

Elite women and the agricultural landscape, 1700-1830*

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This paper forms part of a larger project of the same title sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust and the University of Nottingham. The project investigates the role played by elite women in managing large agricultural estates, paying particular attention to their involvement in estate management, enclosure, landscaping and agricultural improvement. It works from the premise that while we know female landowners controlled significant amounts of property in early modern England, their contribution to the agricultural changes which transformed the rural landscape between 1700 and 1830 has been almost entirely overlooked.

The project began very recently in March 2010, but in the fullness of time will investigate archival materials from three or perhaps four case-study English regions in order to explore female landowners' role in managing and improving their estates in different temporal and geographical contexts. This short paper presents preliminary results from two of those regions – Northamptonshire and East Yorkshire – six months into the project. In doing so, it has two principal aims: firstly, to investigate the varying experiences of female landowners in the two regions using statistics drawn from a sample of enclosure awards, and secondly, to explore the range of activities women engaged in on their estates through a number of short biographical vignettes.

Women and property

Over the last ten to fifteen years, there has been a burgeoning of interest in single, married and widowed women's relations with property of all kinds. As Amy Erickson has demonstrated, early modern women actually controlled considerable amounts of property as co-heiresses and widows. Within ordinary families, daughters were usually treated equally with younger sons, receiving the equivalent value in moveable goods as the eldest son received in land.¹ Further up the social scale, the failure of male lines meant that – despite primogeniture – daughters inherited land as co-heiresses whilst because women commonly

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outlived their husbands, widows often came to control landed estates either as guardians to young sons or under their own jointure arrangements. Yet while unmarried women and widows had most of the same legal rights as men, married women had no such rights to property. Under coverture, married women's legal identity was subsumed within their husbands' leaving them technically unable to own land. Yet as several scholars have shown, there was an inevitable gap between legal theory and everyday practice.² Women could exploit a variety of legal loopholes in order to set land aside as a 'separate estate' which they remained in control of during marriage, and many married women did think of themselves as the owners of family estates.³

However, two key uncertainties remain. Firstly, it is unclear how various changes to the early modern legal system – including the shift from dower to jointure arrangements, the emergence of strict settlement and the declining power of the ecclesiastical courts – impacted on women's property rights. Several historians have argued that the seventeenth century saw a decline in women's rights to property.⁴ Eileen Spring attributes this to the introduction of strict settlement, arguing for a long-term decline in women's property and rights which reached their lowest ebb in the eighteenth century as a result of the increased use of prenuptial contracts.⁵ Others disagree. Mary Prior, for example, has pointed to a growth in the number of married women making wills between 1558 and 1700, whilst Christine Peters has argued that women's ownership of freehold land actually increased in the early modern period.⁶ Amanda Capern treads the middle ground, making the point that changes to the legal system affected different groups of women in different ways: for example, the use of strict settlements undercut widows' dower rights at the same time as helping to secure marriage portions for daughters.⁷ In her view, marriage settlements also introduced 'a language of female property ownership' so that women could – and did – imagine themselves as property owners.⁸

Secondly, there is considerable uncertainty about the actual scale of women's property ownership. Little quantitative information is available on the proportion of land owned by women, although a handful of studies have used rentals and leases to examine female landholding – as opposed to landownership – within small groups of manors. Jane Whittle, for example, demonstrated that female tenants rarely made up more than 10 per cent of landholders on her four north-east Norfolk manors in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.⁹ Other studies of medieval landholding suggest that women made up between about 12 and 18

per cent of tenants.¹⁰ Capern has demonstrated that women – most of whom were widowed or single – made up 15 per cent of leaseholders on the Jervaulx lands in North Yorkshire between 1600 and 1800, while Sylvia Seeliger has suggested that female tenants held up to one-fifth of the land in many Hampshire parishes between the mid sixteenth and mid nineteenth centuries.¹¹ Overall, Whittle is probably right to suggest that women rarely made up more than 20 per cent of landholders across the long sweep of history between c.1250 and c.1750.¹²

