# The Fabric of Life: Linen and Life Cycle in England, 1678-1810

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## Abstract

‘The Fabric of Life: Linen and Life Cycle in England, 1678-1810’ is structured around the human life cycle to draw out the social and cultural importance of linen for all ranks of society. Human and object life cycles are juxtaposed in the thesis to analyse co-dependent activities and processes rather than focusing on one facet of daily life. For thousands of years flax was a staple fibre, used for textile production in many parts of the globe. Cotton only overtook linen as the most popular textile in England at home and on the body during the nineteenth century. This thesis examines the preceding century to reveal why linen remained a daily necessity in England between 1678 and 1810, a period which encompassed a series of significant changes in the production, trade and use of linen. Linen was ubiquitous as underwear, sheets, table linens and for logistical purposes therefore it provides a unique insight into the early-modern world; a means of understanding the multifaceted experiences of daily life, of integrating understandings of the body, domestic, social, cultural and commercial activities. This thesis is social history through the lens of linen, reading a society through its interactions with a textile.

Title page image: Winterthur Museum, 1970.0346.002, Pillow Case, linen, America, marked in 1818. [image removed for copyright reasons]

## Abbreviations

BL: British Library

BM: British Museum

BRO: Berkshire Record Office

CCA: Canterbury Cathedral Archives

KHLC: Kent History and Library Centre

LMA: London Metropolitan Archives

LRO: Lancashire Record Office

OBP: Old Bailey Proceedings Online

OHC: Oxfordshire History Centre

NYCR: North Yorkshire County Record Office

SRO: Somerset Record Office

V&A: Victoria and Albert Museum

WAA: Worcester Archives and Archaeology Service

WYASW: West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield

YCA: York City Archive

## Measures

*Lengths*

Spindle / spangle: 4 hanks or 14,400 yards (yarn)

Hank: 3,600 yards (yarn)

Ell: an English ell was 45 inches

Yard: 36 inches

*Weights*

Stone: 14 pounds

Pound / lb.: 16 ounces (oz.)

Ounce: 16 drams

*Volumes*

Bushel: 8 gallons (used for seed, grain and other goods)

Gallon: 4 quarts or 8 pints

Quart: a quarter of a gallon or 2 pints

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## List of Illustrations

All museum objects originated in Britain unless otherwise stated. Detailed origins are provided in the captions.

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## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.1, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14444, linen embroidered with cross-stitch.** © Coram

On 12 November 1759, John Barney Sheppard was presented to the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury, London, because his parents could not support him due to poverty or illegitimacy. The person who presented John, or the clerk who accepted him into the Hospital decided that the two linen textile swatches shown in figure 0.1 were the best identifiers should his parents ever be able to return to collect him. Plain linen was ubiquitous, it was the triangle embroidered in black cross-stitch that made the swatches identifiable. The scraps mark the separation of mother and child. Alongside, they also represent another set of lives and processes. The swatches have a life cycle of their own, from ploughing the soil ready to sow the flax seed to producing and selling the cloth, from conversion into baby clothes to their final resting place in the London Metropolitan Archives these swatches have been created, altered and stored by generations. This interconnection between human and object life cycles is central to this thesis, which examines why people produced and used linen and the meanings which were constructed around it.

For thousands of years flax was a staple fibre, used for textile production in many parts of the globe. Cotton only overtook linen as the most popular textile in England at home and on the body in the course of the nineteenth century. This thesis

examines the preceding century to reveal why linen remained a daily essential in England between 1678 and 1810, a period which encompassed a series of significant changes in the production, trade and use of linen in England. The source of supply changed. In 1678 the vast majority of linen was imported, while by 1810 large English, Scottish and Irish linen industries had developed. Linen went from being an essential domestic good in 1678, representing a significant proportion of a family's material wealth, to losing this status as cotton became an increasingly viable option. But it was only in the 1820s that all ranks of society changed consumption habits and cotton became more widely used than linen.[1] Alongside these changes there were continuities. Linen continued to be used for clothing, domestic and commercial textiles throughout the period, despite the rise of a cotton industry that produced large volumes of textiles that could be substituted for linen.

The social, cultural and economic causes for the retention of linen during its last century and a half of domestic dominance are investigated. Society was permeated by linen in the home, on the body and at work. Linen was worn as underwear by rich and poor during the early-modern period: touching linen was a universal experience in daily life. The thesis therefore explores intimate daily relationships with flaxen cloth. Linen's spectrum of uses included clothing as shirts and shifts (underwear), gowns, petticoats, waistcoats, breeches, aprons, drawers, caps, night caps, night shirts, ruffles, lace, swaddling, clouts and other items of infant clothing; for textile construction as thread, garment linings, stiffenings, inkle and tape; for household textiles as sheets, pillow covers, table cloths, napkins, towels, mattress covers, sacking bottoms which held mattresses up, window and bed curtains and for commercial purposes as sacks, wrappers, money bags, cart covers, ropes, twine and sailcloth. Linen, unlike wool and silk could be washed, therefore before the advent of cotton it was the preferred option for garments and textiles that would be regularly soiled by bodies: underwear, bed and table linen. Long flax fibres made strong yarn and durable cloth, therefore they were used to transport and protect other goods.

[1] John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 128-32, 347; John Styles, 'What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution?', in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*, ed. by Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Pasold Research Fund and Oxford University Press, 2009), 307-326 (pp. 318-321).

The ubiquity of linen means that it speaks to many aspects of life during the long eighteenth century, from rites of passage to respectability and trade. A study of linen during the period is not just the study of a material, but a way of drawing the threads of everyday life together. Linen was the fabric of life, thus it provides a unique insight into the early-modern world; a means of understanding the multifaceted experiences of daily life, of integrating understandings of the body, domestic, social, cultural and commercial activities. This is social history through the lens of linen, reading a society through its interactions with a textile.

There has been no major study of linen in England during the long eighteenth century, a significant omission. Linen, the only fibre with comparable properties to cotton, provides a counterpart to the well-studied global and industrial story of the rise of cotton.[2] The limited research undertaken on linen has primarily focused on national linen industries, trade and cleanliness.[3] Susan North's 2012 Ph.D. thesis is the only work to cover the production and consumption of linen clothing during the eighteenth century, focusing on underwear – what was worn, changes in construction, medical attitudes to hygiene, production, particularly the making-up of bespoke and readymade garments and washing. This thesis complements her work. Notable points of difference include a focus on household and commercial linens and research on children's clothing and domestic and institutional linen manufacture. This thesis builds on historiographies of manufacture, trade and cleanliness to ask what the social, cultural and economic factors were that led to the continued use of linen as a daily necessity during the long eighteenth century.

Linen met a socially constructed need, the need for a fabric to ensure and express cleanliness and respectability, deemed so vital that it influenced international trade and provided a living for vast swathes of Europe. This demand was particularly

[2] For example, Beverly Lemire, *Cotton* (Oxford: Berg, 2011); Lemire, *Fashion's Favorite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Riello and Parthasarathi (ed.) *The Spinning World*; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 109-32.
[3] For example, *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Brenda Collins and Philip Ollerenshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); L.M. Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade 1660-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968); Alastair J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1979); Negley Harte, 'The Rise of Protection and the English Linen Trade, 1690-1790', in *Textile History and Economic History*, ed. by N.B. Harte and K.B. Ponting (Manchester, 1973), pp. 74-112; Conrad Gill, *The Rise of the Irish Linen Industry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

significant in England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, transforming patterns of trade and industry. Linen supply was a major issue in England until the mid-eighteenth century. Despite its necessity status, relatively small quantities of linen were produced in Britain and Ireland in the late seventeenth century. England was reliant on European imports, a concern for the government who promoted import substitution from 1670. A 1678 ban on French goods included linen and in 1697 additional high duties were added to French linens. Despite penalising the French, imports from other European countries continued and in 1700 linen was the single largest manufactured import, constituting 15 per cent of all English imports.[4]

A national industry was to be developed to meet growing demand and to enable import substitution. Existing linen industries were developed in England, Scotland and Ireland promoted by the British government. The promotion of linen industries in Scotland and Ireland allowed the development of large-scale highly profitable textile industries that would offer no competition to the English national industry – the manufacture of woollen cloth. Alongside the linen industry, cotton manufacturing developed in Britain and Ireland in the later eighteenth century. Although ultimately cotton would dominate, throughout the eighteenth century linen successfully competed with cotton both in terms of the scale of the industry and consumption. This thesis explains the need for these economic changes, why linen was a necessity and why demand for linen grew during the eighteenth century. Thus it covers the period 1678 to 1810. The start date of 1678 represents the first major change in government policy towards linen supply when French linens, which comprised a third of England's supply, were prohibited. The end date of 1810 represents a moment when cotton, though expanding rapidly had not yet overtaken linen outside the realm of decorative textiles, while the production of linen itself was beginning to be transformed by mechanisation. The following section provides an overview of how England supplied itself with linen between 1678 and 1810.

[4] Brenda Collins and Philip Ollerenshaw, 'The European Linen Industry since the Middle Ages', in *The European Linen Industry*, 1-41, (p. 15); Harte, 'The Rise of Protection', pp. 78-79; David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 141-43.

**Table 0.1, Origins of linen used in England 1700-1770 (million yards)**

| | Retained imports from Europe | Irish exports to England | Scottish production | Total of European, Irish and Scottish production | Estimated minimum English production | Contemporary English production estimates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1700 | *22.1* | 0.3 | | | 12.9 | |
| 1710 | *15.1* | 1.5 | (1.5) | 18.1 | 9.9 | |
| 1720 | *16.7* | 2.6 | | | 12.4 | |
| 1730 | 23.1 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 30.7 | 14.4 | (21.0) |
| 1740 | | 6.4 | 4.6 | } 32.0 | 16.4 | |
| 1741 | 21.1 | | | | | |
| 1750 | | 10.9 | 7.6 | } 39.1 | 27.1 | |
| 1752-1755 | 20.7 | | | | | (25.8) |
| 1760 | 17.9 | 13.1 | 11.7 | 52.8 | 26.8 | |
| 1770 | 18.6 | 19.7 | 13.0 | 59.8 | 42.8 | |

Source: Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, p. 169. Numbers in italics are from customs figures, those in brackets are contemporary estimates.

Research has primarily focused on the Scottish, Irish and European linen industries. The full scale of English manufacture is unknown. Table 0.1 shows David Ormrod's compilation of contemporary sources, production and trade statistics located by other historians which reveals that although British and Irish manufacturing output grew, the English were never self-sufficient for linen in the eighteenth century. Imports remained important throughout. They are listed as 'retained' in the table because large quantities of linens were re-exported.[5] Table 0.1 does however suggest that English linen production was higher than Ireland and Scotland combined and also exceeded quantities of retained Continental imports from the 1750s.[6] Regionally, the North-East, North-West and South-West manufactured the most linen. English counties that have been identified as having linen industries are Cumbria, Lancashire, Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Devon, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Kent. Large quantities of flax were also grown on the Isle of Ely and in Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Sussex in the late eighteenth century. Linen was 'a major textile industry' in eighteenth and early

[5] Ormrod, *Rise of Commerical Empires*, p. 169.
[6] See also John Horner, *The Linen Trade of Europe During the Spinning-Wheel Period* (Belfast: Linenhall Press, 1920), pp. 224-26, 233.

**Table 0.2, Annual averages of English imports and re-exports of flaxen items, 1663-1774 (thousands of pounds)**

| | | 1663 & 1669 (London only) | 1699-1701 | 1722-1724 | 1752-1754 | 1772-1774 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imports | Flax and hemp | 86 | 194 | 182 | 397 | 481 |
| | Thread | 141 | 79 | 40 | 11 | 14 |
| | Linen | 582 | 903 | 1,036 | 1,185 | 1,246 |
| Re-exports | Linen | unknown | 182 | 232 | 331 | 322 |
| Imports remaining | Value of imports remaining in England | unknown | 721 | 804 | 854 | 924 |
| Exports | English Linen | 0 | 0 | 25 | 211 | 740 |

Sources: Davis, 'English Foreign Trade, 1660-1700', pp. 164-65 and 'English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774', pp. 300-03.

nineteenth century England according to Negley Harte, the only scholar to look broadly at the production and protection of linen in England.[7]

Table 0.2, based on annual averages, shows that imports of linen cloth, flax and hemp grew during the period 1663-1774. Significantly thread imports collapsed from £141,000 through London annually in the 1660s, to only £11,000 annually across England in the 1750s. Most thread would have been linen. These figures indicate the rise of successful thread production in Britain which is little discussed in historiography. Some thread was supplied by Scotland; thread manufacture grew from the 1720s and mechanised production began in Scotland in 1762.[8] Imports of raw flax and hemp, as well as linen yarn were used to supply the growing English linen industries. Linen cloth was used by the English and re-exported to other countries, particularly the American colonies and West Indies, where between 86 and 95 per cent of all English re-exports were sent in every time period in table 0.2 apart from the 1660s. The majority of re-exports between 1700 and 1770 (based on

[7] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 102-03, 106; Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, p. 144; W.G. Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds, Flax Spinners, 1788-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 3; Margaret Robinson, 'The Linen Industry in North Lancashire and Cumbria' in *A History of Linen in the North West*, ed. by Elizabeth Roberts (Lancaster: Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 1998), pp. 44-65.
[8] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, pp. 77-78.

**Table 0.3, Origins of English linen imports, 1663-1774 (thousands of pounds)**

| | 1663 & 1669 (London only) | 1699-1701 | 1722-1724 | 1752-1754 | 1772-1774 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Germany, Holland, Flanders, France | 570 | 798 | 838 | 684 | 415 |
| Norway, Denmark, Baltic | 6 | 48 | 84 | 16 | 169 |
| Ireland, Channel Islands, Scotland before the Act of Union | 6 | 57 | 114 | 332 | 652 |
| Total imports | 582 | 903 | 1,036 | 1,185* | 1,246* |

Sources: Davis, 'English Foreign Trade, 1660-1700', pp. 164-65 and 'English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774', pp. 300-03.
* These are the total import figures provided by Davis, however they are not the correct regional totals which should be 1032 and 1246. It is not clear whether this is a calculation error or whether there is data missing from the table.

value) were of German cloth, ranging between 46 and 75 per cent during the period. English re-exports of Irish linen were higher than direct exports from Ireland throughout the eighteenth century. In particular there was a large market for coarse linens to clothe slaves. The Colonies and the West Indies were a significant market until the War of Independence and the removal of a ban on Continental European trade with the Colonies in 1783. Re-exports continued after 1783 and Irish exports and English re-exports of Irish goods peaked from 1793 to 1797 at 10,751 yards.[9]

Table 0.3 shows the shifting origins of English linen imports purchased for use in England and for re-exportation. In the 1660s, German, Dutch, Flemish and French linens formed 98 per cent of the value of imports, dropping to 34 per cent in the 1770s, when a 52 per cent share had been taken by Ireland and the Channel Islands. Scottish linens were excluded from the figures after the 1707 Act of Union, therefore the full extent of the market lost by North-West Europe is obscured. Around a quarter of the linens purchased between 1700 and 1750 were exported to the

[9] Ralph Davis, 'English Foreign Trade, 1660-1700', *The Economic History Review*, (EHR) 7:2 (1954), 150-66 (pp. 164-65); Davis, 'English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774', *EHR*, 15:2 (1962), 285-303 (pp. 290, 295-97, 300-03); R.C. Nash, 'Irish Atlantic Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 42:3 (July, 1985) 329-56 (p. 337); Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, pp. 152, 155, 168.

American colonies. Re-exports grew faster than imports, which indicates that the English were increasingly using linen manufactured in England and Scotland. Table 0.2 shows the growing significance of English linen manufacture. Exports rose exponentially from a yearly average of £25,000 in 1699 to 1701, to £740,000 for 1772 to 1774. Although British production had substantially increased, England remained reliant on European continental imports in the late eighteenth century, the value of which grew slowly from £721,000 in 1699 to 1701 to £924,000 in 1772 to 1774 (table 0.2).[10]

David Ormrod has examined the changing origins of linen imports in greater detail. He revealed that between 1702 and 1760, the vast majority of linen imports were from Germany, matching the re-export data. German imports grew from 1720 to the late 1730s when they peaked at around £650,000 then declined to under £500,000 in the late 1750s, similar levels to 1710 (based on nine-year moving averages). The early growth of German imports was due to the heavy duties on French linens and the failure of the British Customs to reassess the duties on German linens when their quality improved. The duties for specific types of linens were based on the 1660 Book of Rates valuations (see Appendix 1) and were used until 1787, with no amendments to account for changes in the quality of products. Dutch imports declined from around £200,000 in 1720 to under £100,000 in 1760. Dutch and Flemish imports suffered from the lower rates of duty on German linens. Imports from Russia increased to a maximum of just over £100,000 in the 1750s again owing to the disparity between improving quality and a low 1660 valuation. Imports from Scandinavia and Flanders were worth less than £100,000, throughout, although this sum may underrepresent Flanders.[11] The Seven Years War led to a significant reduction in European continental linen imports into England from 32 million yards in 1751 to 1752 to 19 million yards in 1761-1762.[12] Large quantities of linens were smuggled into England. A 1719 estimate suggested that smuggled French and Dutch linens added another third onto the official import figures and many merchants were complicit in the mis-declaration of goods to Customs.[13]

[10] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 83-85; Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, p. 156.
[11] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 78-81, 85; Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, pp. 154, 157, 160, 162. See also Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade*, p. 61.
[12] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, p. 92.
[13] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 83-85.

