred on their employer's most valuable resource: the family's children. Thus, conflict arose when the governess, who in the eyes of her employer was a servant but who lived and worked all day in the family parts of the house, infringed even further on the employer's 'space' when disciplining the children. Unlike other female servants, whose labour supported their employer's lifestyle or work, governesses were threatening to the social norms because they were from the class that should employ servants, not be servants.⁴⁸⁹ While not all country house governesses were "...repressed, neurotic, even sadistic women who ruthlessly exploited their power..." the paradoxical nature, physical and spiritual distances in the house, likely made their working

lives difficult.⁴⁹⁰ Following the successful publication of their novels *Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey*, Charlotte and Anne Brontë turned from governessing to full-time authorship to support themselves.

The careers of governesses who were not fortunate enough to have alternate employment opportunities were much more dependent on any highly specific skills they possessed than other female servant's careers were. Recruitment through the employer's social circle had a unique bearing on the governess's career trajectories. As seen with the Brontë sisters, governesses' job mobility was limited. They could make small gains by seeking subsequent jobs with older children and slightly more affluent employers, but on the whole they did not make wholesale leaps to working for employers who were significantly richer than those whom they previously worked for. The root of this lies in the 'circle of friends' method of recruitment; women were unlikely to hire a governess who was completely unknown to their social circle. Furthermore ladies would want a woman who had proven competencies in whichever accomplishments they deemed important, so hiring a governess who could not teach German or drawing adequately was unlikely.

The case study of Ormesby Hall ties together all the other stages of domestic service this study examined. Servants whose birthplaces or next-of-kin were recorded were overwhelmingly Yorkshire natives. This supports the likelihood that Mary Pennyman used the same recruitment method of canvassing her friends and social contacts for potential servants; as well it confirms the existence of a county-wide labour pool for country house servants. The average age of the servants at Ormesby Hall fits with country house service being an industry where physical strength and previous experience were required. This

⁴⁸⁹ Johnson, 110.

finding tallies with Schwarz's discovery that at mid-century half of female servants were between 15 and 24 years old, old enough to have developed some physical strength.⁴⁹¹ This is in line with the findings of the Lancaster case study, where specialised domestic skills meant servants required previous job experience before they could work for wealthier employers.⁴⁹² The career profile of Helena Pike, who worked as Mary Pennyman's lady's maid for more than twenty-four years, is in line with the long employment of lady's maids Cordingley and Gotherd. Unsurprisingly, the case study showed that the highest turnover rates were found among the lowest paying position, the scullery maids. As mentioned, this was a function of the hierarchal structure of domestic service with older, better paid servants remaining in their jobs longer and thereby blocking promotion routes. The unexpected finding was that Ormesby's turnover rates were nearly equal to those of the London Disraeli household.⁴⁹³ In-depth comparison with another country house with similar income and in a similar economic area is necessary before Ormesby Hall could be declared 'average' in terms of domestic service and turnover, However the constant in- and out- flow of servants, particularly the lower ones, shows that the 'Servant Problem' was not simply a middle-class issue. Such turnover also suggests a desire among servants to find a position that had as little as possible contact with the 'matter out of place', to move into a position that has less drudgery, that underpinned the service hierarchy.

To modern eyes, some of Anne Lister and Jessie Sykes' actions seem cruel and unjust. However, both women were acting within their recognised rights as employers and members of the landed upper class. Any private employer has the right to dismiss an

⁴⁹⁰ Gerard, 45.

⁴⁹¹ Schwarz, 250.

⁴⁹² Pooley, 416.