As a preliminary to the current project, female landownership in the two case-study regions was investigated using a sample of parliamentary enclosure awards. The awards provide detailed information about landownership at the time of parliamentary enclosure, although they are, of course, only available for those parishes enclosed under parliamentary act. It's also worth noting here that because the two samples were originally drawn up for different reasons, the Northamptonshire cohort represents a geographically representative sample across the county whilst the East Yorkshire cohort focuses on a single landscape zone, the Yorkshire Wolds.¹³ The awards themselves are dated between the 1750s and the 1840s, and thus provide a snapshot of female landownership at a particular point in a community's landscape development rather than an estimate of women's landownership across the two regions at a particular date. Both samples cover between 60 and 70 enclosures, although because of the relatively large size of the Wolds parishes the Yorkshire sample includes about 40 per cent more land.

Figure 1

County	Total acreage sampled	Acreage owned by women ¹⁴	% owned by women	No. of female land-owners	Average acreage held	Women owning > 100 acres	Women owning > 500 acres
Northamptonshire	106,699	15,430	14.46	189	82	30	6
Yorkshire Wolds	152,455	7,037	4.62	135	52	16	2
Combined totals	259,154	22,467	8.67	324	69	46	8

Overall about 22,500 acres in the two case-study regions were owned by women. This equates with about 8.6 per cent of the overall acreage, a figure a little below those calculated by Whittle, Capern and Seeliger. There are, however, some interesting differences between

Northamptonshire and East Yorkshire. Despite the smaller acreage covered by the Northamptonshire awards, women held more than twice as much land in Northamptonshire as Yorkshire: that is, more than 15,000 compared to 7,000 acres. Whereas less than 5 per cent of the land included in the enclosure awards for the Yorkshire Wolds was owned by women, almost 15 per cent of the land in Northamptonshire was. This distinction between Northamptonshire and Yorkshire is reflected in a range of other statistical measures. For example, women owned less than 1 per cent of the land dealt with under the enclosure award in more than half of the Yorkshire parishes, compared with only one-fifth of Northamptonshire parishes. At the other end of the scale, women held more than 20 per cent of the land enclosed in 13 Northamptonshire parishes, compared to only four Yorkshire parishes. Nowhere in the Wolds did female landowners hold more than around 35 per cent of the land, whereas female landowners held more than 50 per cent of the land enclosed in five Northamptonshire parishes.¹⁵

There were also significantly more female landowners in Northamptonshire than Yorkshire, who on average held bigger acreages (around 80 acres compared to 50 acres). Most women were of course relatively small landowners, often holding no more than a cottage or a few acres. Women holding more than 100 acres account for less than a seventh of all female landowners, yet there were more of these large landowners in Northamptonshire than Yorkshire: 30 women held more than 100 acres and six more than 500 acres in Northamptonshire, compared with 16 and two respectively in the Yorkshire Wolds.

It is these bigger landowners I'm interested in here. The project focuses on elite women's role in agricultural change and landscape improvement, in part because suitable sources tend not to survive for smaller landowners and because it tended to be larger landowners who had the acreage and financial resources to engage in agricultural modernisation and landscaping. Yet despite recognising the existence of landowning women, the existing literature says almost nothing about how these women managed their estates or the activities they were involved in. The remainder of the paper examines three categories of elite women: childless widows, widows with children and married women. By drawing on examples from Northamptonshire and the East Riding, the paper explores the role these women played in landscape improvement and estate management. In doing so, it also touches on the women's relationship with the men in their lives including husbands, sons and estate stewards, as well as explores important questions about propertied women's position in Georgian society.

Widows

Along with single women, childless widows were perhaps the most easily spotted group of female landowners in archival documents. Unlike married women whose legal identity was largely subsumed within their husbands', widows could hold landed property in their own names. Hence many of the female landowners known from the enclosure awards and other sources were widows, often those without surviving children.