National specialisations in types and qualities of linens also influenced trade patterns. Holland was the European expert on bleaching for the first half of the eighteenth century. Dutch linens, mainly hollands, were high quality and the whitest in the world. However, by 1750 Irish bleaching techniques produced a white that rivalled Dutch bleaching and by 1775 most linen manufactured in Scotland was also bleached there, no longer in Holland or Ireland. Fine Dutch linens were also superior in design and weaving to much of the rest of Europe. Diaper, damasks and lawns, fine linens, were imported from Silesia, Saxony and Lusatia, via Hamburg or Haarlem if bleached in Holland. The majority of imports were middle weight linens from Germany, used for clothing and domestic uses: dowlas, hamborough, osnaburgs and tecklenburgs as well as coarse cloth for commercial and domestic use: borelaps, crocus, East Country narrow, hinderlands and ticking. Greater quantities of coarse Russian linens were imported than fine Dutch linens from 1750.[14] Trade continued with Europe despite viable Scottish and Irish alternatives to Continental linens which indicates that in terms of price and quality, European linens remained desirable. Damasks, cambrics and lawns, high quality linens were key Irish manufactures during the mid to late eighteenth century.[15] Scotland specialised in coarse linens for most of the eighteenth century, particularly osnaburgs, although fine textiles such as hollands and lawns and linen imitations of cotton muslins were also produced.[16]

Tariffs were applied to European imports as part of the English strategy to encourage import substitution. Starting at 7.5% from 1660 to 1690, after 1714 the duty for some linens was more than half the value of the cloth. Duties further increased during the War of Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War and American War of Independence. The development of the English linen industry was fostered by these high duties. Ormrod suggests that in the long term, the tariffs protected British and Irish producers of middle price linens and were intended to encourage import substitution, whereas Harte argues that revenue gathering was the chief intent. Export duties on English linen and flax seed were removed in 1717 to

[14] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, p. 86; David Mitchell, 'Linen Damask Production: Technology Transfer and Design, 1580-1760' in *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 61-97 (pp. 65-70, 84-85, 90-91); Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, pp. 150, 157, 160.
[15] Brian Mackey, 'Overseeing the Foundation of the Irish Linen Industry: The Rise and Fall of the Crommelin Legend' in *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*, 99-122 (pp. 117-18).
[16] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, pp. 6, 11.

encourage the industry. Duties on flax were removed in 1731 followed by those on Continental yarn in 1756. Duty free yarn imports from Ireland and Scotland were allowed from 1696 and 1707 respectively, ensuring good prices to promote the flaxen industries of the three countries. English manufacture was further encouraged through bounties between 1743 and 1832. In 1743 bounties for the exportation of linens were introduced for England, Scotland and Ireland and from 1782 bounties were paid on flax and hemp grown in England, all 'critical' elements according to Harte in enabling the development of a competitive English linen industry.[17] The problem is that we are reliant on export figures and bounty claims to estimate production, yet these figures obscure a high level of domestic production. Linens were produced on small farms throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As well as commercial production for export, this linen included production for domestic use and sale within England. Fibre cultivation bounties were not claimed by all small farmers therefore the quantity of cloth produced as well as demand for linens cannot be estimated reasonably. Furthermore this lack of data potentially masks changes in manufacturing and consumption, because if domestic consumption for household use declined across England as a whole during the eighteenth century, as John Styles found for Northern England, the peak in manufacture in 1750 (table 0.1) is partially distorted due to a shift away from domestic production for the household. In other words, the increase in demand and production suggested by the trade and bounty data would be misleading.[18] In part, at least, it simply shows manufacture that was previously excluded from official figures.

Flax fibre and yarn imports do however testify to a growing English use of linen in manufacturing, with a significant acceleration in the 1740s. As table 0.4 shows, flax and yarn imports generally increased from 1740, with the large jump in imports in 1750 preceding the removing of Continental duties in 1756. Flax for coarse yarns came from the Baltic while flax for fine yarns came from Holland and Ireland. English demand for fibre changed over time. In the 1790s and 1800s, smaller quantities of coarse Irish yarn were imported due to the development of English machine-spun flaxen yarn, but as technology developed allowing finer yarns to be mechanically

[17] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 76-78, 96-100; Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, pp. 162, 168, 173.
[18] John Styles, 'Clothing the North: The Supply of Non-Elite Clothing in the Eighteenth Century North of England', *Textile History*, 25:2 (1994), 139-66 (pp. 148-49).

**Table 0.4, English imports of flax and yarn, 1700-1790 (hundredweight)**

| Year | Flax imports | Yarn imports |
|---|---|---|
| 1700 | 62,701 | 17,921 |
| 1710 | 43,024 | 15,984 |
| 1720 | 37,310 | 27,458 |
| 1730 | 61,397 | 23,660 |
| 1740 | 69,572 | 27,071 |
| 1750 | 124,694 | 40,672 |
| 1760 | 73,059 | 62,537 |
| 1770 | 121,683 | 95,349 |
| 1780 | 146,734 | 91,914 |
| 1790 | 145,056 | 79,855 |

Source: Harte, 'Rise in Protection', p. 104.

spun, there was increased English demand for Irish flax, which produced finer fibres than Baltic flax.[19] Flax imports reached their peak in 1780 while yarn imports peaked in 1770. Thus the figures testify to a growing English industry from the 1740s, although an unknown proportion of imported fibre and yarn would have been used for thread, stockings or woven fabrics made from combinations of linen with cotton or wool. Harte identifies that the English linen industry expanded significantly from 1740 to 1790 and during the same period linen was 'a significant export industry' for England. Linen exports grew from under 1 million yards a year before 1735 to between 7.3 and 9.5 million yards annually from 1760 to 1790. However, the linen industry was not the key textile manufacturing priority; woollens retained their leadership.[20]

The British government encouraged the development of Irish and Scottish linen industries in part to aid import substitution. The most critical factors in the growth of these industries were duty-free access to a growing English market and cheap labour costs. State intervention also had some impact, through Boards of Trustees who promoted linen manufacture, founded in 1711 in Ireland and 1727 in Scotland. The Boards chiefly used bounties, prizes, spinning schools, legal regulation of standards and knowledge exchange from Continental craftsmen in an attempt to assure quality, with varying success.[21] Duties on Irish imports were removed in 1696, while Ireland was allowed free direct access to colonial markets in 1705. The

[19] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 258-59; Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 3, 6.
[20] Leslie Clarkson, 'The Linen Industry in Early Modern Europe' in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), II, 473-92 (pp. 485-86); Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 105-08.
[21] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, pp. 32-52, 67-75, 88-91, 106-12; Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 61-82, 94-121, 206-15.

Scottish gained the same privileges in 1707. From the 1730s the Irish and Scottish linen industries offered real competition to Continental imports in England. Harte suggests that by 1750, Irish and Scottish linens could compete with the prices of German linens and the quality of Dutch linens.[22] Alastair Durie suggests that this change came later for Scotland and that only in the late eighteenth century could Scotland rival the quality and price of Irish and Continental linens.[23] The value of linens stamped in Scotland increased from £103,312 in 1728 to £1,403,767 in 1824. The Scottish industry was smaller than the Irish. English imports of Irish linen yarn and cloth grew in the 1680s and 1690s, cloth imports increased from 11,376 yards in 1683 to 556,224 yards in 1698, while in 1800 imports were at least 32 million yards.[24] Durie emphasises the instability of the linen trade due to war and economic depression. There was a trade depression from 1771 to 1773 in Scotland and Ireland because the production of linen exceeded English demand. Production varied significantly by year, a third more linen was produced in 1802 than in 1803 in Scotland. East Scotland specialised in the production of coarse linens, while West Scotland specialised in finer linens and quickly transitioned to the production of cotton. By 1800 cotton had replaced fine linen manufacture in Scotland.[25]

The key trend in linen production in Britain and Ireland during the long eighteenth century was the move from small-scale domestic production, often for local markets, in the late seventeenth century to the mechanisation of flax spinning in the 1790s and further technological developments during the first third of the nineteenth century. The linen trade is variously considered to have promoted and impeded the move from proto-industrialisation (linen production either as household by-employment or under the putting-out system) to industrialisation. Arguments reign over whether low wages de-incentivised investment in mechanisation, or whether the capital, labour training and expertise developed by the linen industry alongside the intensification of work aided industrialisation.[26] Mechanisation was slow, therefore

[22] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 91-96.
[23] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, p. 6.
[24] Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade*, pp. 58, 60; Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, p. 22.
[25] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, pp. 22-28; Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 122-24.
[26] Clarkson, 'The Linen Industry', pp. 481-83; Jane Gray, 'The Irish, Scottish and Flemish Linen Industries during the Long Eighteenth Century' in *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*, 159-86 (pp. 159-62) summarises contrasting debates over linen's role in proto-industrialisation; Harte, 'Rise of Regulation', pp. 110-11; Beverly Lemire, 'Transforming Consumer Custom: Linens, Cottons and the English Market, 1660-1800' in *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*, pp. 187-207; Franklin F. Mendels, 'Proto-Industrialization: The First Phase of

most of the linens discussed in this thesis were spun, woven and sewn by hand. In East Anglia, linen production was a rural industry undertaken on smallholdings until the mid-eighteenth century, when much production was organised through the putting-out system. The majority of these linens were produced for local markets. The East Anglian linen industry never mechanised.[27] In the North Riding of Yorkshire, linen manufacture was a similarly domestic rural trade with farmers still weaving linen in 1800 and only limited mechanisation in the early nineteenth century.[28] Conrad Gill and Adrienne Hood also identified linen production as a primarily rural industry in Ireland into the nineteenth century and in Pennsylvania. In Ireland, significant changes in the organisation of labour only occurred in the 1760s with many waged workers labouring for bleachers instead of producing their own cloth until mechanisation in the early nineteenth century. It took a decade longer for steam power to be applied to flax spinning in Ireland than England.[29] In contrast, Durie attributes the expansion of linen spinning into the Highlands in the 1730s and 1740s to the putting-out system and suggests that centralised weaving of linen in 'factories' appeared in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, although it remained uncommon. The first Scottish flax-spinning mills were built in 1787, a steam mill was first introduced in the 1790s but it did not survive for long. Hand-spinning was still dominant in the 1790s but by the 1810s it was in decline due to mechanisation.[30] Similarly, while spinning was rural work in Lancashire and Cumbria, Margaret Robinson suggests that most weaving was undertaken by professional weavers in towns in these counties.[31] Wet-spinning, which allowed the mechanised production of fine flaxen yarn only spread across Great Britain and Ireland in the 1830s and Western Europe in the 1840s, while a major portion of linens remained hand woven until 1875.[32]

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the Industrialization Process, *The Journal of Economic History*, 32:1 (1972) pp. 241-61; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[27] Nesta Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry: Rural Industry and Local Economy, 1500-1850* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985), pp. 2, 19, 120, 132-36, 142-46, 151-52, 162, 165.

[28] R.P. Hastings, 'The North Riding Linen Industry', *North Yorkshire County Record Office Journal*, 7 (1980), 67-86 (pp. 67-75).

[29] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 1, 138-55, 235; Adrienne D. Hood, 'Flax Seed, Fibre and Cloth: Pennsylvania's Domestic Linen Manufacture and its Irish Connection, 1700-1830' in *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*, 139-158 (pp. 140, 157).

[30] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, pp. 38, 46-48, 95-98.

[31] Robinson, 'The Linen Industry in North Lancashire and Cumbria', pp. 44-45.

[32] Solar, 'The Linen Industry in the Nineteenth Century', pp. 815, 817.

Marshall's of Leeds was the largest and most successful mechanised flax spinning firm in Britain and Ireland during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It bought flax from the Baltic and flax and yarn from Ireland. Marshall's supplied North and West Yorkshire towns, London, Bristol, Norwich, south-east Lancashire and Dundee. The firm's output was significant: they manufactured 10,500 bundles of flaxen yarn and spun half the quantity again to be made up into cloth in 1793. In 1803, the company purchased 6 per cent of national imports of flax.[33] Marshall's was a major and growing manufacturing firm in this period but the road to mechanisation was gradual after their foundation in the late 1780s. The grades of yarn and cloth produced by the firm increased slowly due to technological limitations which prevented fine yarn production. In 1800, hand spinners' fine yarns were still superior, although Marshall considered his coarser and tow yarns to be equal to or better than their hand spun equivalents. It was only in the late 1820s that wet-spinning was fully developed in Marshall's mills, allowing the production of the finest yarns: steam removed the gum that held short fine pieces of flax fibre together and separated them allowing finer yarns to be spun. Nevertheless dry spinning did not disappear immediately, it continued in Marshall's mills in a reduced form into the 1840s. Hackling machinery, used to comb flax fibres before spinning was only widely used in large mills from 1817 and in smaller mills hand heckling continued until the late 1820s. Although Marshall's faced increased competition from other mills founded in Leeds from the 1810s, the progress of mechanisation was by no means secure, many firms failed.[34] Therefore although significant, mechanised firms were still far from monopolising the market, even in the 1810s.

While there is a clear chronology to the mechanisation of linen manufacture, long term trends in linen prices are harder to ascertain. Carole Shammas argued that textile prices declined in real terms during the early-modern period. Worsted and woollen prices continued to decrease during the eighteenth century, while linen and cotton prices stabilised. However Shammas' samples are too small to draw such a broad conclusion: she used an average of six prices for each textile to get an

[33] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, p. 252; Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 26, 34, 37, 48, 75, 87-89, 134.
[34] Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 24-25, 37, 42, 48, 50, 78-79, 84, 124-25, 175-79, 187.

**Table 0.5, Linen prices per yard, 1560-1705 (pence)**

| | Canvas | | Linen | | Holland | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Median | Range | Median | Range | Median | Range |
| 1560-1610 | 11.7 | 6.9-25.7 | 17.1 | 8.0-30.9 | 20.6 | 15.4-82.3 |
| 1610-1660 | 7.7 | 1.7-39.1 | 14.0 | 10.3-14.2 | 22.3 | 17.1-32.0 |
| 1660-1705 | | | 11.3 | 5.3-22.0 | 34.4 | 20.6-89.1 |

Source: Spufford, 'Fabric for Seventeenth-Century Children and Adolescents' Clothes', p. 50. No figures are given for canvas in the final period because there was only one record in the sample.

**Table 0.6, Price series for the average cost of a spindle of linen yarn from Perth, 1741-1776 (pence)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1741 | 19 | 1760 | 29.38 |
| 1742 | 21 | 1761 | 22.13 |
| 1743 | 23 | 1762 | 26.25 |
| 1744 | 23 | 1763 | 30.75 |
| 1745 | 21 | 1764 | 29.75 |
| 1746 | 23 | 1765 | 30.5 |
| 1747 | 23 | 1766 | 27.75 |
| 1748 | 24 | 1767 | 26.25 |
| 1749 | 25 | 1768 | 27 |
| 1750 | 26 | 1769 | 25.5 |
| 1751 | 26 | 1770 | 25.75 |
| 1752 | 25 | 1771 | 25.75 |
| 1753 | 25 | 1772 | 24 |
| 1754 | 22.25 | 1773 | 23.75 |
| 1755 | 22.5 | 1774 | 25.5 |
| 1756 | 20.25 | 1775 | 27.5 |
| 1757 | 21.75 | 1776 | 30.5 |
| 1758 | 24.5 | | |
| 1759 | 29.38 | | |

Source: Alexander Bald, *The Farmer and Corndealer's Assistant* (Edinburgh, 1780), pp. 435-36.

average for a forty-year time period.[35] Furthermore, Margaret Spufford makes the point that there were a wide range of prices within each category of textile. Table 0.5 shows median linen prices from Spufford's work which suggest that the prices of canvas and linen declined during the seventeenth century while the price of holland rose. However, as the ranges show, there was no simple decline or increase in price;

[35] Carole Shammas, 'The Decline of Textile Prices in England and British America Prior to Industrialization', *EHR*, 47:3 (1994), 483-507 (pp. 484-85, 492).