⁴⁹³ Horn, 39.

employee who was no longer needed, regardless of how many years he or she may have served. The employer did not have to consider the fact that she was turning a person out of the home he or she had known for the past thirty years; taking that into account would be generous on the employer's behalf. Reading Anne Lister as a particularly unlikeable person is a contemporary mistake as well. Her papers reveal a woman who was determined, ambitious, tenacious and not the least bit concerned with what other's thought of her sexuality. On the last count, she undoubtedly benefitted from a lack of terminological exactitude for strangers and locals to politely discuss what went on in her private life. But the rest of her actions are the same as any ambitious, fortune-hunting man of the same social rank could have undertaken and faced less censuring. Neither woman was overly empathetic towards their lower servants, but neither did they expect the lower servants to show empathy in return, only duty and obedience. The same was likely true of Mary Pennyman and her lower servants; the high turnover rate of Ormesby Hall's scullery maids and lowest housemaids would have made it difficult for her to become more than passingly acquainted with them. She would have been more familiar with the upper most servants who stayed at Ormesby for several years, and would have been closest to Helena Pike who served her for a quarter century. Anne Lister and Jessie Sykes were likewise much more personally familiar with their lady's maids than with any other servant in their employ.

The findings of several recent studies of different geographic areas and time periods help contextualise the findings of this study. Siân Pooley's examination of servants in late nineteenth-century urban Lancaster showed similarities with the findings here. Although the geographic setting excludes country houses, several of her more general findings are applicable to this study. Calling lower class households' economic strategies an 'economy

of makeshifts', she discovered those households depended on the wages of both members who lived at home and lived away from it⁴⁹⁴ The stamps Ormesby Hall servants signed over when receiving their wages were intended to allow servants to send the money home, a method of supporting a household in which they did not live. For those who were working in service, there was less of a power imbalance between employer and servant than one might assume as servants could use "back stage resistance".⁴⁹⁵ Perhaps as a way to avoid servants using this resistance, Lancaster wives worked with their servants, rather than merely managing them.⁴⁹⁶ This resistance was certainly used by servants in this study, from Margaret MacDonald spreading insinuations about Anne Lister's sexuality, to Mrs. Baines complaining to Mary Sykes about Jessie, to Harriet Hawley giving insufficient notice before leaving Ormesby Hall. Even those not yet working as servants were warned to be perfectly docile in Samuel Dunn's *A Present...* Lastly, the lifecycle of Pooley's Lancaster employers also influence the number of servants they kept. When their children had outgrown the nursery servants were let go, and daughters who were old enough to undertake the household tasks did so. Pooley concludes that urban lower- and middle-class Lancastrians kept servants solely for their labour and not as status symbols, a distinct difference from the house here with their hierarchies and status proclaiming footmen.⁴⁹⁷

Another geographic study is Pamela Sambrook's examination of Staffordshire domestic service. Like the smaller studies below, one of Sambrook's main questions is 'who employed servants in Staffordshire?'⁴⁹⁸ Rentier landowners were left out of her investigation of which occupations employed servants, partly due to time constraints and

⁴⁹⁴ Pooley, 406.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, 407.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid, 421.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid, 418.

⁴⁹⁸ Sambrook, *Servants, Family and Business...*, 2.

likely due to the assumption that such landowners would have had servants as a matter of course.⁴⁹⁹ Just like the families in this study and Pooley's, family life cycle was a decisive factor in who employed servants.⁵⁰⁰ Households of bachelors and widowers employed more servants than did other family groups of similar means,⁵⁰¹ This supports the hypothesis that the Houghton Hall servant rule book was created because Mary Langdale's death had left Houghton Hall without any one to adequately manage the servants. In Staffordshire the specialised servants were both older than general servants, and had come from farther away.⁵⁰² This corroborates our findings for Sledmere House and Ormesby Hall servants in two important ways: that age is a proxy for experience, and that specialised servants travelled further from their hometowns searching for employment.

Anthony Reid's more tightly focused study of two Edinburgh streets Moray Estate and Ainslie Place in the 1861 and 1891 censuses shows some important differences with the rural country house.⁵⁰³ Some rentier landowners did live on these streets, although it is not clear if they did so year-round.⁵⁰⁴ In terms of age, the majority of servants were between 25 to 44 years old, less than 20% were younger than 20.⁵⁰⁵ This is slightly different than the country houses here, where the most common age bracket was 20 to 25, except in the 1881 census. Although Scotland is a different labour market than Yorkshire, the slight shift may mean that older servants preferred the more varied recreational or social opportunities an urban setting offered. Further inquiries into the average age of servants in wealthy urban houses would be necessary before drawing firm conclusions.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 11.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid*, 15.