One such childless widow was Jane Ashley of Ashby St Ledgers (Northamptonshire), one of the few women to be recorded as manorial 'lord' in the parliamentary enclosure awards for the county. She managed a 1,300 acre estate for more than 20 years between her husband's death in 1761 and her own in 1784. Evidence for Jane's management of Ashby comes from the correspondence she maintained with both her estate steward in Rugby and the family solicitor in London. The letters demonstrate that Jane was personally involved in managing the agricultural estate. As well as collecting rents and organising repairs to the tenants' farms, she played an active role in the 1764 enclosure, maintaining a frequent correspondence with her solicitor in London as he lobbied for the bill. She also carefully calculated the profits she expected to make from the enclosure, and in the two decades after it, she reorganised the tenancies and more than doubled her rental incomes whilst maintaining the vast majority of her tenants on their farms.¹⁶ In this sense, Jane created – rather than simply preserved – wealth which could be passed on to future generations.

Another widow actively involved in estate management was Elizabeth Prowse of Wicken (Northamptonshire), who managed a 2,200 acre estate for over 40 years between 1767 and 1810. This was the longest period of estate management by a woman in eighteenth-century Northamptonshire, and the survival of key sources – including three estate ledgers, a cash book, two estate notebooks, a copy of her memoirs and her brothers' letters and papers – allow us to say a great deal about Elizabeth's management of the Wicken estate.

Elizabeth was a meticulous book-keeper who kept her own estate ledgers as well as personally audited the accounts kept by her senior servants including the estate steward. As well as carefully managing the estate's finances, Elizabeth tirelessly improved the house, gardens and estate woodlands during her 43-year widowhood. She also rebuilt the church and

founded the day and Sunday schools, as well as embarked on a programme of repairs which included re-thatching and glazing the estate cottages and installing water pumps. She paid for the cottagers' children to attend school and sold fuel and foodstuffs to local agricultural labourers at subsidized prices, all of which went significantly beyond the traditional role of the landowners' wife as Lady Bountiful.

The Wicken estate had been enclosed by Elizabeth's father-in-law in 1757, but Elizabeth introduced a range of agricultural innovations and improvements to the newly enclosed estate. Within a year of her husband's death, Elizabeth had converted the yearly tenancies to longer-term leases, presumably in an attempt to encourage her tenants to invest in improvements. She certainly paid for hedging, fencing and ditching on both the tenants' farms and the home farm, as well as invested in repairs and improvements to the farmhouses and outbuildings. Alongside improvements to the eight tenant farms, Elizabeth undertook similar improvements on the ninth farm which she kept in hand. Here marling, drainage works and the clearing of anthills allowed her to bring former pasture land into arable cultivation. Elizabeth also experimented with new animal feeds and new agricultural machinery, including the so-called rolling carts and carriages which were bought from her brother's London manufactory and used in the drainage works on the home farm and in the construction of the new riding through the woods.¹⁷

Whilst women like Jane Ashley and Elizabeth Prowse managed their estates for life and handed them on to more or less distant male relatives at their deaths, widows with children often took on estate management as the guardians of young sons not yet old enough to inherit the estate in their own right. Sarah Dawes of Escrick in the East Riding and Mary Cotterel of Aynho in Northamptonshire were two such women. Like Jane Ashley, both were involved in enclosing their estates although because they were acting on behalf of their sons, their names do not appear in the enclosure awards. Hence their lives and actions are more difficult to uncover than those of childless widows like Ashley and Prowse.

Sarah was the widow of Beilby Thompson of Escrick Hall (c.1686-1750) and the mother of their eight year old son, another Beilby (1742-99). At her husband's death in 1750, she quickly returned to using her previous married name, Dame Sarah Dawes. Whilst her son was away at school and at Cambridge, Sarah managed the Thompson estates, building them up through a series of purchases in the south-east corner of the East Riding.¹⁸ She organised for

the Thompson property at Riccall and Bole (Nottinghamshire) to be surveyed and acted on her son's behalf in the enclosures at Stillingfleet, Ottringham in Holderness and Acaster Malbis on the west bank of the River Ouse in North Yorkshire. Between 1756 and 1764, Sarah was also involved in the Ouse and Derwent drainage commission as well as oversaw building works at Escrick Hall which included refronting the house and adding a third storey in 1758, the date on the rainwater heads which interestingly bear the initials of her son rather than her own.¹⁹