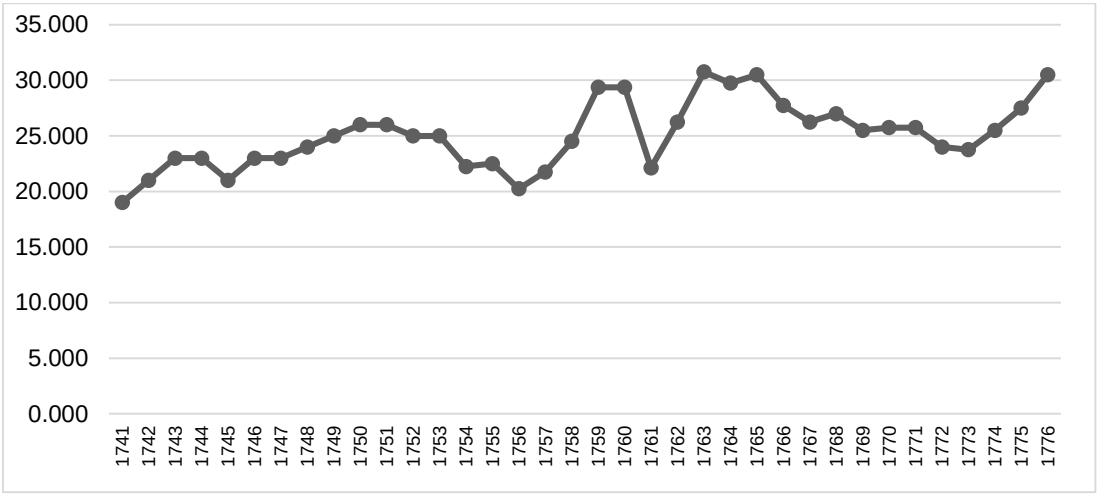


**Figure 0.2, Graph of Table 0.6, the average cost of a spindle of linen yarn from Perth, 1741-1776 (pence)**

while the median price of 'linen' fell, it had a higher upper range in 1660 to 1705 than 1610 to 1660.[36] Eighteenth-century linen prices have not undergone similar analysis.

There is no reliable price series for flax or linen cloth. The wide variety of linen textiles available in multiple qualities makes a definitive price series for flaxen cloth impossible. Linen yarn prices provide a more reliable series. The series in table 0.6 and graph in figure 0.2, show that prices ranged from 19d. to 30.75d. per spindle from 1741 to 1776.[37] These prices are probably for coarse yarn because Perth was in East Scotland, the centre of coarse linen manufacture. The median price was 25d. On the whole, prices were at or below the median from 1741 to 1758 while they were typically higher from 1759 to 1776. The period of largest price fluctuation coincided with the Seven Years War from 1754 to 1763. War disrupted trade, but the War of Austrian Succession from 1740 to 1748 seems to have had limited impact. The American War of Independence began in 1774 and interrupted a period of stable prices that had begun in 1769. In 1802 Baltic flax prices were £63 a ton, nearly double those of 1792. Prices rose during the Napoleonic wars as the French restricted access to Continental flax, but after Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812, flax prices fell until 1832.[38]

[36] Margaret Spufford, 'Fabric for Seventeenth-Century Children and Adolescents', *Textile History*, 34 (2003), 47-63 (pp. 47-53).
[37] My thanks to John Styles for this reference.
[38] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, p. 223; Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 71, 78.

After manufacture or import, the linens needed to be distributed. Wide distribution networks enabled even those living in isolated rural areas to purchase linens from continental Europe, Ireland or Britain. The purchase and distribution of Irish linen in England has been subject to more scholarly attention than linen of other origins. Irish linen was bought by English customers from Dublin in the first part of the eighteenth century, with more direct trade via Ulster, the main centre of production, in the later eighteenth century. Many buyers came from Bristol, Chester and Liverpool. The bleachers and merchants J. and J. Richardson received orders from England ranging between £11,000 of linen and flax from Marshall's of Leeds, to small orders of £50 to £100 worth of goods from shopkeepers demonstrating that small English traders also bought goods directly from Ireland in the 1810s and 1820s. Over the eighteenth century customers increasingly bought directly from bleachers who ran large-scale operations, cutting out the need for merchants. Much of the cloth was bought by wholesale linen drapers in London. Linens were also taken to English fairs for sale.[39] Scottish weavers sold to English purchasers at fairs in Scotland until the 1740s, then via merchants. Direct wholesale trade between manufacturers and linen drapers grew over the eighteenth century.[40]

Linen, whatever the origin, was sold from warehouses, fairs, shops and by chapmen on horse or foot. Margaret Spufford used seventeenth-century chapmen's probate inventories to reveal that chapmen with horses had by far the largest quantities of linens in their packs, up to 99 per cent of contents, while packmen on foot were more likely to carry no linens, but some had packs which were 69 per cent linen goods. Chapmen helped to distribute linens across England even in remote areas and provided credit for customers. Their goods came from major London linen importers and sites of manufacture. There was little specialisation in local goods. It appears that some drapers and wealthier chapmen employed other chapmen to distribute goods for them.[41] Anne Buck identified a similar supply chain in the eighteenth century. Manufacturers sold to London dealers, who sold to provincial drapers. 'Travelling merchants' sold textiles bought at cloth fairs to shopkeepers and

[39] Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade*, pp. 88-90, 96, 108-09; Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 57-58, 186-87, 252-53, 256.
[40] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 86-91; Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, p. 53.
[41] Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), pp. 45, 49, 51-58, 69-75, 78-83, 85, 90-92, 113-16.

chapmen for merchants in Northern England. Linen drapers sold goods to pedlars who Buck and Spufford considered essential in supplying isolated areas.[42] Styles emphasised the importance of significant increases in the numbers of small shops over the eighteenth century in improving plebeian access to textiles.[43]

## Consumption of Linen

Once purchased, the uses of linen were myriad. As previously noted, linen was used for clothing, shirts and shifts, gowns, petticoats, waistcoats, breeches, aprons, drawers, caps, night caps, night shirts, ruffles, lace, swaddling, clouts and other items of infant clothing; textile construction, thread, garment linings and stiffenings, inkle and tape; household textiles, sheets, pillow covers, table cloths, napkins, towels, mattress covers, sacking bottoms, window and bed curtains and for commercial purposes as sacks, wrappers, money bags, cart covers, rope, twine and sailcloth. Historiography on the consumption of linen focuses on cleanliness, female responsibility, changing patterns of ownership, regional and occupational differences and how quickly the use of cotton replaced that of linen.[44] These topics help to clarify why English demand for linen remained high and increased during the eighteenth century. This thesis brings together these separate historiographical strands to assess the consumption of linen as a whole.

The consensus among historians is that whiteness of linens was prized. Linen shirts and shifts were visible in everyday dress and multiple accessories were also made from linen, for example caps, stocks and handkerchiefs. Therefore the whiteness of linen mattered. Georges Vigarello sparked the debate over the significance of linen with his study of French cleanliness, arguing that washing was believed to be dangerous to the body and that at the end of the Middle Ages washing of linen was substituted for washing of the body. As this concept gained wide acceptance, clean linen was considered to show ‘refinement’ and indicate status because it was expensive to purchase and difficult to maintain. Vigarello emphasised that the idea that linen ‘washed’ the skin through humoural regulation, only faded slowly in France.[45] Daniel Roche agreed that cleanliness of linen contributed to respectability

[42] Anne Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1979), pp. 198-200.
[43] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 138-39, 146-59.
[44] Ibid., pp. 128-132, 347; Styles, ‘What Were Cottons For?’, pp. 318-21.
[45] Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness*, for example pp. 7-37, 41-92.

and stated that by 1700, clean linen was expected for all individuals in France. He suggested that the differentiation between rich and poor occurred through quantity, quality and whiteness of linen.[46]

Vigarello's elite focus is also challenged by Virginia Smith and Styles who contend that the cleanliness of linen was an important sign of decency for the middling and lower sorts. Cleanliness was relative, it might be up to three weeks before a plebeian changed and washed their shirt or shift. However the English were considered remarkable for the standard of dress worn by the poor, including their widespread use of clean linens.[47] Susan North's rigorous examination of 600 works of conduct literature and medical texts showed that cleanliness was considered good manners from the beginning of the seventeenth century, but that the cleanliness of clothing was of little interest in popular medical literature until the 1760s and 1770s, when ideas of the relationship between linen and cleanliness changed. North stressed that William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1769) was the first popular health text to promote the idea that clothing should be kept clean to prevent it from infecting the body with disease, while naval and medical texts first noted the medical importance of clean linen earlier in the decade. However even in the sixteenth century, clothing was considered to spread the plague. North therefore locates the popular belief in the connection between linen and health in England later than Vigarello suggests it emerged in France.[48]

Female responsibility for the provision and cleanliness of linen is also the subject of consensus.[49] Amanda Vickery observed that women were almost universally responsible for the management of linen, including purchasing, making it up, laundering and marking. They provided linen for male family members even those

[46] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 159-71.
[47] Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 197-98; Virginia Smith, *Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 191-94; Styles, *Dress of the People,* pp. 19-29, 71-73, 77-79.
[48] Susan North, 'Dress and Hygiene in Early Modern England: A Study of Advice and Practice' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2012), pp. 84, 90-91, 97-102, 133, 141-43.
[49] Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 84, 88; Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 155; Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, pp. 104, 118-19; Carole Shammas, 'The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America', *Journal of Social History*, 14:1 (1980) 3-24 (pp. 5, 10, 18).

living independently.[50] Aileen Ribeiro agrees with Vickery that it was common for women and girls of all ranks to make shirts and shifts for themselves and family members.[51] Another aspect of female responsibility for linens was laundering, work which maintained the decency of the household as suggested by Vickery, a physically strenuous task.[52] Styles notes that some plebeian women paid for the service indicating how exhausting it was.[53] Women also participated in linen manufacture, widely cultivating and dressing flax and spinning. Jane Gray posits that Irish women's flax spinning was undervalued and their low wages 'contributed an unremunerated input to the overall value of the Irish linen trade'. She suggests that gender was a key determinant of the rate and efficiency of proto-industrialisation because cheap female labour inhibited the development of linen manufacture in countries where women were responsible for a greater number of stages of production.[54]

Changes in the material culture of the home have been a major research thread for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A study of linen during the long eighteenth century therefore needs to consider patterns of change and factors that led to differences in ownership of goods that have already been identified. Probate inventories, lists of goods owned by the deceased, have been used to quantify change. Probate inventories survive in their millions to the mid-eighteenth century and later in a few regions. They can therefore be used to show large scale changes in domestic material culture and practice. Lorna Weatherill's seminal work *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* revealed significant changes in domestic life, with an increase in the number of people using books, clocks and looking glasses, for example alongside the introduction of hot drinks equipment in

[50] Amanda Vickery, 'His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, Supplement 1, (2006), 12-38 (pp. 24, 27-31); Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 13, 58-64 115, 118-22, 128, 153, 296-300.
[51] Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe 1715-1789*, revised edn (London: Yale University Press, 2002),pp. 72-73. See also Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 183.
[52] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London: Methuen, 1989), pp. 220-22; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 13-14, 122.
[53] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 80-82.
[54] Gray, 'Irish, Scottish and Flemish Linen Industries', pp. 159-86; Jane Gray, *Spinning the Threads of Uneven Development: Gender and Industrialization in Ireland during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), p. 108

the 1690s.[55] Joe Harley's research identifies a similar arc of change amongst pauper inventories decades later, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.[56] The work of Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Andrew Hann and Darron Dean acts as a reminder that there was no universal progressive improvement in material circumstances. The quantity and range of goods owned by the Cornish declined as the county grew poorer. Linen is considered a 'traditional' good in these accounts of change because bed linens were already widely used in the early seventeenth century, although Weatherill includes table linen in her analysis of unusual and new goods.[57] 'Traditional' is a convenient conceptual descriptor, yet no evidence has emerged of linen being considered a 'traditional' good by contemporaries. Notably English probate inventories rarely list clothing, therefore these studies are most useful for their perspectives on household linens. Varied methods have been applied to inventories to uncover changes in the consumption of linen.

Carole Shammas and Paul Glennie placed importance on the total inventory value of linen in inventories. Shammas argued that the status of linen declined during the seventeenth century: it was the 'most expensive consumer item' in up to 15.9 per cent of 'average' inventories in Oxfordshire for 1550 to 1591, declining to 0.8 per cent or less in Worcestershire for 1669 to 1670 and 0.7 per cent for Massachusetts in 1774. There were similar declines for the poor and affluent.[58] However, comparing two English counties with America at different time periods of dramatically different lengths risks producing misleading results. Furthermore Glennie notes that that the apparent declining importance of linen was 'overstated' by Shammas due to the decline in textile prices after 1650. Glennie found that linen wealth, the percentage of the total inventory value consisting of linen, only decreased for one occupational group – husbandmen – between 1610 and 1699. In contrast yeoman, tradesmen and craftsmen had relatively stable linen wealth, while labourer's linen wealth increased,

[55] Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 26.
[56] Joe Harley, 'Material Wealth or Material Poverty? A Regional Study of the Material Lives of the Poor, c.1670-1834', 'British History in the Long Eighteenth Century' seminar, Institute of Historical Research, 21 January 2015.
[57] Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), pp. 116-20; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, p. 28.
[58] Shammas, 'The Domestic Environment', pp. 6-11, 22.

convincingly contradicting Shammas' findings.[59] Overton et al. also disagree with Shammas' argument for the declining importance of linen, stating that it was 'one of the most important categories of domestic goods'. They identified a 30 per cent rise in the number of sheets owned in Kent from 1660 to 1749.[60] Weatherill similarly identified an increase in linen goods. Despite the fact that few inventories itemised linens, table linens along with looking glasses were the only two unusual goods 'frequently recorded' in inventories of less than £25 showing that table linen was used across society and had not declined in importance.[61]

Spufford identified an increase in living standards and domestic 'comfort' during the seventeenth century from increasing quantities of linens in inventories. She argued for the importance of this 'minor revolution', stating that the change affected 'more people' than Neil McKendrick's concept of a 'consumer revolution' in the late-eighteenth century.[62] Peter Earle similarly associated changing household goods with improved standards at home. He argued that Peter Thornton's 'true comfort' appeared in middle class houses in England in the eighteenth century and that linen was one of the goods that created comfort.[63] There is some disparity between historians over the quantities of linens owned. Daniel Roche stated that huge quantities of linen were owned in France in 1789, citing averages of twenty-four shirts owned by the lower sorts, fifty to sixty pieces for the middling sorts and hundreds for the rich from probate inventories.[64] Roche's results are incongruous with the work of North, Spufford, Styles and Smith who all suggest that one or two shirts were the most basic clothing requirements for the poor in England during the eighteenth century, a far leap from Roche's twenty-four shirts owned by members of the lower sorts.[65] The quantity of linens owned had implications for lifestyle in terms of cleanliness and respectability. However judging standards of living by increased ownership of linen is challenging because such assessments are based on a modern

[59] Paul Glennie, 'The Social Shape of the Market for Domestic Linens in Early Modern England', working paper for 'Clothing and Consumption in England and America 1600-1800', Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), 1992, pp. 6, 15.
[60] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption,* p. 109.
[61] Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour,* pp. 80-83, 107-09, 207.
[62] Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, pp. 108-18, 125-29, 144, 146.
[63] Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 291.
[64] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 169.
[65] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 65, 69, 74-76; Smith, *Clean*, pp. 191, 194; Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England and the Accuracy of Gregory King', *EHR*, 53:4 (2000), 677-705 (p. 678); Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 79-80.

rather than an early-modern mind-set. In the course of this project contemporary references to a rise in living standards due to the ownership of more linens have not been located. But undoubtedly the ownership of higher numbers of linens made life easier; hence the middling sort owned more changes of underwear than the poor.

Several scholars have illustrated the influence of region and occupation on domestic material culture. Weatherill's analysis revealed regional variation in ownership of linen with some urban/rural differences. Differences in administrative processes by county could have influenced this finding: it could have been more likely that table linens were itemised in particular counties. Weatherill's data also suggested that ownership of table linens increased with total inventory value and total number of household goods.[66] Glennie similarly identified regional and occupational differences in linen ownership during the period 1600 to 1749. Linen wealth was higher in Hertfordshire at 11 to 17 per cent of household wealth compared to 9 to 10 per cent in Bristol. The labourers in Glennie's sample for 1670 to 1699 had the highest proportion of their wealth in linen at 35 per cent compared to husbandmen at 28 per cent and yeomen at 23 per cent.[67]

Comparison of Kent and Cornwall by Overton et al. also revealed significant regional differences. They stated that the 'ownership of linen provides the greatest single contrast between Kent and Cornwall', with residents of Kent choosing to spend 'a significant part of their disposable income on linen, a "traditional" and familiar commodity'.[68] While the number of pieces of linen increased in Kent to 1750, the quantity in Cornish inventories declined. The declining material standards in Cornish homes reflected the growing poverty of the county. Overton et al. concluded that consumer change was not speedy or universal. It focused on traditional goods like linen, not new or unusual goods and there were stronger correlations between wealth and the ownership of goods such as linens and upholstered furniture than window curtains and hot drinks.[69] The revelation that consumer changes can be read more accurately through traditional goods than unusual or new goods emphasises the value of a study like this that examines the sources of demand for one of these traditional goods.