⁵⁰² *Ibid*, 24.

⁵⁰³ Reid, 129.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 131.

Sledmere House and Shibden Hall showed a distinct increase in average migration distance among female servants as the century wore on, and the opposite shift appears in Reid's study. A pair of dot maps show that in 1861, 60% of male servants and 78% of female servants came from lowland Scotland and Edinburgh itself. By 1891, the proportions had changed to 84% for men and 68% for women. Lastly, Reid also suspects servants were undercounted, particularly coachmen and grooms because the houses on Moray Estate were contiguous and therefore did not have attached stables or coach houses where coachmen usually lived.⁵⁰⁶ While few coachmen were enumerated at either Sledmere or Ormesby, the nature and place of their work meant they were not considered indoor servants. Elizabeth Wilkes Cordingley represents this study's undercounted servants. Like the Edinburgh coachmen she was not always living at her employer's house, but she may have counted as a servant (as the coachmen and grooms certainly did), in the census returns.

There are a couple areas where further inquiry would be profitable. Anne Lister's sexuality and business acumen have attracted historians' notice because these aspects seem radical in comparison with her contemporaries' lives. But her role as Shibden's chatelaine, a seemingly more traditional female role, could be greatly expanded on. On the side of the servants, the wage books for Ormesby Hall continue into the mid-1920s, making a study of wage rates and servant retention in light of the social changes the First World War brought to domestic service, and life as a whole possible; this however was beyond the time frame of this study. More generally, widening the scope of this study to compare and contrast gentry country house service in other parts of Britain would ascertain the universality of the practises discovered here, be it in recruitment, service careers or retention.

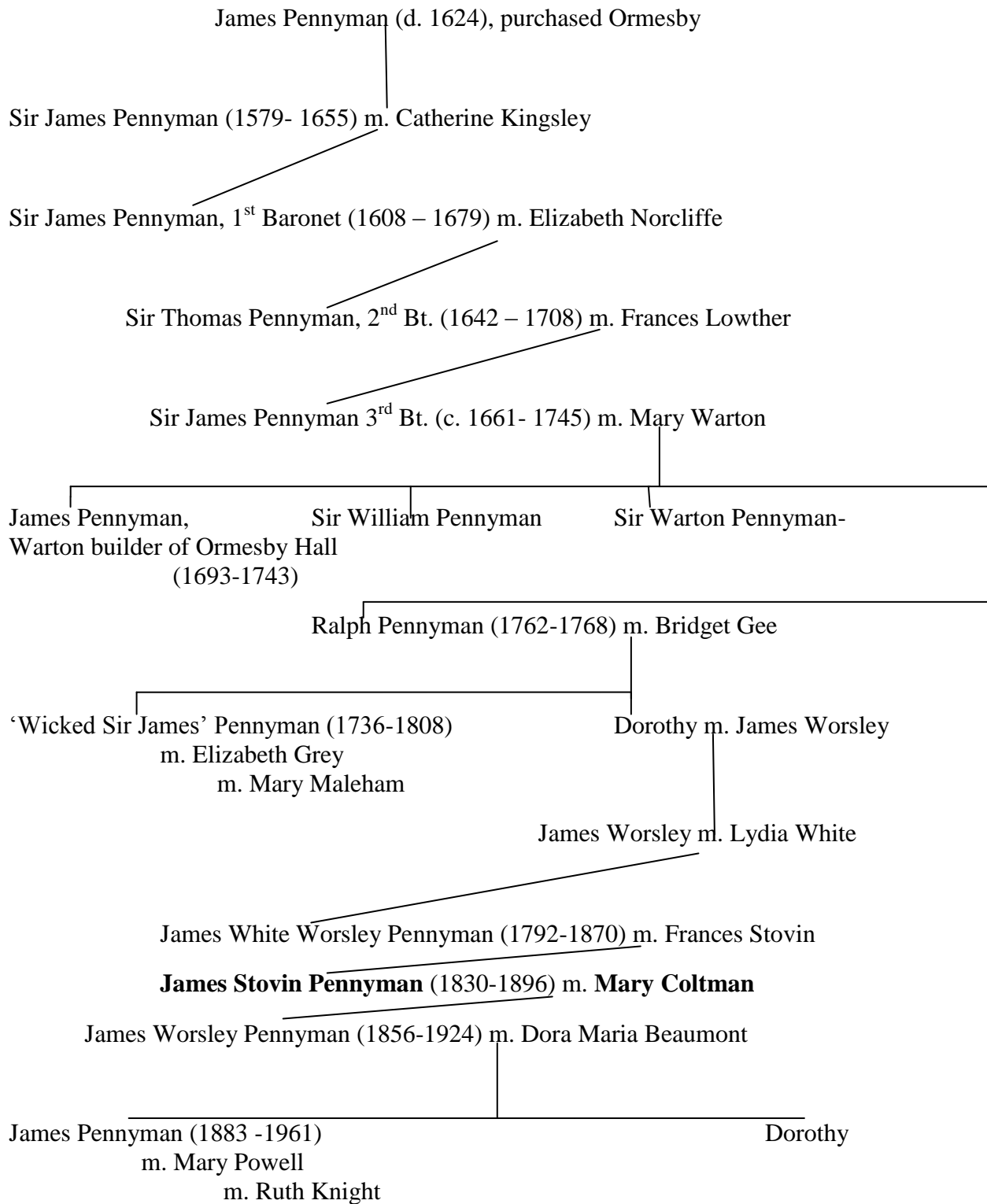
⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 133.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 134.