Another woman who oversaw major improvements to the home estate was Mary Cotterel, the widow of Thomas Cartwright of Aynho in the extreme south-west of Northamptonshire. Their only son William Ralph Cartwright was just a year old at his father's death in 1772 and Mary and her new husband Stephen Cotterel managed the Aynho estate on his behalf for two decades. During this time, they improved the estate by establishing new plantations, acquiring freeholds via a series of purchases and exchanges, diverting roads so the park could be extended and eventually enclosing the open fields. Although William was the legal owner, the parties involved in the land sales and the 1792 enclosure all deferred to Mary as his representative and it was her who instructed the estate steward in the various negotiations as well as wrote to her son at university and on the grand tour to tell him how things progressed.²⁰

Married women

Mary Cotterel was of course married, but to a second husband who had no legal claim on the Aynho estate: she is visible in the records because as a widow she was managing the family estate on behalf of her young son. But what about women whose husbands were still alive? What role did they play in managing family estates? And how can we go about uncovering their 'hidden histories'?

Like the research on elite women more generally, studies of married country-house women have tended to focus on their role in interior decoration, garden design and household management.²¹ By the eighteenth century, married women are assumed to have played little part in managing agricultural estates. This is in sharp contrast to the situation a hundred years earlier, when we know the wives of landowners managed their husband's estates, during both the Civil War and the political upheavals of the later seventeenth century.²² Capern cites the

example of Elizabeth Hotham of Scarborough, who managed around 10,000 acres in the East Riding during her husband's exile on the Continent and after his death. His letters make it clear that he was willing to accept Elizabeth's judgement about both the family property and their son's marriage negotiations, writing to his future daughter-in-law's mother to assure her that his wife had the authority to act of his behalf.²³ Another married woman active in estate management in the seventeenth century was Elizabeth Sherburn who managed the family property at Stonyhurst (Lancashire) as well as helped her daughter Anne run the Constable of Everingham estates in the East Riding. All this was done in her husband's lifetime and at her death in 1666 he acknowledged that it was her 'who for many yeares last past managed my whole estate'.²⁴

Gentle and aristocratic women seen to have been active in seventeenth-century farm management are nevertheless thought to have retired into domesticity in the eighteenth century.²⁵ Much of the literature on separate spheres points to just such a conclusion and even Capern – who provides several examples of seventeenth-century women active in estate management – has highlighted a 'defeminisation of property' in the eighteenth century arguing that '[t]he woman as estate steward... became a creature of the seventeenth-century past'.²⁶ But if the idea of women's retreat into domestic space stems in part from the separate spheres hypothesis – itself still actively debated – then it is also an outcome of the fact that married women's activity on their husbands' estates is very difficult to recover in the archive. Of all the categories of landowning women discussed here, they produced least in terms of a paper trail. As a result, married women's presence on the home farm tends to be eclipsed by their husbands' presence in the documents.

Two brief examples from the Sykes family of East Yorkshire may shed more light on married women's activities on their husbands' estates in the eighteenth century. Henrietta Masterman was the heiress to the Settrington estate in the northern Wolds. In 1795 she married Sir Mark Sykes, the eldest son of Sir Christopher Sykes of Sledmere. In the years before Sir Mark inherited Sledmere, the couple apparently lived at Settrington where they introduced a series of improvements. Thus the open fields were enclosed under an act of 1797 and the village replanned around the same date. The village green was enclosed and reduced to a standard width road, and the houses on its south side demolished. Houses at the southern end of the village near the church were also removed to make way for the new gardens surrounding the rebuilt manor house, and neat pairs of estate cottages built further north. The new estate

cottages and farmhouses were built around 1795 to 1800 and are usually said to be the work of Henrietta. Interestingly, the date stones on the manor house, garden pavilions, estate offices, stables and riding school all imply that work at Settrington were underway before Henrietta's marriage to Sir Mark, perhaps suggesting that she played a much bigger role in the improvements than has traditionally been attributed to her.²⁷