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[66] Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 27, 76-78, 156, 168, 184, 186, 188.
[67] Glennie, 'Clothing and Consumption', pp. 15-16.
[68] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, p. 119.
[69] Ibid., pp. 108-11, 118-20, 142-43.

Locality and status are essential determinants of the consumption of linens, so they are examined here. Sources for Cornwall, Durham, Kent, the Deanery of St Albans, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, London, Somerset, Worcestershire and Yorkshire are used and there is a direct comparison of regional differences in Chapter 4. There is no urban or rural bias. Both feature in Chapters 4 and 6, Chapters 1 and 5 focus on urban experience and Chapters 2, 3 and 7 more on rural communities. Plebeians, the poor and the middling sorts are the main focus of the thesis, representing the bulk of the population. The thesis examines status and locality in order to locate the experiences of individuals and reveal how they fitted into broader regional trends.

Finally, connections between the linen and cotton industries and the timing of the replacement of linens by cottons has been an important focus of scholarly interest. Historians have identified links between the development of the cotton and the linen industries in terms of training a workforce, the substitution of printed linens and cotton-linens for printed calicoes during the calico bans of 1701 to 1774, the provision of capital and finally the contribution of the proto-industrial linen industry to industrialisation.[70] There is a consensus that cotton manufacture competed with linen from the late eighteenth century. Only Styles has undertaken quantitative research on when plain cottons replaced plain linens. His findings indicate that this only happened after 1825.[71] Peter Solar identified multiple factors that led to the long-term decline of linen manufacturing during the nineteenth century: a significant reduction in the price of raw cotton while flax prices were comparatively high from 1790 to 1839; the slower mechanisation of linen, lagging a minimum of 10 years behind cotton; the greater care needed in mechanised linen spinning because flax fibres were more likely to break than cotton; costs added by wet-spinning and finally the requirement that linen power looms should have vibrating rollers to keep the tension of flaxen yarn equal, which required more labour, further increasing costs.[72]

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[70] Collins and Ollerenshaw, 'The European Linen Industry', pp. 16-18; Lemire, 'Transforming Consumer Custom', pp. 187-207; Gray, 'Irish, Scottish and Flemish Linen Industries', pp. 159-62.
[71] Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry*, pp. 11, 126-27; Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 180-81, 239, 243; Gray, 'Irish, Scottish and Flemish Linen industries', p. 165; Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 8, 24; Styles, 'What Were Cottons For?', pp. 318-21.
[72] Peter Solar, 'The Linen Industry in the Nineteenth Century' in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, ed. by David Jenkins, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), II, 809-23 (pp. 814-15); Solar, 'The Triumph of Cotton in Europe', Seminar, Utrecht University, 22 March 2012 <http://vkc.library.uu.nl/vkc/seh/research/Lists/Seminar%20Program/DispForm.aspx?ID=76> [accessed 10 February 2015], pp. 4, 7-10. See also Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 233, 326; Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 134, 164.

There is also consensus that wages influenced the fortunes of the cotton and linen trades, with higher wages leading workers to switch to the cotton industry, resulting in correspondingly rising wages for linen workers, sometimes leading to renewed mobility between the two.[73]

Beverly Lemire argues that the success of cotton was price led, that cotton was widely used when it was cheaper in the 1680s due to the English East India Company's (EEIC) deliberate low pricing policy which led to large-scale consumer moves from linen to cotton. Lemire states that these moves also occurred when there were linen scarcities and high linen prices during times of war from 1740 to 1748 and 1756 to 1763 and the development of mechanised cotton production from the 1760s. Lemire considers the 1760s to be a key decade, sparking the only permanent change to the widespread use of cotton. However economic determinism masks nuanced consumer choice. Price was not the sole determinant in Lemire's case study of the Hudson Bay trading company. Even during the years when the cheapest fabrics were cottons, linens were still purchased in significant quantities which must relate to consumer preferences for quality and perhaps other material characteristics, such as durability.[74]

Social and cultural expectations and aspirations also had a significant influence on choice. Giorgio Riello emphasised that 'familiarisation' with cotton was necessary in Europe before it became widely adopted and that printed calicoes and cotton-linens were popularised before cottons for underwear. Printed cottons offered cheap fashion through their variety of designs and superior colourfastness to linen.[75] Styles also highlights social and cultural influences on the different rates of adoption of cottons and cotton-linens during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His analysis of criminal records showed that printed cottons overtook printed linens in popularity from the 1770s despite their higher values. Similarly, counterpanes show the same chronology. In contrast, fustians and thicksets used for male garments, declined from the 1760s due to changes in the style of male coats, more suited to wool. Fustians only regained popularity for jackets in the 1810s. Nankeen was particularly popular because it mimicked expensive buckskin a fashionable

[73] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 239, 243; Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, p. 8.
[74] Lemire, 'Transforming Consumer Custom', pp. 191-93, 200-06; Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 98-99.
[75] Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 110, 113-16, 130-31, 134.

material for men's breeches. Styles posits that the 1770s was a key decade for the growth of cotton with the repeal of the calico ban in 1774 alongside the first mechanised production of cotton warps. In contrast, cotton shirting and sheeting were resisted by the majority of consumers until 1825 due to the superior durability of linen.[76]

Robert DuPlessis has also shown the complexity of the adoption of cottons over linens through analysis of merchants' probate inventories in Philadelphia and Montreal in the 1680s and 1690s and from 1770 to 1774. The quantity and value of linen in the inventories declined by a third in Philadelphia, while the quantity and value of linen increased in Montreal by a third and a quarter respectively. Linens lost out to cottons and calicoes in Philadelphia, while in Montreal, woollens rather than linens suffered from the popularity of cottons. Differences were caused by changes in fashion, trade with Native Americans and Montreal's declining wealth.[77] There were also shifts from hempen and flaxen cloth to cotton in commercial textiles. During the 1810s Philadelphian merchants began to use cotton to bag goods rather than flax or hemp.[78] These authors represent the complexities of the triumph of cotton over linen, agreeing that decorative cottons overtook linens for outerwear faster than plain cottons replaced linens for underwear, the bed and the table.

## Methodology

Interdisciplinary approaches are required to fully engage with daily experiences of linen to uncover its production and consumption, the meanings constructed around the textile and why it continued to be used despite the growth of cotton. Methodologies from social, cultural, textile and design history are applied. The thesis contributes to a growing body of innovative interdisciplinary scholarship on single materials which cut through both well-established and more recent areas of research to integrate understandings of the past.[79] Human and object life cycles are juxtaposed in the thesis to analyse co-dependent activities and processes rather

[76] Styles, 'What were Cottons for?', pp. 307, 312-25.
[77] Robert DuPlessis, 'Transatlantic Textiles: European Linens in the Cloth Culture of Colonial North America', in *The European Linen Industry*, 123-37 (pp. 127-31).
[78] Michelle M. Mormul, 'The Linen and Flaxseed Trade of Philadelphia, 1765 to 1815' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Delaware, 2010), p. 297.
[79] Harvey Green, *Wood: Craft, Culture, History* (London: Penguin, 2007); Roze Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Beverly Lemire, *Cotton* (Oxford: Berg, 2011); Riello, *Cotton*.

than focusing on one facet of daily life. Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff emphasised the importance of studying objects throughout their lives – their production, sale, purchase, initial use and the on-going histories of reuse, misuse and disuse.[80] Stages in the life cycle of a linen shirt were growing, harvesting and preparing the flax; spinning, weaving, bleaching, sale if it was not homespun; making, wearing, washing, mending and eventual discarding or repurposing, perhaps with its final incarnation as rags used to make paper.

Alongside these 'object biographies', human life cycles are considered. While life cycle has been used as an analytical tool in histories of textiles and fashion, this thesis is the first major study structured around the human life cycle.[81] Use and responsibilities for the maintenance of linen differed by gender, age and number of children, thus making life cycle a valuable means of reconstructing domestic activities and temporalities. Linen offered a backdrop to everyday life, on tables as people came together to celebrate important life events and on bodies as people worked, walked, slept, ate, socialised and prayed. Furthermore, a life cycle approach provides a means of integrating different categories of textiles that are rarely analysed alongside each other: clothes and household furnishings together with rarely studied commercial linens.[82]

Object and human life cycles can diverge in multiple places, for example when linen yarn was sold to a weaver, a shirt was pawned, or a ragged shirt was used to make paper. Uncovering the reasons that linen continued to be used so extensively through the eighteenth century and on into the nineteenth requires interrogation of how flaxen objects were created and used and whether human relationships with linens changed during the life cycle. Furthermore, reflecting on objects in terms of their life cycle makes it possible to think about them 'in transit' rather than as the static and perhaps even invulnerable things suggested by sources such as inventories. The life cycle approach also bridges the common disciplinary separation

[80] Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', pp. 3-63 and Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', pp. 64-91, in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[81] For example, Edwina Ehrman, 'Dressing Well in Old Age: The Clothing Accounts of Martha Dodson, 1746-1765', *Costume*, 40 (2006), pp. 28-37; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 229-45.
[82] A few scholars do combine the two, for example, Riello, *Cotton*; Styles, 'What were Cottons for?', pp. 307-26.

between economic history approaches and the analysis of consumption through social, cultural and design history methodologies.

The human life cycle is used to structure the thesis. Key life stages have been chosen to explore the role of linen as a daily necessity, subject to changing use across the life cycle, as well as a material marker of life events. These are Chapter 1, infancy; Chapter 2, childhood; Chapter 3, production and use in family life; Chapters 4 to 6 cover aspects of adult daily life, decency, logistics and emotion. The final chapter focuses on burial practice. Aside from Chapter 3, analysis of object life cycles is not linear. Chapters consider different stages, for example production and sale in Chapter 2 and divergences between human and object life cycles in Chapter 6.

The concept of 'materiality' underpins the thesis because the material properties of flax fibres determined the use of linen cloth. Considering materiality is therefore essential to the identification of the causes of the retention of linen over the long eighteenth century. Within anthropology, the term 'materiality' has been used to describe both the material or physical world of artefacts and the physical qualities of the materials that form these objects.[83] The thesis uses materiality as Daniel Miller suggests, to 'try and understand which attributes are salient for the population ... and why and at what times'.[84] For a history of linen this means asking which properties of flax and linen cloth were important to people during the long eighteenth century, why and how they affected the use and meanings of linen. Materiality has been considered by textile and fashion historians.[85] This thesis pushes understandings of the materiality of linen further by applying the concept to commercial linens and through in-depth analysis of differences between different types of flax fibres and hemp. The fact that flax was a plant that produced long fibres fundamentally determined the use of linen because long fibres produce a strong, durable yarn. The

[83] For example Tim Ingold, 'Materials Against Materiality', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14:1 (2007), pp. 1-16; Daniel Miller, 'Stone age or plastic age?', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14:1 (2007), pp. 23-27; *Materiality*, ed. by Daniel Miller (Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 2005).
[84] Miller, 'Stone age or plastic age?', p. 24.
[85] For example, Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 188-89, 193, 197; North, 'Dress and Hygiene', for example pp. 84-147; Riello, *Cotton*, for example p. 116; Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, p. 110; Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 113-23, 130; John Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and Their Furnishing in Eighteenth-Century London', in *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, ed. by John Styles and Amanda Vickery (London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 61-80; Philip A. Sykas, 'Fustians in Englishmen's Dress: From Cloth to Emblem', *Costume*, 43:1 (2009), pp. 1-18 (p. 4).

fibres are stronger when wet than dry. Thus in the long eighteenth century flaxen cloth outlasted silk and wool with regular use, could be washed thoroughly and allowed everyone, potentially, to have clean clothes.

The ubiquity of linen during the long eighteenth century, alongside its commercial and social significance, means that all aspects cannot be considered in detail, particularly large-scale commercial linen production and the long-distance trade in linens. These essential contexts have therefore been provided within the introduction. It would also be impossible to cover all the varieties of clothing, domestic and commercial linens because they were so numerous. The main focus in the thesis is on plain linens in the form of underwear (shirts and shifts) and bed sheets, while table linens and towels also feature. The poor, plebeians and the middling sorts are the main human subjects because they constituted the majority of the population. Finally, whilst a narrative of the preparation, collection and gifting of linen on marriage is widely recognised in collective memory, the practice is singularly absent from the documents examined here and therefore this practice is not discussed. North experienced the same difficulties.[86]

Quantitative and qualitative approaches are both used to explore individuals' actions within different social and regional contexts. The ubiquity of linen requires multiple sources to extract the variety of relationships that people had with it. The sources used are account books, burial registers, criminal proceedings, inventories, novels, objects, pamphlets, a pawnbroker's book, records of overseers of the poor and charities and wills. Crime records and extant objects are used in multiple chapters. The crime records used are the Old Bailey Proceedings and samples of indictments from the Midlands and North England, the latter two collected for John Styles' book *The Dress of the People*.[87] The North of England sample is taken from all extant indictments for thefts of clothing at Quarter Sessions and Assizes in the North and West Riding of Yorkshire for the 1730s, 1750s and 1780s.[88] The Midlands sample is taken from all extant indictments for thefts of clothing at Quarter Sessions and

[86] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 77-78.
[87] Tim Hitchcock, Robert Shoemaker, Clive Emsley, Sharon Howard and Jamie McLaughlin, *et al.*, *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674-1913* (OBP) (<www.oldbaileyonline.org>, version 7.0, 24 March 2012).
[88] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 328.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.3, LMA, Foundling 13396, '1 Gown Striped Cotten'.** The white warps (vertical) are linen, the wefts (horizontal) are cotton, 65x magnification. © Coram

Assizes for Oxfordshire and Worcestershire from 1678 to 1810.[89] Limitations of crime records are various. They only represent crimes that were pursued to prosecution, for offences that the authorities considered worth enforcing, which changed over time. J.A. Sharpe noted that 'any quantification of crime is a risky enterprise' because so many crimes were never reported or prosecuted. However he still considered crime statistics 'useful' if their limitations are recognised and only cautious conclusions are drawn.[90] Robert Shoemaker argued that the Old Bailey Proceedings were 'an intervention in public debates about crime that was fundamentally sympathetic to the views of the City authorities' until 1774. Trial accounts were compressed to fit the publication, for example defence cases were often fully or partially omitted, which Shoemaker suggests was to make the prosecution 'look stronger'. The main impact of these omissions for the thesis is missing data about the textiles.[91] Styles emphasises that Old Bailey court records are valuable sources for material culture histories because they cover a wider social spectrum and chronology than inventories, the main source used for quantitative analysis. However Old Bailey records are most helpful between 1740 and 1800.

[89] Styles, private communication, 26 June 2015.
[90] J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 21, 60-61, 77-91, 100-01.
[91] Robert B. Shoemaker, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings and the Representation of Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of British Studies*, 47:3 (2008), pp. 559-80.

Before these dates, fewer transcripts survive and cases contain less detail. After 1800, the large number of cases meant that less information was given about possessions.[92]

Extant objects are another key source, for example the swatches of textiles contained in the Foundling billet books are used extensively within the thesis. They are used to provoke questions, test ideas, demonstrate characteristics such as weave and quality and develop the reader's visual literacy in the variety of flaxen and hempen cloth used during the long eighteenth century. The majority of objects examined in the thesis have been examined using a portable electronic microscope, the dino-lite AM-413ZT, which magnifies textiles by 60 to 65 times and c.210 times, an essential tool because it allows distinction between linen and cotton. The two textiles can look similar to the eye, however under a microscope, the long shiny flax fibres are distinct from shorter fluffy cotton fibres as figure 0.3 shows. However the dino-lite has limitations. In some instances where the linen is worn and the fibres are broken it is not possible to determine conclusively whether the yarn is cotton or linen.[93] The dino-lite is less powerful than laboratory microscopes and cannot magnify the fibres to a level that would allow identification by examining a single fibre. It can be used to identify wool and silk yarns where this cannot be undertaken by eye, but flax and hemp fibres cannot be distinguished, due to the similarity of the fibre structure, discussed further in Chapter 4.