The employment practises of the ladies in this study were a variation on what prescriptive authors believed to be upper class methods. Their family country houses were unacknowledged but potent forces influencing the ways servants were organised and perceived. The methods of recruitment they deployed echoed and reinforced their class positions by drawing from a geographically limited but skilled labour pool largely created by the limits of their social circle. This labour pool was specific to their social and economic position in Yorkshire as opposed to the country as a whole. There was less friction between the employers and their servants in the country houses studied with more complex service hierarchies. To what degree the servants actively supported their employer was inversely proportional to the servant's place in the domestic hierarchy. For the governess, who was seen by the family as a servant and by the servants as being socially closer to the family, there was no comfortable fitting spot for her within the country house and this could result in conflict. On the whole however, the domestic practises of the Yorkshire gentry Lister, Sykes and Pennyman families reflected their membership in the upper class in ways both explicit and implicit.

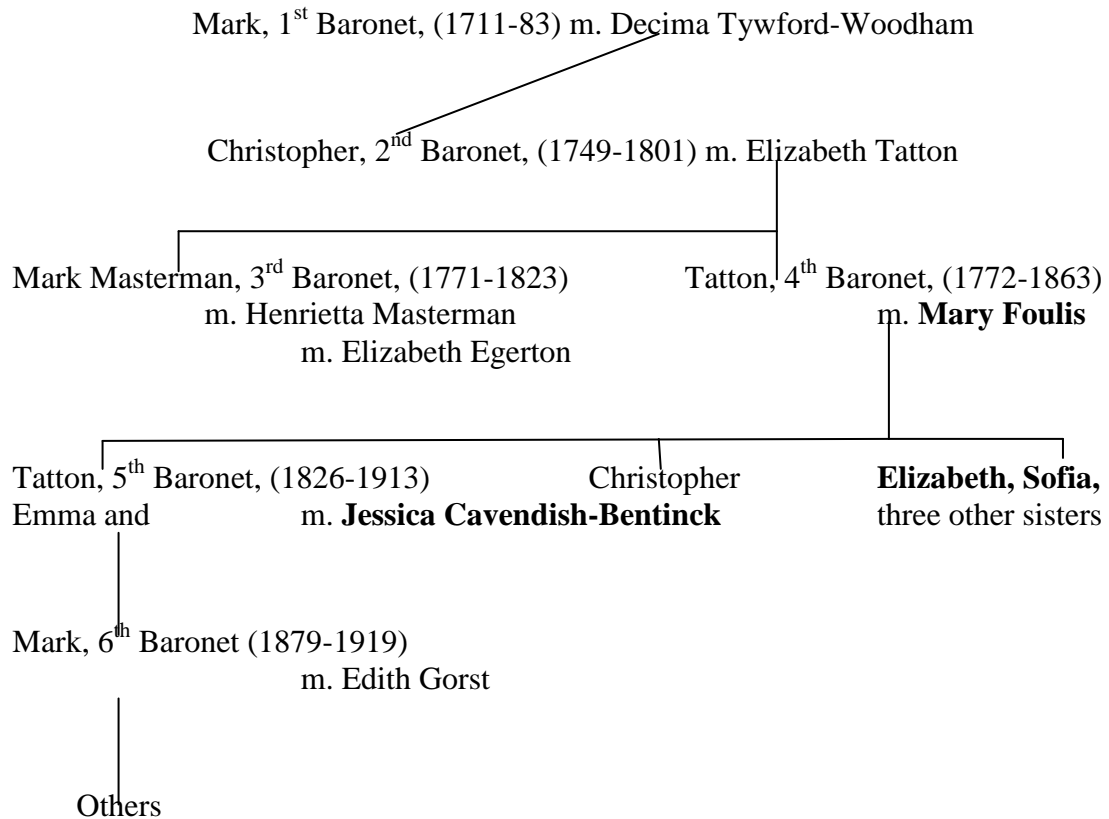
Appendix A: Family Trees and Anne Lister's Circle

Pennyman Family Tree⁵⁰⁷



⁵⁰⁷ Raikes, 48. Names in bold are represented by primary sources in this study.

Sykes Family Tree (Partial)⁵⁰⁸



⁵⁰⁸ Adapted from Sykes, xi. . Names in bold are represented by primary sources in this study.

Anne Lister's Family and Social Circle⁵⁰⁹

Maria Barlow: A British widow with a teenage daughter whom Anne Lister met while on extended vacation in Paris. The two had a brief intimate relationship.