Henrietta's mother-in-law was Elizabeth Egerton, the wife of Sir Christopher Sykes. She was a wealthy heiress bringing Sir Christopher £17,000 at their marriage in 1770, later followed by another £60,000 and her brother's Cheshire estates. Sir Christopher was a famous improver who spent over £75,000 on enclosing, planting and building at Sledmere and around another £180,000 buying up property in the Wolds and Holderness. His wife's inheritance was said to have paid for the two new wings added to Sledmere House in 1787-94 and no doubt also funded other improvements at Sledmere which included relocating the village, enclosing the open fields, building new outlying farmsteads and planting hundreds of thousands of trees.²⁸

Further work in the Sykes of Sledmere collection at the Hull History Centre should allow me to say more about the role Elizabeth played in decision making about the Sledmere improvements. It should also tell me more about how Elizabeth and Henrietta contributed to the day-to-day management of the Sykes family estates. Both their husbands were MPs who would have spent time away in Parliament, perhaps leaving their wives to liaise with the estate steward in their absence.

Unfortunately we know little about the relationship between married women and their stewards, although we can say something about the relationship between some of the widows discussed above and their stewards. For example, the surviving Cartwright of Aynho correspondence tells us a great deal about the division of responsibility between Mary Cotterel and her estate steward Robert Weston. Somewhat unusually, a letter survives referring to an agreement drawn up in 1777 regarding Weston's duties. He was to receive rents, organise repairs, discharge bills and prepare the half-yearly accounts, though he later noted how much more he had done on his clients' behalf in overseeing the enclosure, organising drainage works and managing the home farm.²⁹ It is clear that Weston was responsible for the day-to-day management of the Cartwright estates, with Mary receiving

reports from him and issuing instructions much as wealthy male landowners would have done.

Yet not all female landowners relied on an estate steward to same extent as Mary Cotterel. Jane Ashley, for example, collected her own rents and organised for repairs to the tenants' houses, while Elizabeth Prowse took an active interest in all aspects of the Wicken estate including the home farm. Unlike the professional land agents employed on other estates, the Wicken stewards were local men. It is clear from her records that Elizabeth audited their accounts, copying their receipts and expenditure into her own ledger and cross-referencing the items against entries elsewhere in the volume.³⁰ Thus it was Elizabeth rather than her stewards who had overall control of the estate and its finances, even if her senior servants regularly took over the day-to-day management of the house and estate whilst she visited friends and family in the capital and elsewhere.

In other words, there is nothing here to suggest that female landowners necessarily relied any more heavily on their estate stewards than male landowners. Like their male counterparts, some women chose to leave their land and farms in the hands of employees whilst others adopted a much more hands-on approach to estate management. Interestingly, women like Elizabeth Prowse also played a key role in the circulation of ideas, knowledge and expertise, bringing new ideas about estate management to Wicken which she encountered either through reading the publications of leading agricultural improvers like Arthur Young and Nathaniel Kent or when visiting improving estates both in the Midlands and further afield.³¹

Conclusions

Despite the difficulties in accessing women's 'hidden histories', the evidence presented here demonstrates that propertied women – perhaps particularly widows – were actively involved in estate management, enclosure, landscaping and agricultural improvement. Wealthier widows like Elizabeth Prowse and Lady Elizabeth Dryden of Canons Ashby (Northamptonshire) kept detailed estate ledgers in which they recorded receipts and expenditure along with memoranda about the estate's tenancies, whilst more middling landowners like Mrs Jane Ashley of Ashby St Ledgers personally collected rents and organized repairs to tenants' farmsteads. Like male landowners, these women lobbied parliament for enclosure acts and negotiated with freeholders and stewards about purchases

and exchanges. They supervised the enclosure of family properties even where they were not identified in the act or award, rebuilt their family homes, improved their gardens and parklands, and replanned whole villages. They also reorganised tenancies and raised rents in the wake of enclosure, thereby increasing the value of their estates. In this sense, these women did more than simply act as a 'bridge' to pass land from man to man: instead, they actively improved their estates in order to generate wealth which could be passed on to future generations.³²