Another textile analysis technique used by curators and textile practitioners but rarely by historians is thread counting. Thread counting gives the number of warps and wefts in an inch or centimetre and therefore enables comparison of textile quality in extant pieces. In this period, superior quality was usually associated with higher thread counts, resulting in a correspondingly finer fabric. Thread counts were recorded in centimetres and inches when the time constraints of museum appointments allowed, otherwise centimetres were prioritised. Even the finest quality linens from the long eighteenth century had uneven numbers of yarns in different places on the textile, therefore thread counts were taken in three different locations, diagonally when the textile was large enough in order to count different warps and

[92] Styles, 'What Were Cottons for?', p. 310.
[93] Warps are the threads that are held taut on a loom. Wefts are passed over and under the warps to form the textile.

wefts each time. These figures were then averaged out. The mode was used when there were two identical readings, otherwise the mean was used. However, thread count alone can be misleading – the density of the weave influences the number of yarns in a centimetre, therefore average yarn widths were also recorded as another measure of quality. The diameter of five different yarns in each direction were measured using a ruler on the scale of 0.1mm and these were used to provide an 'average' range of yarns, average, because smaller or larger yarns could have been missed. Where a selvage survived these characteristics are described in terms of warp and weft, otherwise vertical and horizontal yarns.[94] When museum regulations and appointment times allowed, all of these characteristics were recorded. This data is provided with the image to provide an ongoing idea of comparative linen qualities and to contribute to the argument when relevant. Other characteristics recorded were weave structure, whether the yarn was plied, the direction in which the yarn was spun, whether there were unbroken fibre bundles or pieces of stem in the textile and the frequency with which these appeared. The vast majority of plain, checked and striped linens were tabby, also known as plain weave.[95] Some coarse linens were produced with a twill weave (see Chapter 5). The majority of linens were produced with single-ply yarn and all linen yarn analysed had a 'z' spin direction for both warp and weft.[96]

Objects like all sources have limitations. Multiple varieties of linen cloth were sold during the long eighteenth century but only a minority of extant linens survive with their original names, usually as swatches collected for categorisation purposes. It is therefore extremely difficult to understand how a coarse osnaburg was different from a coarse English linen. The date of making, maker and users are also generally unknown, meaning that an object's context is lost. Yet extant objects are the very things that were manufactured, traded, used and described. They provide information that cannot be obtained through texts or images.

[94] The selvage is the uncut edge of the textile that runs in the direction of the warp.
[95] The simplest weave, over-one, under-one.
[96] See how in figure 0.3, the direction of the twist runs from the bottom left-hand corner to the top right-hand corner: if you draw a 'z' over it, the twist runs in the same direction as the 'z' while 's' spun yarn runs in the opposite direction. When yarn was plied this is noted. Unbroken fibre bundles were used to consider textile quality and are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## Flax to Cloth: Fibres and Nomenclature

In early-modern Europe five fibres were used for textiles: flax, hemp, wool, silk and cotton. Their material properties determined their uses. Silk has a natural sheen, can be dyed a wide range of colours, drapes well and is wrinkle resistant, properties which made it an attractive fabric for showy clothing and upholstery fabric for the early-modern elite. Silk could not be washed with water in the early-modern period because laundry processes were brutal. Textiles were boiled and bashed with a wooden battledore which damaged silk therefore silk was primarily used for decorative items rather than shirts, shifts and textiles for the table which were required to absorb sweat, spit and food. Wool comes in short fibres (wool) and long fibres (worsted). It is a good insulator, dyes well, is colourfast and drapes well, qualities which meant that it was valued for clothing. Woollen and worsted textiles were not washed in water in the early-modern period because the rough process damaged the finish on the textile. In addition the heat and friction involved in washing felted the fibres and shrunk the cloth. Furthermore wool is prickly, therefore it was mainly used for clothing which did not touch the skin and furnishings although there were exceptions, including a medical school of thought that considered flannel shirts beneficial for the health.[97]

Flax fibres are long. Plants can grow up to 4 feet tall and the fibres run the length of the plant. Flax is 20 per cent stronger when wet than dry, is highly absorbent, a good heat conductor, therefore it is cool to the touch, it bleaches and gains lustre when beaten. It can also be washed without deterioration. However flax creases easily, absorbs dye less effectively than cotton and is less colourfast. These characteristics made flax popular for underwear, sheets and table linens but it was also much used for decorative outer clothing. Hemp fibres are significantly longer than flax fibres. Hemp grew up to 7 feet high in the eighteenth century, therefore fibres could be exceedingly long, producing strong yarn and textiles that could be washed with little damage. Hemp is typically coarser than flax because the taller plant needs stronger fibres to support it. Hemp fibres are stiff and hard to bleach. The coarseness, stiffness and more expensive bleaching process for hemp made it less popular for

[97] Howard L. Needles, *Handbook of Textile Fibers, Dyes & Finishes* (London: Garland STPM Press, 1981), pp. 90, 93; North, *Dress and Hygiene*, pp. 119-47.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figures 0.4 and 0.5, William Salmon, *Botanologia. The English Herbal, or History of Plants* (London 1710-1711), I, p. 363.** Figure 0.4 on the left shows flax grown in the garden, figure 0.5 shows flax grown commercially, with straighter stems due to dense sowing.

clothing and household linens, but it was widely used for purposes where durability was key, including cordage, sails, wrappers and bags.[98]

Cotton has similar properties to flax because they are both made of cellulose. Cotton is highly washable and is again 20 per cent stronger when wet than dry. It dyes well and is colourfast because the fibres have a highly crystalline structure. It also absorbs and de-absorbs moisture easily and is abrasion resistant. These properties made cotton appropriate both for decorative printed or painted garments, plain underwear and household textiles. However cotton has shorter fibres than flax, only a few centimetres long which made it hard to manufacture strong cotton yarn for warps in England until Richard Arkwright developed the water frame in 1769.[99] In summary, only flax, hemp and cotton had the key properties needed for widespread use as underwear, bed and table linens because they could be washed. Flax and cotton were also the only textiles appropriate for surface decoration by means of printing or painting, because they could be bleached to a white ground, accepted dyes and were colourfast.

[98] Needles, *Handbook*, pp. 60-63; William Salmon, *Botanologia. The English Herbal, or History of Plants*, 2 vols (London 1710-1711), I, p. 510.
[99] Needles, *Handbook of Textile Fibers*, pp. 55-60.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.6, Crommelin, *An Essay Towards Improving the Hempen and Flaxen Manufactures* (Dublin, 1705).** F is a mallet to brake flax

**Figure 0.7, Author using eighteenth or nineteenth-century brake**

Linen is made from fibres from the flax plant (figures 0.4 and 0.5). Flaxseed (linseed) was sown densely in March or April, two to four bushels per acre on flat ground. One set of contemporary directions advised 'wet the underside of your thumb and see if it take up of the seed sown 14 or 15 seeds at once' to check that the seed was sown sufficiently densely. Dense crops produced straighter flax plants with finer fibres (figure 0.5). The crop had to be weeded when it was four inches high. If both the seed and fibre were needed, the flax was pulled or harvested when the entire stem was yellow, but for finer fibres flax was pulled when the stem started to yellow and a few leaves had fallen off the bottom of the stem. If the seed was needed, the flax was dried then rippled to separate the seed bolls. The flax was then retted (rotted): it was either submerged in a pond for several days or left for several weeks on grass and turned regularly to break up the outer surface of the stem. When a stem could be snapped and the central hollow core removed, the flax was sufficiently retted and was dried.[100]

The flax was then prepared in three stages: first, breaking, which broke the hard inner core into small pieces and loosened the outer stalk; second, scutching or swingling which removed the remaining core and began to separate the fibres; third, heckling or combing the flax to remove matted fibres and align the fibres for spinning.[101] Flax breaking technology appears to have expanded during the

[100] Berkshire Record Office (BRO), D/Ewe EP, Anon., 'Derections to Sow Fflaxe'; The Commissioners and Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland, *Directions for Raising Flax* (Edinburgh, 1772), pp. 2-9, 12-14; Richard Bradley, *Dictionarium Botanicum* (London, 1728), 'Linum'; Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, first edition, 2 vols (Dublin, 1780), I, p. 163.
[101] Adrienne D. Hood, *The Weaver's Craft: Cloth, Commerce and Industry in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 50; John Houghton, *A Collection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, 4 vols (London, 1727-28), II, pp. 391-95.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.8, British Museum (BM), 1877,0113.373, William Hincks 'The Common Method of Beetling, Scutching and Hackling the Flax', *Irish Linen Industry* series, etching, 340 x 415mm, London, 1791.** © Trustees of the British Museum

eighteenth century from the mallet (figure 0.6) used in household production to the larger brake which could process more fibre, valuable for workshop production shown in figure 0.7.[102] Scutching was the next stage after breaking, using a wooden knife (figure 0.8) to beat the flax, supported by a wooden board. The purpose was to remove remaining pieces of stem, particularly the inner core and in the process to begin to separate the finest fibres. The fibres were then beetled, which is the task being undertaken by the girl hitting flax stems on a rock with a rounded hammer in figure 0.8.[103] Finally the fibres were heckled prior to spinning using a heckle (figure 0.10). Figure 0.9 illustrates the purpose of heckling.[104] The quantity of material is reduced significantly, but fine clean fibres are prepared that are suitable for spinning fine yarn. Progressively fine heckles were gradually used to separate out the finest fibres, the line or tear, from the coarse leftovers, known as tow, hards, or hurds. The material left in the heckle can be seen in figure 0.10.

[102] Brenda Collins, personal correspondence, 27 February 2015.
[103] Clarkson, 'The Linen Industry', p. 477.
[104] My thanks to Zephram and Johannes Zinzendorf for giving me the opportunity to try flax processing on their collection of eighteenth and nineteenth-century machinery and further thanks to Linda Eaton who made it possible.

**Figure 0.9, Scutched flax on the left, heckled flax on the right.** This was the author's first attempt at scutching and braking therefore her scutched fibres are rougher and more matted than when worked by an expert.

**Figure 0.10, Author using heckle from the late eighteenth century.** What will become the tear fibres are pulled through the heckle. The tow is left in the heckle.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.11, Museum of London, 36.17d, baby cap belonging to the Duke of Gloucester, Queen Anne's son, linen, 1689-1700.** © Museum of London

Thread count per inch: 144 x 122

John Houghton who published on husbandry processes advised that the tow from the first heckling which was the coarsest fibre, should be used for 'fine *hurden* cloth', the fibres left in the heckle from the second heckling would make 'fine middling cloth' and the tear, held in the heckler's hand the 'best linen'.[105] It is impossible to tell whether surviving linens were made from tear or finer tow fibres for middling cloth which makes it challenging to uncover the type of fibre used in extant linens. Flax dressing processes were more refined when the fibre was going to be used for cambrics and lawns.[106] The difference between tow and tear is essential to understanding the different qualities of linens used in eighteenth-century England. Tow was rougher, coarse tow had small pieces of stalk remaining, even in woven textiles (see Chapter 5) and produced coarse textiles used for clothing, in the home and for commercial activities, while the finest tear was used to produce transparent linen, such as that in figure 0.11. Hemp fibres were also used to make 'linens', a term widely applied to hempen cloth by contemporaries and accepted by historians, due to the similar cultivation and processing of flax and hemp fibres and their overlapping properties.[107] Hemp processing also produced tow and tear. The doctor William Salmon stated that hemp plants that flowered, classified as 'male' in the period, were tougher plants, harder to peel, with coarser fibres that were often used for cordage. The plants that produced no seed known as 'female' plants were used for tear because they were 'tenderer and weaker plant[s]'.[108]

Hemp was used for textiles for commercial purposes and also for clothing and household textiles by poorer members of society. It can be difficult to know when hempen rather than flaxen cloth was used because it is rarely noted. In this thesis it is assumed that in the majority of instances flax rather than hemp was used for linen. Flaxen linens were imported in their hundreds of thousands of yards from Ireland rather than hempen linens – the hemp industry failed there. It is not known how many counties other than Norfolk and Suffolk produced hempen rather than flaxen cloth for local use, therefore the thesis errs on the side of current knowledge and

[105] Houghton, *A Collection*, II, pp. 391-96.
[106] Commissioners and Trustees, *Directions*, pp. 16-20.
[107] Bailey, *Dictionarium Domesticum*, see OC: 'A Method of Brewing ALE or OCTOBER Beer, from NOTTINGHAM' which calls for canvas 'or other coarse linen bags'; Clarkson, 'Linen Industry', pp. 476, 481; Evans, *East Anglian Linen Industry*, pp. 9-10, 12, 27, 141; Houghton, *A Collection*, pp. 378; Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America 1650-1870* (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007), p. 278; North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 25-26, 175.
[108] Salmon, *Botanologia*, I, p. 510.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.12, North Yorkshire Record Office, ZBA.371, The Weaver's Guide. Linen designs of Ralph Watson of Aiskew, late eighteenth century, number 25, 'Snow and Slete'.** A diaper design.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.13, ZBA.371, number 31, 'the Planting in the Forest'.** A damask design.

Figures 0.12 and 0.13 © North Yorkshire Record Office

considers most linens discussed to be flaxen. When the term 'linen' is used in the thesis it refers to flaxen cloth in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7. Flax and hemp are discussed together in Chapters 4 and 5, so when the term 'linen' is used in those chapters it includes both fibres. Hempen cloth is always identified when known.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain further discussion of the flax and hemp dilemma. After heckling, the fibres were then spun into yarn, bleached, woven into cloth and bleached again (see Chapter 3). The application of water or spit to the yarn during spinning was common to create a smooth yarn. Coarser yarns were not always bleached before weaving. The majority of linen was woven in tabby. Some was woven in decorative weaves: damask, diaper and huckaback were commonly used for table linen. The three weave types have floating threads to create designs. Diapers (figure 0.12) have a small repeating pattern across the textile, often in a lattice. The patterns on damask diapers are formed with a satin weave while twill diapers use a twill weave to create the design.[109] A huckaback weave has a tabby ground with a small repeating design on the whole textile.[110] Huckaback was also used for towels and was a coarser and stronger textile than the other weaves. Damask designs (figure 0.13) are the most complex, took the longest to weave in the long eighteenth century and thus were the most expensive, while huckabacks were typically cheapest. Spinning and weaving are explored in greater detail in Chapter 3 and Appendix 2. As already discussed, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the majority of this work was done by hand. Some linens were also calendered or pressed through rollers to make them 'smooth, even and glossy'.[111]

A vast array of flaxen and hempen textiles were available in England from 1678 to 1810, designed for a variety of purposes. The qualities of linen used varied enormously across society, but it is often difficult to understand these distinctions through texts or objects. A 1691 inventory and linen purchase book for 1797 to 1805 will serve here to indicate the range of linens available during the period. The inventory of Robert Burridge (table 0.7), of St Andrew, Worcester who died in 1691 listed only his shop goods and a horse. He may have been a shopkeeper or a travelling chapman.[112] Nearly all of his goods were fabrics, haberdashery or clothing. Most were linen, cotton, hempen or woollen fabrics. Burridge stocked far more linen than cotton, 129.9 yards of cloth that was definitely just flaxen compared to 13 yards

[109] J.F., *Merchant's Ware-House*, p. 12; Dorothy K. Burnham, *A Textile Terminology: Warp and Weft* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 36. The pattern for satin weaves is over five or more yarns, under one yarn. The thread that goes over the five yarns is the float. Simple twills are over-three under-one, or over-two under-two.
[110] Burnham, *Textile Terminology*, p. 72.
[111] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 184.
[112] Margaret Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, p. 45.

**Table 0.7, Linen goods listed in the inventory of Robert Burridge, 1691**

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 yards ticking | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| 17 yards dyed linen | 0 | 8 | 6 |
| 32 yards dyed linen | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| 5 yards dyed linen | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| 21.25 yards lining | 0 | 10 | 6 |
| 16.5 yards coarse lining | 0 | 13 | 9 |
| 21 yards dyed fustian | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| 12 dozen Inkle | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| 24 ells bagging | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| 23 yards green linsey | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 ells lockeram | 0 | 4 | 8 |
| 7 ell flaxen remnants | 0 | 8 | 9 |
| 7.5 ells dowls | 0 | 9 | 4 |
| 9.75 ells hurden | 0 | 4 | 10 |
| 24 ells hempen | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| 24 ells flaxen cloth | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 8 ells flaxen cloth | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| 8lb thread | 0 | 15 | 0 |

Source: Worcestershire Archive, September 1691, Robert Burridge. 1 ell was 1.2 yards

of calico.[113] In his inventory, linen cloth made from flax was variously termed linen, lining, lockeram, flaxen, dowls (dowlas), with one tow textile, hurden. 'Flaxen' was a specific type of linen cloth, but the differences between flaxen and other linens are unclear, apart from the breadths available and the fact that flaxen was manufactured in England and Ireland in 1695.[114] While many of the differences between eighteenth-century linens have been lost, it is clear that some could be easily substituted for each other when price required. The Glaswegian merchant John Glassford advised his Virginian client not to purchase ¾ Irish (three-quarters of a yard wide) because they were 'so extremely mean and dear' instead advising '¾ German dowlas, which will answer the same purpose, I mean dowlas from 24s. to 30s. per piece, for German dowlas under 24s. is extremely mean and in place of that Scotch dowlas answers, which is better linen'.[115] The 'lining' in Burridge's inventory

[113] The list of goods is not verbatim, the inventory was transcribed for Mark Overton's software and therefore elements of spelling and phrasing may have been lost.
[114] J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open: Or, the Plain Dealing Linnen-Draper* (London, 1696), pp. 15-16.
[115] *Virginia Merchants: Alexander Henderson, Factor for John Glasford at his Colchester Store. His Letter Book of 1758-65,* ed. by Charles and Virginia Hamrick (Athens, Georgia, 1999), p. 272, letter, Alexander Henderson, Colchester, VA to Mr John Glassford, Glasgow, 17 September, 1764. My thanks to John Styles for this reference.

was probably for garment linings, but 'lining' was a common spelling for linen in England during the long eighteenth century.