Vere Cameron (née Hobart): Sibella Maclean's niece. Vere had family connections to the aristocratic British ambassador in Paris, through these connections Anne was introduced to a higher social circle than her own in Yorkshire.

Marianna Lawton (née Belcombe) : 1790-1868. Anne Lister's most lasting love interest. Married Charles B. Lawton in March 1816. Her family home was in York but her married home was in Cheshire.

Anne Lister (senior): 1765-1836. Anne Lister's unmarried aunt who was living at Shibden Hall with her brother Jeremy when Anne (junior) moved to Shibden.

Jeremy Lister: 1748-1826. Anne Lister's uncle, she inherited Shibden Hall upon his death.

Marian Lister: 1798-1882. Anne Lister's younger sister.

Sibella Maclean: A friend of Anne Lister. The two were introduced by the Belcombe family.

Isabella Norcliffe: 1785-1846. One of Anne's lovers. Her family home was Langton Hall in Malton, Yorkshire.

Captain G. M. Sutherland: Married to Ann Walker's sister Elizabeth, brother-in-law to Ann Walker.⁵¹⁰

Ann Walker: 1803-1854. Anne Lister's partner.

⁵⁰⁹ Adapted from Whitbread, *No Priest but Love*, xx-xxi, except for Captain Sutherland.

⁵¹⁰ Liddington, 34.

Image 2 Ormesby Hall Floor Plan⁵¹²

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(Front cover) A carved doorcase in the Gallery
 (Back cover) A performance of *The Winter's Tale* in front of the Old Wing in 1933
 (Title-page, top left) A 19th-century German candlestick in the 18th-century Rococo style;
 (bottom left) The hat stand in the Den;
 (top right) The 1770s plasterwork in the Drawing Room, which was probably designed by John Carr of York;
 (bottom right) The Pennyman coat of arms in the Entrance Hall overmantel

⁵¹² Raikes, inside front cover.