All the examples discussed here date from the second half of the eighteenth century, precisely the period that the parliamentary enclosure movement in both Yorkshire and Northamptonshire was at its peak. Future research will examine women's role in estate management and improvement in both the earlier eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, as well as pay further attention to both unmarried heiresses and married women. It will also explore some of the differences between Northamptonshire and Yorkshire hinted at here in greater detail, examining whether contrasting soils and land use histories produced distinct landscapes and economies in which female landowners potentially played very different roles. In doing so, the project aims to explore important questions about propertied women's position in Georgian society, as well as contribute to wider cultural debates about women's place in the environmental, social and economic history of Britain.

¹ A. L. Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England* (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 77.

² A. L. Erickson, 'Possession – and the other one-tenth of the law: assessing women's ownership and economic roles in early modern England', *Women's History Review* 16.3 (2007), pp. 369-85; J. Bailey 'Favoured or oppressed? Married women, property and "coverture" in England, 1660–1800', *Continuity and Change* 17.3 (2002), pp. 351-72.

³ A. Capern, 'The landed woman in early modern England', *Parergon* 19.1 (2002), pp. 185-214, especially p. 213; Erickson, *Women and property*, pp. 12, 149-50.

⁴ Erickson, *Women and property*, p. 6; P. Sharp, 'Dealing with love: the ambiguous independence of the single woman in early modern England', *Gender and History* 11:2 (1999), p.226; S. Medelson and P. Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 434-5; Capern, 'The landed woman', pp. 213-4.

⁵ E. Spring, *Law, land and family* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1993), *passim*, especially p. 102.

⁶ M. Prior, 'Wives and wills 1558-1700', in J. Chartres and D. Hey (eds), *English rural society, 1500-1800: essays in honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 201-225; C. Peters, 'Single women in early modern England: attitudes and expectations', *Continuity and Change* 12:3 (1997), pp. 325-45.

⁷ Capern, 'The landed woman', p. 191. Women's chances of inheriting landed property may also have differed according to their social position. Economic necessity perhaps encouraged ordinary men to leave land to their widows and daughters, while the more middling gentry and aristocracy often favoured collateral males over female dependents (J. Whittle, 'Inheritance, Marriage, Widowhood and Remarriage: a Comparative Perspective on Women and Landholding in North-East Norfolk, 1440-1580', *Continuity and Change*, 13 (1), pp. 33-72, especially p. 65; Erickson, *Women and property*, p. 63; Spring, *Law, land and family*, pp. 46 and 93-4).

⁸ Capern, 'The landed woman', p. 196.

⁹ Whittle, 'Inheritance, Marriage', p. 35.

¹⁰ B. M. S. Campbell, 'Population pressure, inheritance and the land market in a fourteenth-century peasant community', in R. M. Smith (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 87-134; Bennett, *Women in the medieval English countryside: gender and household in Brigstock before the Plague* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 33; P. Franklin, 'Peasant widows' 'liberation' and remarriage before the Black Death', *Economic History Review* 2nd ser. 39 (1986), pp. 186-204; J. Cox Russell, *British medieval population* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1948), pp. 62-4; J. Z. Titow, *English rural society 1200-1350* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 87; all cited in Whittle, 'Inheritance, Marriage', pp. 36-7.

¹¹ A. Capern, 'Women, Land and Family in Early-Modern North Yorkshire', paper presented at the Economic History Society conference 2006, p. 4 [available at www.ehs.org.uk/ehs/conference2006/Assets/IIIDCapern.doc, accessed 20 April 2010]; S. Seeliger, 'Hampshire women as landholders: common law mediated by manorial custom', *Rural History* 7 (1996), pp. 1-14.