White linen was used for underwear, bed and table textiles. Dyed linen would have been used for outer clothing. Blue is the most frequently named dyed linen.[116] Dowlas was a coarse flaxen cloth, widely used for underwear for the poor (Chapter 1).[117] In John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* (1748/49), the eponymous heroine's poverty was marked by her dowlas shift and her body linen was changed almost immediately on her entry into a house of prostitution.[118] Dowlas was described as the strongest sort of linen after canvas by J.F. author of *The Merchant's Warehouse Laid Open* (1696) which advised on the uses of linens and cottons and was possibly a piece of English East India Company propaganda to promote cottons.[119] Hemp cloth could describe any quality. Bagging is most likely to have been coarse tow or hemp cloth used for bags or sacks as indicated by the name. Lockeram is the only linen in Burridge's list not discussed in the thesis. It was a coarse linen cloth, first made in Locronan, Brittany and was probably coarser than dowlas.[120] Burridge's inventory was taken in 1691, therefore it is mostly likely that the vast majority of the linens that he sold, possibly even all of them, came from Continent.

Burridge's inventory contained two mixed fibre textiles which included linen: fustian and linsey. Fustian was a napped cloth used for men's clothing. Before the eighteenth century, the term was occasionally used for textiles made of mixtures of woollen and linen yarn, but by the period covered by this thesis it was almost always a fabric made from a combination of cotton and linen yarns. However, it is important to note that 'fustian' was not used contemporaneously for all mixed cotton and linen textiles.[121] Styles has recently identified that during the eighteenth century, the term

[116] Blue linens appear in shop inventories. Kent History and Library Centre (KHLC), probate inventories, CKS/PRC11/36/28, September 1674 James Bown; CKS/PRC11/45/227, March 1681, William Patridge; CKS/PRC11/54/87, June 1690, Edmund Backer; CKS/PRC11/58/121, 1694, William Rumfield; CKS/PRC11/70/224, February 1710, John Clarke. See also *The Account Book of Richard Latham 1724-1767*, ed. by Lorna Weatherill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), for example pp. 26, 38, 45; West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford, 33D80/6/7, Shop book of Stephen Hudson of Fewston, 1751-1759, 11 January, 24 March, 25 April, 25 June, 18, 26 July. My thanks to John Styles for sharing his transcript of the Hudson shop book.
[117] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English language*, 6th edn, 2 vols (London, 1785), I, 'Dowlas'; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 223.
[118] John Cleland, *Fanny Hill* (London: Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2012), pp. 11, 17, 21.
[119] J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House*, p. 8; Styles, private communication, 1 May 2014.
[120] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 279.
[121] Styles, 'What were Cottons for?', p. 322; Sykas, 'Fustians', pp. 1-18.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.14, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14464. '1 Gown [...] Brown and white stript Lincey'.** © Coram

**Table 0.8, Yardage prices for linen and hempen textiles purchased by St Thomas' Hospital 1797-1805**

| Textile name | Width | Used for | Range of prices per yard (d.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Holland | unknown | Sheets | 63 |
| Irish | 4/4 | Surplices | 51-60 |
| Sheeting | 5/4 | Sheets | 28-40 |
| Sheeting | 9/8 | Sheets | 18-26 |
| Bleached and brown Scotch | 4/4 | Blinds | 14 |
| Dowlas | unknown | Sheets | 13-17 |
| Pomerania linen | unknown | Hand towels | 12 |
| Flaxen Russia | unknown | Towels | 9-14 |
| Hempen Russia | unknown | Towels | 6-8 |

Source: LMA, H01/ST/A/126/002/A/001, Linen Books, St Thomas' Hospital, 1797-1805.

'calico' was used to describe pure cotton textiles while a 'cotton' textile was actually a mixed cotton-linen.[122] Ticking was used for bed ticks and could be linen or cotton and linen. Linsey-woolsey, the other mixed fibre textile in Burridge's inventory, was a fabric made from linen and wool used for clothing and furnishings (see Chapter 1). It has a distinctive appearance (figure 0.14) due to the difference in textures between the flaxen and woollen yarn and the bright white of the linen if undyed. The thread

[122] Styles, private correspondence, 1 May 2014.

**Table 0.9, Holland thread counts, for textiles in figures 0.16 and 0.17**

| | Average thread widths vertical (mm) | Average thread widths horizontal (mm) | Thread count per cm: | Thread count per inch: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Checkard | 0.2-0.6 | 0.2-0.7 | 21 x 18 | 54 x 46 |
| Stripe | 0.2-0.6 | 0.1-0.4 | 27.5 x 22 | 69 x 60 |
| Masquerade | 0.1-0.5 | 0.1-0.3 | 24 x 21 | 63 x 52 |
| Marvel | 0.2-0.7 | 0.1-0.8 | 21 x 20 | 53 x 50 |
| Bangall | 0.2-0.4 | 0.2-0.4 | 28 x 24 | 71 x 62 |

Source: Science Museum, 1862.121

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.15, Science Museum, 1862.121, checked and striped Flemish and German linens (possibly also some English linen) collected c.1783-84, page 3, sample 12.** © Science Museum, London

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.16, Science Museum, 1862.121, page 4, samples 1-4.** © Science Museum, London

and inkle in the inventory could also have been linen. Inkle was decorative tape or braid and also a term for linen thread. In this context it must have been braid or tape because the other thread mentioned was sold by weight, a common practice. Haberdashery is not discussed in the thesis.[123]

[123] See Polly Hamilton, 'Haberdashery for Use in Dress, 1550-1800' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wolverhampton, 2007) for discussion of early modern haberdashery; Montgomery,

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.17, V&A, T.49-1969, Infant Shirt, linen, England, eighteenth century.** © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Average thread widths. Vertical: 0.1-0.3mm. Horizontal: 0.1-0.2mm
Thread count per cm: 46 x 44
Thread count per inch: 120 x 120

The linens purchased by St Thomas' Hospital, London from 1797-1805, towards the end of the period covered by this thesis, were also made from flax and hemp (table 0.8). The St Thomas' purchases represent a different range of origins to Burridge's 1691 inventory. Irish, Scottish, Russian and Baltic (Pomeranian) linens dominated, all countries that supplied little flaxen cloth to England in 1691. Table 0.8 shows another crucial piece of information: linens were sold in different widths, for instance 4/4 was a yard wide.[124] Width mattered because it prevented wastage of expensive textiles. If the width was correct, several shirts could be cut out from a piece of cloth without wasting any fabric, if too narrow, a longer length was needed, if too wide, a band of linen would be left at the edge. Either way, the wrong width wasted money.[125] This difference in widths makes it extremely difficult to calculate average prices for a particular type of linen because width had a significant impact on price.

Holland was the finest linen bought by St Thomas' as suggested by its price. 'Holland' is however a cryptic term. It was often used for high quality linen (see

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*Textiles in America*, p. 265. See for example, LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/022, Sub-Committee Minutes 1796-1798.

[124] LMA, H01/ST/A/126/002/A/001, Linen Books, St Thomas' Hospital, 1797-1805.

[125] Anon., *Instructions for Cutting out Apparel for the Poor* (London, 1789) pp. 4-39; A Lady, *The Lady's Economical Assistant, or The Art of Cutting out and Making, The most useful Articles of Wearing Apparel, without Waste; Explained by the Clearest Directions and Numerous Engravings of Appropriate and Tasteful Patterns* [...] *Designed for Domestic Use* (London, 1808), pp. 25-33.

Chapter 4), but this was not always the case. In 1818 it was described as ‘a species of stout shirting’.[126] The textile samples in figures 0.15 and 0.16 are hollands. The ‘Checkard’ holland has a thread count of 21 x 18 per cm and 21 x 20 per cm for the ‘Marvel holland’, (table 0.9) under half the number of warps and wefts of the infant’s shirt in figure 0.17 which has a thread count of 46 x 44 per cm. To contextualise, the widths of the threads ranged from 0.1mm to 0.8mm for the Marvel holland, while the thread widths for the baby shirt were 0.1mm to 0.2mm. Therefore ‘holland’ should not be automatically considered to denote the finest linen. Variation in quality might be due to the fact that the Dutch were European masters of bleaching until c.1750 so ‘holland’ did not necessarily describe the finer linens made in Holland, but could have described linens bleached there.[127] Irish was the next most expensive linen used at St Thomas’ for surplices for the chaplain, while the Scottish linen was significantly cheaper. This distinction echoes the established historiography which suggests that in the late eighteenth century Ireland produced finer linens while Scotland focused on coarse linen. However, by 1818, Irish was described by one author as ‘a species of shirting of heavy fabric, generally made in Ireland’.[128] Bleached and brown Scottish cloth was bought for blinds by St Thomas’. Bleached cloth was typically more expensive because it involved more labour, so when the whiteness of a textile was unimportant, unbleached linens were often used. The bleached Scottish linen was 1 yard wide and cost 14d. per yard in 1801. In 1802 brown linen of the same width was bought at 14d. The brown linen could have been equally expensive for three reasons, firstly a rise in flax prices.[129] Secondly, the brown linen could have been higher quality than the white linen. Finally, the Hospital could have overpaid for the brown linen, or underpaid for the white linen. This example emphasises the difficulties that confront attempts to understand the price of a particular early-modern linen. Sheeting was another specific type of linen, but information on it is limited. It is unclear how it differed from flaxen or dowlas. In 1818

[126] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 258; Alexander Peddie, *The Linen Manufacturer, Warper’s and Weaver’s Assistant* (Glasgow, 1817), p. 370.
[127] Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, p. 86; Mitchell, ‘Linen Damask Production’, pp. 65-70, 84-85, 90-91; Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, pp. 150, 157.
[128] Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*, p. 369.
[129] Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, p. 223; Rimmer, *Marshall’s of Leeds*, p. 71.

sheeting was used for sheets, trousers and logistical purposes – 'packing fine goods'.[130]

Russia or rushey was a coarse cloth made from flax or hemp and used for towels by the hospital. It is not known how the quality changed over the period, but in 1695 flaxen Russia was finer and whiter than the hempen and wore better.[131] It is unclear whether Russia was coarser than dowlas. The flaxen Russia purchased by St Thomas' was likely to have been coarser than the dowlas because the prices were lower. The lower price of hempen Russia reflects the premium paid for flax over hemp. Hempen and flaxen Russia were used by the hospital for towels, dusters, knife cloths and glass cloths.

Burridge's inventory and the St Thomas' Hospital linen book have served to indicate the range of linens widely available at their respective dates. However, they include only a fraction of the linens in use in England across the eighteenth century. The variety of textiles produced in different qualities by different European countries is apparent from the large number of categories in the 1660 Book of Rates listed in Appendix 1. Lawn, cambric, kenting and canvas are also discussed in this thesis. Cambric was a fine linen, lawn a fine, 'delicate' linen and kenting a fine lawn, mainly produced in Kent according to *The Merchant's Ware-House*. These three descriptions are nearly identical and highlight the problems of accessing historic nomenclature. In *The Merchant's Ware-House,* lawns, cambrics and kentings came in overlapping breadths: all three had a 'three quarters and half' breadth. The main stated differences were whether they washed white or not and how they were packed when sold wholesale. Lawns and cambrics used the same quality yarns in 1695. Clear lawn was nearly transparent while the specific properties of long lawn are unknown. Cambrics were used for dress accessories for example, headwear and handkerchiefs. Lawns were used for underwear, aprons and accessories and kentings were used for table linens, accessories and possibly sheets.[132] Canvas

[130] John Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays on the Art of Weaving* (Glasgow, 1808), p. 14; Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*, p. 371.
[131] J.F., *Merchant's Ware-House*, p. 35.
[132] J.F., *Merchant's Ware-House*, pp. 5, 26, 28, 36-38; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, pp. 187, 272, 275; Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, 'Clam - Club head', in *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820* (Wolverhampton, 2007), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820/clam-club-head> [accessed 24 February 2015], also 'Load – Longhee', <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820/load-longhee> [accessed 24 February 2015].

**Table 0.10, The appropriate weight for a hank of yarn used to weave cloth on a 1000 reed 37 inches long**

| | Warp | | Weft | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | oz. | dram | oz. | dram |
| Shirting | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Diaper | 4 | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| Clear / plain lawn | 1 | 15 | 1 | 11 |

Sources: Malloch, *The Weaver's Companion*, 57-60; Peddie, *The Linen Manufacturer, Weaver and Warper's Assistant*, ix, 360-62. Peddie copied tables from Malloch. There were 16 drams in an ounce.

**Table 0.11, The appropriate weight for a spindle of yarn used to weave cloth on a 500 reed, 37 inches long**

| | Warp | | | Weft | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | lb. | oz. | dram | lb. | oz. | dram |
| Canvas | 5 | 4 | 7 | 17 | 4 | 8 |
| Dowlas | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Bagging | 3 | 1 | | 4 | 10 | |
| Strelitz Osnaburg | 2 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 8 |
| Sheeting | 2 | 12 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 15 |
| Sacking | 2 | 12 | | 4 | 2 | |

Source: Peddie, *The Linen Manufacturer*, pp. ix, 363, 365, 368.

came in several types and could be hempen or flaxen. It was a coarse textile used for a variety of purposes including needlework, to line and stiffen garments, for clothing, towels and sails. In 1818, a weaving manual noted that canvas had a double warp and could be made from hemp, flax, or flaxen tow.[133]

Another method for considering linen qualities is through looking at setting or caaming tables in weaving literature which recommend the weight of yarn needed to weave particular linens. The tables were organised by the number of splits in the reed, that is the number of holes in the bar used to beat the weft straight on the loom. Typically two warp yarns ran through each split.[134] Table 0.10 lists the weight of each hank of yarn (3600 yards) needed for linens using a 1000 reed 37 inches long. Shirting produced using these weights was a third heavier than the diaper and four times heavier than clear lawn. Alexander Peddie, author of *The Linen Manufacturer, Weaver and Warper's Assistant* (1818) advised that 'clean eve[n] yarn' was needed for clear lawn to achieve an even transparency. Wefts were lighter

[133] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 191; Peddie, *The Linen Manufacturer,* p. 371.
[134] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, pp. 12, 22; Joseph Beaumont, *Mathematical Sleaing-Tables: Or, the Great and Only Mistery of Weaving Linnen-Cloth Explain'd* (Dublin, 1712), p. 40.

than warps for these fine linens because Peddie stated that this produced the 'best' and most attractive cloth.[135]

Table 0.11, contains the weight of each spindle of yarn (15,120 yards) needed for coarser linens using a 500 reed 37 inches long. In contrast to the finer linens, the warps are heavier than the wefts. Peddie advised that coarser weft is needed in these instances 'to answer the purposes to which it is to be applied' but does not specify the benefits.[136] Canvas and sheeting had particularly disproportionately heavy wefts. One benefit of a coarse weft was that it would be quicker to weave the cloth and would thus reduce production costs and allow a lower sale price. The textiles produced using table 0.10 would have varied greatly by weight. Canvas was by far the heaviest textile, three times heavier than the sacking and twice as heavy as the sheeting and would have been extremely coarse. The dowlas, bagging, osnaburg and sacking were in a much closer weight range.