Appendix C: Ormesby Hall Servants, 1865 to 1903

	Capacity	Wages per annum	Entered Service	Last Pay
E. L. Cowburn	Head Nurse	£ 20.00	1865	13 November 1871
Eliza Bell	Under Nurse	£ 18.00	1866	
ditto	Nursemaid		from 1870	11 December 1871
Hannah Ward	Cook	£ 15.00	April 1866	
ditto		£ 16.00	From 1868	1870
Jane Storrow	Housemaid	£ 7.00	22 April 1868	22 October 1868
Ellen Smith	Housemaid	£ 12.00	1865	
ditto	Ladies maid		January 1867	1870
M. Hogg	Under Nurse			1865
Elizabeth Akers	Cook	£ 14.00	From 1865	9 April 1866
Jane Walker	Housemaid	£ 18.00	April 1866	15 March 1867
Ann Johnson	Nursemaid	£ 18.00	9 March 1866	11 June 1866
Elizabeth Hardy	Under Nurse	£ 18.00	1866	1867
Emma Liddle	Not given	£ 24.00	1867	
Mrs. Hance	Housekeeper (Cook)	£ 25.00	1870	1873
Mary Mason	Housemaid	£ 14.00	1 January 1870	23 March 1870
Alice Cundell	Housemaid	£ 16.00	30 March 1870	21 August 1871
Mary Harrison	Under Housemaid	£ 12.00	6 January 1870	
ditto		£ 13.00	from 1871	
ditto	Housemaid	£ 16.00	from 1873	1874
Mary Fox	Ladies maid	£ 20.00	1 September 1869	1871
Elizabeth Corner	Kitchen maid	£ 13.00	January 1870	15 August 1871
Elizabeth Meek	(Under) Kitchen maid	£ 10.00	January 1870	
	Dairymaid	£ 11.00	from 1871	1871
Hannah Reed	Laundry maid	£ 18.00	1870	
Mary Hardy	Schoolroom maid		6 October 1870	30 December 1870
Amelia Williamson	Nursemaid	£ 20.00	9 November 1871	1876
ditto	Ladies maid	£ 22.00	30 June 1874	
ditto		£ 23.00	from 1875	1877
E. Taylor	Ladies maid		1871	1 July 1874
Annie Watson	Under Nurse		1871	

ditto	Scullery maid			1874
Annie Newton	Under Nurse	£ 22.00	1871	
ditto	Nursemaid	£ 14.00	1874	16 November 1875
Ann Routledge	Under Nurse		1871	1871
Jane Stephenson	Not given	£ 10.00	1871	
Fanny Meek	Housemaid		1871	
Alice Dickinson	Scullery maid		1871	1873
Sarah Dawson	Housemaid	£ 14.00	1873	27 February 1874
Jane Barton	Under Housemaid	£ 14.00	1873	
ditto		£ 15.00	from 1876	1877
Maria Childs	<i>Laundry maid</i>		1873	
Hannah Holmes	Scullery maid		1873	20 February 1874
Jane Calvert			1873	
Sarah Storks			1873	
Lizzie Horsfall	Kitchen maid	£ 15.00	1873	14 August 1876
H. Fallowfield	Housekeeper (Cook)		1873	1874
Jane Bell	Housekeeper (Cook)	£ 40.00	2 March 1874	24 May 1875
Ann Bryant	Housemaid		2 March 1874	23 March 1874
Ann Nicholson	Housemaid	£ 18.00	1874	1877
Sarah Bell		£ 14.00	24 March 1874	27 June 1874
Rachel Walker	Laundry maid	£ 18.00	1874	5 August 1875
Elizabeth Newton	Laundry maid	£ 22.00	18 April 1874	27 May 1876
Ann Watson	Scullery maid		1874	15 December 1875
Elizabeth Ainslie			20 February 1874	3 September 1874
Ms. Iron	Governess	£ 34.00	30 November 1874	
ditto		£ 40.00	from 1875	1878
ditto			1881	
Jane Drury	Cook and Housekeeper	£ 45.00	1875	1879
Emma Jane Bate	Under Laundress	£ 12.00	14 August 1875	