¹² Whittle, 'Inheritance, Marriage', p. 66.

¹³ The Northamptonshire sample was drawn up as part of the Changing Landscapes, Changing Environments project based at the Universities of Sussex, Hertfordshire and Lincoln. The project was sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and ran between May 2007 and May 2010. I am grateful to Mark Fox for transcribing some of the Northamptonshire enclosure awards used here.

¹⁴ This includes land held jointly by men and women. These were often husbands and wives but sometimes groups of siblings.

¹⁵ These were Bulwick, Ecton, Weekley & Geddington, Haringworth and Ashby St Ledgers.

¹⁶ B. McDonagh, 'Women, enclosure and estate improvement in eighteenth-century Northamptonshire', *Rural History* 20.2 (2009), pp. 143-62.

¹⁷ For more on Elizabeth Prowse, see B. McDonagh, "'All towards the improvements of the estate': Mrs Elizabeth Prowse at Wicken (Northamptonshire), 1764-1810", in R. W. Hoyle, *Custom, improvement and anti-improvement in early modern Britain*, (Farnham, Ashgate, forthcoming).

¹⁸ Hull University Archives (hereafter HUL), DDFA/8/11 and /14 (Kexby); DDFA/13/86 (Riccall); DDFA/18/6 (Wheldrake); DDFA/39/22 (Moxby Moor); DDFA/43/33 (Deighton); DDFA2/2/75 (Escrick); DDFA4/1/11 (Acaster Malbis).

¹⁹ D. Neave, 'Escrick Hall and Park', *York Georgian Society Annual Report* (1971), pp. 27.

²⁰ See McDonagh, 'Women, enclosure and estate improvement', p. 152.

²¹ T. Lummis and J. Marsh, *The Woman's Domain: Women and the English Country House* (London, Viling Press, 1990); S. G. Bell, 'Women Create Gardens in Male Landscapes: A Revisionist Approach to Eighteenth-Century English Garden History', *Feminist Studies*, 16.3 (1990), pp. 471-91. Examples of recent work on women and gardens include A. Hunt and P. Everson 'Sublime Horror: Industry and Designed Landscape in Miss Wakefield's Garden at Basingill, Cumbria', *Garden History*, 32.1 (2004), pp. 68-86 on the gardens created by Isabella Wakefield; L. L. Moore 'Queer Gardens: Mary Delany's Flowers and Friendships', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39.1 (2005), pp. 49-70.

²² Capern, 'The landed woman', pp. 199-200.

²³ Capern, 'The landed woman', pp. 197 and 203.

²⁴ HUL, DDEV/69/49; cited in Capern, 'The landed woman', p. 205. Capern also mentions the case of Anne Mildmay who kept her father's accounts (p. 209).

²⁵ A. Vickery, *The gentleman's daughter: women's lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998), p. 2 reviews the literature; B. Hill, *Women, work and sexual politics in eighteenth-century England* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989), p. 123; L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, Harper & Row, 1977), p. 396; S. W. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 187; C. Hall, 'The history of the housewife' in C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992), pp. 43-71. See J. Thomas 'Women and capitalism: oppression or emancipation? a review article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30.3 (1988), pp. 534-49 for a review of some of the early literature on the impact of capitalism on women's position in society.

²⁶ Capern, 'The landed woman', p. 214.

²⁷ K. J. Allison, *The East Riding of Yorkshire landscape* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), pp. 187-9; VCH ER VIII, p. 24; *List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest*, available online at www.imagesofengland.org.uk.

²⁸ Sykes of Sledmere catalogue at the Hull History Centre, available online at www.hullhistorycentre.org.uk; VCH ER VIII, pp. 24, 177-8, 188 and 204.

²⁹ Northamptonshire Record Office (hereafter NRO), C(A)5142.

³⁰ NRO, 364p/67, fos. 45-8.

³¹ For further discussion of this point, see McDonagh, 'All towards the improvements of the estate'.

³² J. Whittle, 'Inheritance, Marriage', p. 64.