While the primary focus of the thesis is linens, cottons feature in several chapters. Indian printed calicoes introduced a new decorative technique to British textiles. Textile printing was taken up in England from the 1670s, initially on Indian calicoes. Indian printed and painted calicoes were banned in 1701 but plain Indian calico could be printed in Britain until its use was also banned in 1721 due to protests from wool and silk manufacturers. The ban lasted until 1774.[137] After 1721, however, textile printing continued on linens and mixed cotton-linens. They were fashionable textiles in eighteenth-century England and were worn widely, even by poor women. Design was democratised with designs characteristic of expensive silks printed on to cheaper linens and cotton-linens.[138] During the eighteenth century, flaxen yarn was commonly used for warps in the mixed cotton-linen cloths which became known as 'cottons'. Until Arkwright patented his water frame in 1769, the English could not produce cost-effective cotton warps that were strong enough to take the tension of

[135] Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*, pp. ix, 328, 369.
[136] Ibid., pp. x, 328.
[137] 7 Geo. I, c.7, 'An Act to Preserve and Encourage the Woollen and Silk Manufactures of this Kingdom', banned 'the Use and Wear of all printed, painted, stained or dyed Callicoes in Apparel, Houshold Stuff, Furniture, or otherwise'. Textiles with cotton content, calicoes that were checked, striped and those embroidered abroad were also prohibited. The only exceptions to the ban on decorated cottons were muslins, neckcloths, fustians and blue calico. The 1720 Act was enforced with £20 fines for the consumer and anyone involved in the sale of the textile. Owen Ruffhead, *The Statutes at Large*, 10 vols (London, 1768-1780), V, pp. 338-40; Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 118, 123.
[138] Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 130-32.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 0.18, V&A, T.246-1931, Shirt, linen, Great Britain, 1750-1800.** © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

**Figure 0.19, V&A, T.26-1969, Shift, linen, Great Britain, 1730-1760. The shift is under the stays and hoop.** © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

the loom. Before this date, almost all English cotton textiles were actually cotton-linen mixes. Checks and stripes were other key aesthetics, typically woven in blue and white designs. Microscopic analysis of these designs in the Foundling Billet books for the thesis and a more comprehensive analysis by Styles shows that the quantity of cotton varied within checks and stripes. Some checks had linen warps and all-cotton wefts; some had linen warps, white linen wefts and blue cotton wefts, others linen warps, blue and white linen wefts and darker blue cotton wefts for contrast. The quantity of cotton in the textile was likely varied according to yarn prices as well as whether a darker blue or lighter blue was desired. Cotton absorbs dye better than flax so the darker blues in checks are cotton.[139] Similarly the quantity of cotton yarn varied in striped textiles. In addition there were checks and stripes made solely of linen.

Finally, having introduced the fabrics used for underwear and household linens in England during the long eighteenth century, a brief description of these items is

[139] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, 148, 159, 171, Foundling Hospital Billet Books; Styles, 'Fashion, Textiles and the Origins of Industrial Revolution', Anglo-Japanese Conference of Historians, University of Osaka, Japan, 2015.

needed. In the early-modern period, sheets were a necessity and were used on beds by everyone apart from the destitute poor. Sheets were made from two lengths of fabric sewn together down the middle because textile widths were limited by loom size. It is unclear how widespread the ownership of table linens was, but they were essential for the elite. Expensive table linens were decorated with damask and diaper designs. Shirts worn by men and shifts worn by women were the most basic item of underwear. Drawers were unusual. Shirts and shifts were long and worn next to the skin (figures 0.18 and 0.19). Susan North notes that from 1660, surviving adults' shirts and shifts were no longer decorated with lace and embroidery. There were minimal changes in shirt design during the period. They had full sleeves until the 1780s after which they narrowed. North found that collar widths increased to accommodate the new fashions for cravats and later, stocks. Cuff widths on shirts grew. In the 1790s they were turned over coat cuffs. The necklines of shifts varied for high and low bodices. Shift sleeves tightened in the 1740s to accommodate tighter gown sleeves.[140]

## Chapter Overviews

Finally, having summarised economic trends, the historiography of consumption, explained the methodology, sources, fibres and textiles, it is time to explore the content of the thesis. Chapter 1, 'Infant Clothing: Age, Materiality and Seasonality' uses records from the Foundling Hospital, extant objects and cutting-out guides to examine plebeian baby clothing. The chapter reveals that age and seasonality had little influence on plebeian baby garments. Linen was mainly used for clothes that would be dirtied or worn against the skin because it was soft and washable unlike wool. Poor people embellished baby clothes using similar techniques to the rich despite the extra expense, the major difference was the quality. Chapter 2, 'Childhood: The Foundling Hospital, Child Labour and the Textile Business, 1758-1772' examines the provision of clothing for thousands of Foundlings in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. It reveals that the procurement of their clothing was primarily driven by business decisions, including the organisation and output of the manufactory staffed by Foundlings at Ackworth, Yorkshire.

[140] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 48-56, 209.

Chapter 3, ‘Family Life: Temporal Influences on Domestic Linen Production and Care’ uses a case study of the Lancashire farming family, the Lathams, to examine the influence of human life cycles and seasonality on the domestic production and care of linen. The chapter reveals that significant amounts of time were spent producing and caring for linen in the Latham household, the equivalent of eight years four months of part-time spinning from 1724 to 1767. The time taken to produce an extant linen sheet is also estimated based on contemporary sources. Chapter 4, ‘Adult Daily Life: Respectability and Decency’ reveals the importance of the quantity and quality of linen owned by adults as a social marker of personal decency. Gender differences in the ownership of underwear, the wide ownership of different fibre types (tear, tow and hemp) for clothing and bed linens and the use of underwear by novelists to indicate the wealth of status of their characters are all considered. Crime records, a pawnbroker’s pledge book and inventories are also employed.

Chapter 5, ‘Adult Daily Life: Logistical Textiles’ reveals for the first time the commercial significance of flaxen and hempen cloth for logistical purposes in eighteenth-century adult daily life through studies of wrappers, sacks and money bags. These extremely coarse textiles can be difficult to locate but they do appear intermittently in crime records, while extant objects from the wide geography of England, Wales and America are used to illuminate the textual sources. The chapter considers the logistics of the transport of goods, working practices, durability of sacks, male sewing and repair of goods. Chapter 6, ‘Passing On: The Emotional Status of Linen’ examines moments of ‘passing on’ during human and object life cycles in order to systematically analyse the relationship between touch and the creation of emotional meaning, an approach currently absent in research on emotional objects. Emotional and commoditised relationships with linen are considered throughout. The chapter concludes that under some circumstances linen gained emotional meaning from touch, yet, on most occasions any emotional significance was trumped by economic value.

Chapter 7, ‘“At first nothing could be more shocking”: The Impact of the 1678 Act for Burying in Woollen’ examines the impact of acts issued in 1666 and 1678 prohibiting burial in linen in order to promote the English woollen industry and force import substitution. Contemporary discussion of the Act in terms of religion, custom, social

cachet and vanity is examined alongside case studies of two Somerset parishes. They reveal that the Act was effective and led the majority in these parishes to rapidly alter burial practices due to a £5 fine which was sufficiently high to deter the majority from continuing to use linen for this purpose.

## Chapter 1. Infant Clothing: Age, Seasonality, Materiality and Fibres

Relatively little has been written on infant clothing during the long eighteenth century. Existing scholarship often focuses on what was worn by infants with limited analysis of the wider implications of the garments and materials used. Gillian Clark did, however, find that there was a long transition from tight swaddling to looser clothing during the eighteenth century.[1] This chapter builds upon previous work through a case study of infants accepted into the London Foundling Hospital. The chapter explores age, seasonality and decoration to consider how materiality affected the use of garments, whether there were differences in clothes worn at twelve months and under and whether plebeian baby garments followed the fashions apparent in extant elite baby linens. Finally the chapter compares the provision of clothing by the Foundling Hospital with recommendations for lying-in sets. The key fibre types discussed are linen and wool because cotton was rarely used for plebeian infant garments apart from printed gowns. Infant garments whether linen or wool were often described under the collective term 'child bed linen' in the eighteenth century, therefore this chapter is crucially, but not exclusively, about linens.

The London Foundling Hospital was the only charity which took in and supported abandoned infants in Britain during the eighteenth century. Legitimate and illegitimate infants were accepted and the majority were from plebeian families.[2] Babies were initially accepted into the Hospital if they were two months or younger, but the maximum age was increased to twelve months in 1757. The first children entered the Hospital in 1741. Thereafter, for most years in the eighteenth century numbers admitted were small, but for a brief period from 2 June 1756 to 25 March 1760, known as the General Reception, Parliament funded the Hospital, to accept all children presented under the age of twelve months. During these four years, 14,934 children were admitted. The annual average jumped from the acceptance of 90 children a year to 3895 children. Around 30 per cent of these children were legitimate. From 1760 the average number of children accepted dipped to 38 a year.

[1] Gillian Clark, 'Infant Clothing in the Eighteenth Century: A New Insight', *Costume*, 28 (1994) 47-59 (p. 56).
[2] D.S. Allin, *The Early Years of the Foundling Hospital 1739/41-1773* (unpublished PhD thesis, n.p., n.d.), p. 3; Alysa Leven, *Childcare, Health and Mortality at the London Foundling Hospital 1741-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 19-26, 30-42; Ruth K. McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 6.

Furthermore, a petition had to be presented to explain why the child should be accepted, removing anonymity. During the period of the General Reception, all but three children were returned to the London Hospital from nurse by the age of six. The majority were aged three to five. By contrast, in the 1760s children stayed at nurse for longer, up to the age of eleven, due to the large numbers of resident children under the Hospital's care.[3] This chapter focuses on the clothing worn by infants on entry to the Hospital who were all aged twelve months or younger, but the section on dressing the Foundling children deals with those under the age of five. All types of clothing, not just linen garments are examined together in order to understand the respective uses of different fibre types and to consider the decoration of the clothing of poor infants. All Foundlings were required to wear the number they were given on entry to the Hospital in the form of a stamped lead disk.[4]

The analysis in this chapter of infant clothing worn on entry to the Hospital is based on the Hospital's billet books from the General Reception period in 1759 and 1760 (figure 1.1). The clothing provided for infants under the care of the Hospital is examined for the General Reception and years after using the accounts of the Hospital's inspectors for October 1760 to September 1761, October 1778 to September 1779 and January to December 1798. The chapter also uses surviving objects and two contemporary books on cutting out linens to illuminate the Foundling material. The anonymous *Instructions for Cutting Out Apparel for the Poor* (1789) was intended to teach genteel charity 'patronesses', experienced or not, how to cut out clothing for the poor that would then be sewn up by poor girls at the local House of Industry.[5] *The Lady's Economical Assistant* (1808) was similarly designed to reduce textile wastage both for family clothing and in the production of charitable lying-in boxes for poor mothers about to have a baby.[6] These books were prescriptive literature designed to aid charitable benevolence therefore the materials and prices stated were not the only options for poorer infants.

[3] Allin, *The Early Years*, pp. 3-6, 148-49; McClure, *Coram's Children*, pp. 88, 116-20.
[4] Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Charity Costumes: Of Children, Scholars, Almsfolk, Pensioners* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1978), p. 173.
[5] Anon., *Instructions for Cutting Out Apparel*, p. i.
[6] A Lady, *The Lady's Economical Assistant*, p. vii. These works have been used previously for the history of infant clothing in Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, for example p. 158; Anne Buck, *Clothes and the Child: A Handbook of Children's Dress in England 1500-1900* (Carlton, Bedford: Ruth Bean Publishers, 1996), pp. 36, 45, 50, 52, 54, 66, 76.

## Billet Books

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.1, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13358, '1 Gown Cheeke'. Appears to be a cotton-linen.** © Coram

The Foundling Hospital billet books are invaluable sources for non-elite infant clothing. When the babies were accepted into the Hospital, information was recorded to enable the future identification of children if parents returned to collect them. The information was entered by the Hospital's officials as text, in the form of lists of the clothing worn by each baby and notes about any distinctive marks on the child's body. But it was also stored in material forms – scraps of textiles from the baby's clothing, items of baby clothing, specially designed tokens left with the child and letters or notes from poor law officials or parents. This chapter examines baby clothing in four Foundling billet books from April, July and November 1759 and

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.2 V&A, W.42:8-1922, baby doll, England, c.1710-1740.** Showing cap or bonnet, silk gown and bib collar (straight pieces of linen edged with lace hanging from neck on either side of gown opening).

**Figure 1.3 V&A, W.42:8-1922,** detail showing open-front shirt, two wool petticoats and one linen petticoat. The doll has no clout or nappy.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.4 V&A, W.42:8-1922,** detail showing cap or bonnet and forehead cloth. It was not possible to unpin the cap to tell if the doll was wearing one or two caps.

**Figure 1.5 V&A, W.42:8-1922,** detail showing roller wrapped around the belly over an unknown garment. The roller was worn under the open-fronted shirt.

February 1760.[7] Together, they contain billets for 397 children. The months were chosen to allow identification of seasonal patterns. A textile swatch was left with 292 of these children, the clothing was described for 149 children and 115 had both a swatch and clothing description in their billet.

The items of clothing most frequently listed (figure 1.1) were caps (141), biggins (127), forehead-cloths (110), gowns (109), blankets (134), rollers (109), shirts (141) and clouts (130). Infant clothing was unisex.[8] Caps, biggins and forehead-cloths, shown in figure 1.3, were headwear. Biggins were 'close-fitting cap[s] worn over another cap, over a triangular piece of linen' or forehead cloth. Gowns were dresses (figure 1.2). Buck suggests that blankets were an 'unshaped length of woollen fabric, [which] served as a mantle in common wear'. Mantles were shaped coats worn with separate sleeves. Nearly 20 per cent of babies came in with more than one blanket. Rollers were pieces of fabric wrapped 'two or three times' around a baby's torso, over the navel as illustrated in figure 1.5.[9] Clouts were nappies. The full range of items listed on the billets are shown in table 1.1. All of the items printed on the billet forms appear at least once in the sample apart from 'long-stays' which were used to swaddle babies' heads.

Anne Buck's *Clothes and the Child* is the most complete account of infant and children's clothing. Buck established what was worn, what it looked like, how it changed over time and the materials used through extant objects, texts and portraits. Several characteristics of infant dress and changes over time identified by Buck are pertinent to the Foundlings. Children wore longer clothes for six months to one year, until they could walk, then they were 'short-coated' and given shorter, ankle length clothing. Caps were worn by both genders day and night. Front-opening gowns and back-opening bodices and skirt were used by the early eighteenth century. By 1800 frocks were the most popular, they tied at the back unlike open-fronted gowns. However, frocks were rare amongst the Foundlings in the billet books (table 1.1). The major alteration in infant clothing over the long eighteenth century was the move

[7] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Billet Book (Admission numbers 12339-12437), April 1759; A/FH/A/09/001/148, Billet Book (Admission numbers 13300-13397), July 1759; A/FH/A/09/001/159, Billet Book (Admission numbers 14400-14499), November 1759; A/FH/A/09/001/171, Billet Book (Admission numbers 15600-15699), February 1760.
[8] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, p. 164.
[9] Anon., *Lady's Economical Assistant*, p. 29; Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, pp. 21, 28, 36; Noreen Marshall, *Dictionary of Children's Clothes 1700s to Present* (London: V&A Publishing, 2008), p. 63.

**Table 1.1, Percentage of Foundling Hospital children with different garments, listed by age admitted, 1759-1760.**

| | Aged 1 to 6 Days | 7 Days to 1 month (4 weeks) | 1 month, 1 day to 4 months (16 weeks) | 4 months 1 day to 12 months |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 34 children | 64 children | 43 children | 8 children |
| Ribbons | 3 | 22 | 23 | 13 |
| Cap | 94 | 97 | 91 | 100 |
| Bonnet | 0 | 0 | 7 | 13 |
| Biggin | 91 | 88 | 81 | 68 |
| Forehead-cloth | 74 | 78 | 74 | 38 |
| Head-cloth | 3 | 5 | 7 | 0 |
| Long-stay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bibb | 44 | 38 | 51 | 13 |
| Gown | 71 | 83 | 60 | 75 |
| Frock | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 |
| Upper-coat | 0 | 0 | 5 | 25 |
| Petticoat | 0 | 0 | 2 | 25 |
| Bodice-Coat | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 |
| Robe | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| Barrow | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mantle | 15 | 9 | 14 | 0 |
| Sleeves | 12 | 25 | 23 | 13 |
| Blanket | 94 | 92 | 86 | 75 |
| Neckcloth | 9 | 9 | 7 | 25 |
| Handkerchief | 0 | 9 | 7 | 13 |
| Cloak | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Roller | 62 | 77 | 81 | 50 |
| Bed | 15 | 19 | 19 | 13 |
| Waiscoat [sic] | 74 | 45 | 30 | 25 |
| Shirt | 94 | 95 | 93 | 100 |
| Clout | 88 | 92 | 86 | 50 |
| Pilch | 12 | 6 | 16 | 13 |
| Stockings | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Shoes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 |

Source: LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, 158, 152, 171, Billet Books.