Mary Dennis	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	30 November 1875	
Louise Cooper	Nursemaid		November 1876	1877
Ellen Lusk	Kitchen maid	£ 18.00	November 1876	1879
Emma Shaw	Laundry maid		1876	1877
Emma Bate	Under Laundress			11 February 1876
Elizabeth Ripley	Under Laundress	£ 14.00	1876	1878
Hannah Dennis	Scullery maid			11 March 1876
Mary Palmer	Scullery maid		1876	1877
Jane Smithson	Nursemaid		1877	
Mary Charlton	Laundry maid		1877	1878
Margaret Murphy	Laundry maid		1877	
Isabella Grey	Laundry maid		1877	
Margaret Mitchell	Kitchen maid	£ 14.00	1877	
ditto		£ 16.00	from 1880	1882
Mary Cummings			1878	1878
Mary Clark			1878	1878
Hannah Smith	Under Housemaid	£ 15.00	1878	27 May 1892
Elizabeth Stafford		£ 20.00	1878	
Eliza Manton	Upper Laundry maid	£ 20.00	1879	
Mary Ellen Newton	Under Laundress	£ 16.00	1879	
Margaret Brown	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	1879	
Mary Young	Housemaid		May 1882	
Annie Wilson	Housekeeper (Cook)	£ 35.00	1879	
Helena Pike	"Ladies maid"	£ 25.00	1877	To at least 1901
Mary Chappell	Housemaid	£ 20.00	1876	
Mary Young	Not given	£ 12.00		
Agnes Wardale	Kitchen maid	£ 18.00	1882	
E. Carvley	Kitchen[maid?]	£ 18.00		25 January 1884* ⁵¹³
Mary Thompson	Kitchen[maid?]	£ 18.00		25 July 1885
Marianne Simpson	"Ladies maid"	£ 16.00	1877	
Clara Haylar	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	1883	21 December 1883
Ann Harvey	Not given	£ 11.00	1883	16 February 1884
Mary Maller	Scullery[maid]	£ 14.00	1883	3 April 1884*
Anne Atkinson	Scullery[maid]	£ 12.00		14 May 1884

⁵¹³ Asterisks are used to denote where only one payment to the servant was found in Wage Book, 1883-1893.

Lucy [No last name recorded]	Housemaid	£ 20.00		26 January 1885
Eliz. Faulk	Not given	£ 20.00		
Eliza Holland	Not given	£ 16.00	31 May 1884	
Sarah Keach	Kitchen maid	£ 18.00		16 April 1885
Harriette Hawley	Housemaid	£ 21.00		20 April 1885
Annie Walker	Scullery maid	£ 12.00		
ditto	Kitchen maid	£ 18.00		
Anne Scrimpson [?]	Not given	£ 20.00		
Hannah Padgett	Housemaid	£ 20.00	23 April [1885]	
Annie Clark	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	5 Sept.1885	
Mary Law	Temporary Housemaid	£ 14.00		19 April [1886]*
Maragaret Grady	Scullery maid	£ 12.00		17 December 1886
Jane Sutton	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	18 December [1886]	
Fanny Bevridge	Second Housemaid	£ 15.00	26 October 1886	4 August 1888
Mary Moore	Kitchen maid	£ 18.00	15 January 1887	1 May 1888
Frances Harding	Scullery	£ 12.00	2 April 1888	
ditto	Kitchen maid	£ 15.00	Promoted 20 January 1890	At least 1891
ditto		£ 16.00	From 10 April 1891	13 August 1892
Helen Gibbs	Kitchen maid	£ 18.00	3 May 1888	20 January 1890
Augusta Gustafson	Cook	£ 40.00	2 May 1888	By 14 Sept. 1888
Mary Margerison	Housemaid	£ 20.00	7 April 1891	April 1899
Alice Senior	Housemaid	£ 20.00	5 February 1891	6 April 1891
Annie Simpson	Not given (<i>Kitchenmaid</i>)	£ 18.00	2 July 1888	1 July 1890
Sarah Mason	Cook	£ 35.00	14 Sept. 1888	10 July 1893 (U/PEN 5/3/3)
Alice Calvert	Not given (<i>Kitchenmaid</i>)	£ 16.00	13 Sept.1888	10 November 1890
Ann Redfern	Not given (<i>Housemaid</i>)	£ 20.00	15 June 1889	19 January 1891
Elizabeth Cunningham	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	20 January 1890	18 April 1891
Jane Dean	Scullery maid	£ 12.00	1 July 1891	1 March 1893
Ada Sharman	Housemaid	£ 16.00	12 Nov. 1891	12 August 1893
Henry Robson	Footman	£ 25.00	4 October 1890	2 January 1893

Henry Font	Butler	£ 50.00	31 October 1891	31 December 1892
Alice Heathcote	<i>Kitchen maid</i>	£ 18.00	22 August 1892	8 October 1894 (U/PEN 5/3/3)

U/PENN 5/3/3				
Hannah Booth	<i>Cook</i>	£ 35.00	10 July [1893]	9 September [1893]
Mary Ann Williamson	<i>Cook</i>	£ 42.00	9 September [1893]	
ditto		£ 44.00	from Sept. 1897	19 June 19 00
Lena Watton or Walton		£ 10.00	12 August [1893]	6 August 1894
Harriette Harding		£ 10.00	19 April 1893	30 August [1893]
Annie Ellis	Temporary Kitchen maid	£ 16.00	10 Sept.1893	21 October 1893
Agnes West			23 Sept.1897	13 December 1897
Sarah Guite		£ 12.00	8 October 1894	24 April 1897
Kate Simpson	<i>Scullery maid</i>	£ 16.00	9 October 1895	31 December 1896
Anne Kendrew		£ 22.00	10 April 1899	
Ella Smith		£ 22.00	7 April 1899	12 May 19 00
Rose Curson	<i>Scullery maid</i>	£ 14.00	From at least 1 March 1899	12 May 19 00
Ellen Deal		£ 12.00	December 1896	February 1899
Agnes Brown		£ 12.00	11 May 1899	24 August 1899
Ada Fawcett		various	June 1897	June 19 00
Emma Marshall		£ 12.00	6 July 1896	17 September 1896
Maud Young	<i>Scullery maid</i>	£ 12.00	July 1896	
ditto		£ 14.00	from July 1897	24 November 1898
Bertha Whitesides		0 10 0	April 1898	23 May 1898
Kate Pymm		£ 14.00	5 August 1896	23 July 1897
Mary Jones			2 Nov.1898	February 1899
Louise Smith		£ 21.00	June 1896	4 June 19 01
Margaret Martha Derwas		£ 28.00	24 May 1897	14 August 1898
Lizzie Slater		£ 14.00	23 July 1897	1 October 1898
Mary Shaw		£ 25.00	17 April 1899	12 October 19 00
Helen M. Smith		£ 25.00	October 1898	
ditto		£ 28.00	from April 1899	October 1899
Violet Slack		£ 14.00	14 May 1900	14 July 1902
ditto		£ 16.00	from 2 Nov. 1901	14 July 19 02
Margaretta Reynolds		£ 30.00	27 June 1901	January 19 03
Annie Saunders		£ 20.00	4 June 1900	5 February 1902
Esther Slack		£ 12.00	1 May [1902]	28 May [1902]

Katherine Smith		£ 16.00	14 July 19 02	15 September 1902
Sarah Jane Marston	<i>Cook</i>	£ 45.00	28 June 19 00	5 June 19 01
Janet Gilmour		£ 12.00	27 June 19 01	
ditto		£ 14.00	from 1 April 1903	18 June 1903
Marie Smith	<i>Cook</i>	£ 42.00	27 June 1901	23 March 1903
M. A. Shaw		£ 25.00	29 Dec.1900	19 June 1901
Mary Annie Cole		£ 16.00	1 June 1900	1 May 19 02
Mary Wakefield		£ 22.00	18 Aug. 1900	5 September 19 03

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