A long stay was used for swaddling to position the baby's head. A frock was a combined bodice and skirt. A barrow was a wrapping petticoat, normally flannel, which possibly developed from the 'bed'. A mantle was 'a wrap or garment like a long sleeveless waistcoat'. Buck considered a robe similar to a mantle, open fronted and sleeveless, from Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, pp. 28, 36; Marshall, *Dictionary*, pp. 57, 104, 161, 220.

from swaddling to looser garments. Swaddling was undertaken to keep children warm and to make their limbs grow straight. If swaddling was removed at a young age, for example less than two months, children were still wrapped in garments, for

example a ‘bed’ which was a long piece of cloth which wrapped a child from chest to toe or a blanket used as part of swaddling or linen underclothing for older babies. Buck suggested that arms were freed at four months, that swaddling was removed at twelve months and that swaddling had mainly disappeared by 1770.[10]

Clark identified several different outfits worn by the Foundlings on entry to the Hospital; sleeves and a blanket; bodice coats and barrows. Waistcoats were worn ‘with or without gowns’. Clark and Buck, noted a ‘sequence of development from swaddling clothes [...] from the blanket and roller, via sleeveless mantle worn with sleeves and the blanket and sleeves, to the sleeved gown’ and emphasised that rollers, a lesser form of swaddling, were still very popular in the billet books.[11] In 1808 rollers continued to be used for loose swaddling as ‘a band usually worn over the blanket’. The anonymous author warned that ‘Nurses are apt to bind the roller tight round a child’s body, thus stopping the circulation in a great degree and rendering that highly prejudicial, which (if properly used) tends to warm and support the body of a tender baby’.[12]

This chapter develops and extends the work of Buck and Clark on infant clothing through analysis of new themes. Firstly, it asks whether there were differences in clothing by age, secondly it considers the impact of seasonality on clothing and thirdly it compares the descriptions of decoration on Foundling garments with surviving objects to consider whether the babies were fashionably dressed and how far their garb differed from extant elite baby clothes. Finally, detailed analysis of the clothing provided for children at nurse is undertaken using the inspectors’ accounts and London Hospital sub-committee minutes. These are the means used to achieve new findings from the billet books, a sample of which have already been analysed by Clark.

[10] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 21, 24, 32, 46, 59-61, 64, 72; Marshall, *Dictionary of Children’s Clothes*, p. 60.
[11] Clark, ‘Infant Clothing’, pp. 51-52, 56-57.
[12] Anon., *Lady’s Economical Assistant*, p. 29.

## Seasonality

Despite expectations, there was little seasonal influence on infant clothing. Instead the primary material concern was how soft and washable the garments were that were close to the baby's skin. These tended to be linens and were sometimes cotton in the billet books. In particular, headwear, bibs and shirts were made from linen. There were few seasonal differences, blankets and rollers used for wrapping the child were made from woollen cloth throughout the year. Gowns were most commonly made from linen, cotton and cotton-linens in every season. Comparable numbers of children had textual descriptions of their clothing in each billet book: 38 in April, 39 in July, 35 in November 1759 and 37 in February 1760 making a seasonal comparison of fibres viable. This section focuses on the garments worn most frequently.

Caps were primarily made from linen in April, July and November. The information for February 1760 is harder to interpret due to a change in how headwear was listed. While '1 Cap cambric bordered' can reasonably be read as a cambric cap decorated with a border, '1 Cap cambric border' is more ambiguous, therefore this section focuses on the first three months of the sample. Three types of linen were used most frequently for caps, biggins and forehead cloths. Irish linen, long lawn and holland caps were left with 38, 25 and 31 children respectively. These types of linens were typically at the higher end of the quality spectrum which is important because it shows that the poor did not just use cheaper, low quality linens like dowlas. Long lawn was still recommended for caps for poor infants in 1789.[13] There was no concession to wool in the autumn or winter. The other textiles listed were dowlas, cambric, calico, dimity and silk. Dimity was a harness loom woven textile, either a pure cotton or cotton-linen mix. It could also be woven with silk.[14] The bodies of only three caps were made from cotton. Biggins and forehead cloths were also most frequently made from Irish cloth, holland and long lawn. Alternative fabrics were dowlas, cambric and calico. Long lawn caps appear more frequently in these four billet books than in Clark's sample.[15]

[13] Anon., *Instructions for Cutting Out Apparel*, pp. 76-77.
[14] Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 225; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, pp. 218-19.
[15] Clark, 'Infant Clothing', p. 51.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.6, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/171, Foundling 15637.** Working from front to back, the pieces are linen biggin: '1 plaine marckt K'; red and yellow striped silk ribbon; 'read and white flowerd lining' sleeves and finally the gown was 'cuft up with flowerd silck'. There is only one biggin swatch in the billet book sample.


The qualities of linens used for infant headwear varied a lot. Nearly translucent textiles, possibly clear lawn, were used for many surviving elite baby caps (figures 1.10 to 1.12). Figure 1.6 in contrast shows a swatch from a 'plaine' linen biggin marked with a 'K' worn by a Foundling. While it is not translucent, the linen used for the biggin is higher quality than the printed linen pinned behind it. Poverty is apparent in the headwear of two children who had Irish cloth rags for their biggins. Linen was clearly judged the most practical and attractive textile choice for headwear by plebeian mothers and by implication it was not considered necessary for babies to have woollen headwear to keep them warm in winter. Perhaps this is related to the double and triple layering of babies' headwear through caps, biggins and forehead cloths. Only eight children entered the Hospital with just one item of headwear.[16]

Shirts, bibs and clouts were soiled by infants and were made from linen in all seasons. There were only a few cotton examples. The vast majority of shirts were linens. Irish, long lawn, cambric and holland were used most frequently. Long lawn was still deemed appropriate in 1789 for shirts for poor babies.[17] Similarly to headwear and shirts, bibs were most frequently made from Irish, holland and long lawn. Parental poverty is apparent: eight rags were used as bibs. Diaper and

[16] This figure includes all categories of headwear.
[17] Anon., *Instructions for Cutting Out Apparel*, p. 76.

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**Figure 1.7, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/152, Billet Book (Admission numbers 13680-13780), August 1759, Foundling 13751, printed flannel.**
© John Styles

**Figure 1.8, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundling 12428, printed cotton-linen.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.9, A/FH/A/01/09/171, Foundling 15615, 'for a Mantle a peace of checkt stuff', with linen gown cuff.** This is the only mantle swatch in the sampled billet books.

Figures 1.7 to 1.9 © Coram

damask cloth was also used – floating threads were used to create a decorative design. These floating threads made them particularly absorbent. Diapers and damasks are most likely to have been made from flaxen not cotton yarn in this context because so few children wore cotton for any garments other than gowns. Only 8 out of 62 children were left with bibs with cotton content. Clouts were most likely to be made from rags; 63 out of 130 children were left with 'rag' clouts. Once cloth was used for nappies it could not be re-used for clothing, therefore rags were useful for clouts for poor babies. As discussed in the introduction, linen and cotton are 20 per cent stronger when wet than dry, a particular advantage for clouts.

The garments that would be most expected to show seasonal differences are gowns but linen, cotton and cotton-linens were used throughout the year. Few gowns contained any woollen content; there were two linsey-woolseys and one stuff in July, one linsey in November and one linsey, one flannel and one bays jacket used as a gown in February. There were no silk gowns in the sample. The greater use of linens and cottons for gowns could have related to medical beliefs but the range of surviving textile swatches, the majority of which were cut from gowns, attest the aesthetic advantages of these textiles which could be printed in a wide variety of designs. The same aesthetic effects were not possible on wool as is illustrated by figures 1.7 and 1.8. In contrast upper-coats, petticoats and bodice-coats which only appear in small numbers were mainly woollen. Mantles were also most frequently woollen garments (figure 1.9).[18] While all of these garments were used for extra warmth children wore them too infrequently to analyse them by season. In contrast, gowns were extremely common (table 1.1) therefore, the majority of the mothers of these infants considered linen and cotton appropriate for all seasons.

Woollen blankets were used throughout the year and provided insulation in the winter and summer. They made linen and cotton gowns viable in the winter. Only 1 out of 134 children were left with a blanket made from a different pure fibre, coarse linen. Only thirteen children were left with linsey-woolsey blankets and one with a checked example. Repurposing was common, twelve babies were left with part of a bed blanket or bed blanketing. It is difficult to tell whether this indicates poverty or economy. Six children had rags for blankets, while one child had a piece of flannel petticoat. The majority of children were left with flannel blankets (108) but they were not kept as swatches in the sampled billet books therefore they were not distinctive. Alternatives were bays, cloth, serge, swanskin and shalloon. In 1808 the author of *The Lady's Economical Assistant* recommended bays for blankets because it was cheap and wide and was thus more economical. The only impact that seasonality had on dress in the sample was a small impact on the frequency with which babies were left with multiple blankets: seven babies were left with more than one blanket in April, six in July, nine in November and eleven in February. There were no seasonal differences for rollers and the vast majority of these were wool: divided between shalloon and flannel. In 1808 calico was recommended rollers for poor children,

[18] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 28.

indicating a slight alteration in their purpose although they were still considered to have warming properties.[19] In contrast to woollen blankets and rollers, the majority of 'beds' came in linen not wool. Therefore not all wrapping garments were necessarily used for insulating purposes.

In summary, seasonality had little impact on plebeian infant clothing in the mid eighteenth century. Linens were commonly used for infant garments that touched the skin or were soiled. Cottons were rarely used for infant clothing other than decorative gowns. In contrast most woollen garments were used to wrap the child to keep them warm and protect their bodies.

## Age

Four age categories were chosen to analyse the effect of age: children aged less than seven days; seven days to four weeks; four weeks one day to sixteen weeks and six weeks one day to twelve months. Two categories are used for the first month due to the high proportion of the children in the sample. The mothers of children who entered the Hospital within a week would have known that they would not be able to support their child and immediate plans were made to have it accepted into the Foundling Hospital. The category of one month and one to four months includes clothing from mothers who initially hoped to keep their babies.[20] Finally the category of four to twelve months includes children whose mothers attempted to keep them but were unable to support them. While only eight children are in the final category, it is separated because it represents a longer-term clothing investment by the mothers.

Headwear, shirts, bibs and clouts, all linen garments, are the main focus of the section. Caps (see figures 1.4, 1.10 to 1.12) were universally popular; 91 per cent and higher of children entered the Hospital wearing caps at all ages. They were considered essential baby-wear for children up to at least twelve months, supporting Clarke' findings.[21] Bonnets on the other hand were only worn by four children entering the Hospital therefore they were not considered essential. Biggins appear to have been used more frequently for younger babies, worn by 81 per cent and above of children in the first three age categories. Forehead-cloths (figure 1.4) were slightly

[19] Anon., *Lady's Economical Assistant*, p. 29.
[20] There are possible exceptions, for example, outside London some babies were transferred by poor law officials, therefore there could be associated delays.
[21] Clark, 'Infant Clothing', p. 51.

less popular than biggins, appearing with 74 per cent and above of children up to four months old and again like biggins could have been less popular after this age.

Shirts were essential garments, at least 93 per cent of children entered the Hospital wearing a shirt in all age groups. Infant underwear was referred to consistently as 'shirts' by the Foundling Hospital, there was no gender differentiation. *The Lady's Economical Assistant* used the term 'shirts' for babies' underwear and 'shifts' for children aged one to two, but it is not clear whether these terms were specific or interchangeable.[22] The only linen garments that varied by age were bibs. Only one child entered the Hospital wearing a bib over the age of two months. It is unclear why. Some bibs were decorative, other were used to protect clothing, as figures 1.20 and 1.21 illustrate. Children over two months were still messy. On the other hand, 62 children out of 149 were listed as wearing bibs so a reasonable number are represented in the sample. The lowest percentage of gowns was worn by children aged one to four months, at 60 per cent compared to 71 to 83 per cent for the other ages. The alternatives were not clustered around a particular type of outfit, therefore it is unclear what, if any, significance this pattern has.

The most striking age-related patterns were ribbons, waistcoats and shoes and stockings. Ribbons were left with 22 per cent and over of children aged 7 days to 4 months in the sample, compared to only 3 per cent of children under 7 days old. The pattern of low ribbon provision for infants presented to the Foundling Hospital during the first week of their life can be explained in several ways. Firstly there was less time for the mother to make these purchases after birth, insufficient time to gather the pennies to purchase an unnecessary decorative ribbon for a child, or perhaps such desperate poverty that the mother owned no ribbons herself. Secondly, it is possible that for a small number of babies it could represent a lesser maternal attachment. Ribbons were more frequently left by mothers who had more time with their child before separation, either relating to the logistics of caring for a new-born, or perhaps the even greater wrench of giving away a child that they had come to know. There were also age-related patterns for a few other garments. Waistcoats were particularly associated with children under seven days old, worn by 74 per cent of those babies, compared to only 45 per cent of babies aged seven days to one

[22] Anon., *Lady's Economical Assistant*, pp. 25, 31.

month. Shoes and stockings were very uncommon and only worn by two children, aged eleven and twelve months. Rollers were slightly less popular for children over four months.

Overall, age had relatively little effect on what children under one year wore. There were few age-related differences in the linen garments worn. The only category that bucks this trend is bibs, yet a new-born was as messy as a 10 month-old child and the need for soft linen against the skin remained the same. Garments that were not primarily made from linen showed greater differences, whether silk ribbons that were decorative and allowed the expression of identity, shoes and stockings which were only needed by older mobile children, or waistcoats particularly worn by new-borns. These garments fulfilled different functions to linen clothing which is probably why they exhibited more age-related change. The only items that can be identified as showing a different level of clothing investment by mothers are ribbons because they were not necessities.

## Decoration

This section considers the fashionability of the clothes worn by the babies who entered the Foundling Hospital. Linda Baumgarten has noted that adult and children's fashions influenced each other in the early nineteenth century.[23] Despite the poverty of most parents who gave their child to the Foundling Hospital, garments were not automatically plain. Linen garments worn by children on entry to the Hospital regularly featured decoration and gowns were printed with fashionable patterns. Woollen garments in contrast had less complex decoration due to the difficulty of printing on woollen fabrics.

Headwear was frequently embellished, caps were rarely plain. Typical decorative flourishes were borders in a variety of materials including linens, long lawn, clear lawn, cambric and calico, embroidery, a fringe, striped borders and double borders. Edgings were also common and caps were trimmed with linen or cotton: long lawn, clear lawn, cambric, kenting, Irish, calico and muslin. The contemporary differences between trimming, edging and borders are unclear, therefore these categories are noted separately. Cambric, lawn and muslin were used most frequently for biggin and forehead decorations. Lace was used on caps, biggins and forehead cloths. Its

[23] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, p. 173.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.10, V&A Museum of Childhood, Circ.210A-1923, infant cap, linen with Valenciennes bobbin lace, Britain, c.1700-1760.** See figure 1.14 for matching shirt. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

**Figure 1.11, Museum of London, 36.17b, infant cap, linen with hollie point lace decorated with crowns, 1689-1700.** A note from 1819 gives the provenance as the Duke of Gloucester, son of Queen Anne. © Museum of London

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.12, V&A, T.40A-1969, infant cap, linen with hollie point lace, England, eighteenth century.** © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

frequency varied by type of headwear. Lace appeared on 21 out of 141 caps (15 per cent), 13 out of 127 biggins (10 per cent) and 25 out of 110 forehead cloths (23 per cent). It is unclear whether the lace was bobbin lace around the edge of the cap (figure 1.10) or an inset panel of hollie point lace at the back of the cap (figure 1.11). The term ‘laced’ was used much more frequently than ‘trimmed with lace’. The author of *The Lady’s Economical Assistant* recommended trimming caps for poor

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.13, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/171, Foundling 15643. '1 Gown white Irish bordered round the bottom and cuft up with flowerd cotting', linen.**

**Figure 1.14, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/171, Foundling 15656. '1 Bed Irish marckt M with blew thread', linen.**

Figures 1.13 and 1.14 © Coram

babies with Dutch lace 'which saves much work and looks full as well as a muslin border', thus saving time but still achieving an attractive decorative effect.[24] Hollie point was English not Dutch and was needlepoint lace, so it took longer to produce than a simple bobbin lace. The latter could have been bought more cheaply, therefore the lace used on the Foundlings' caps was more likely to be a strip of bobbin lace.[25] Some Foundlings had identical materials and decoration on their cap, biggin and/or head cloth.

Extant caps typically have a translucent or laced border as shown in figures 1.10 and 1.12, therefore there was an aesthetic tendency for transparency. The use of lace, muslin and clear lawn on the Foundling's headwear shows that this aesthetic was also important in non-elite baby dress. Plebeian babies were therefore dressed in infant fashions of the time. It is not possible to identify how far this trend spread amongst the Foundlings because the quality of linen and openness of weave influenced translucency and cannot be determined from the written descriptions in

[24] Anon., *Lady's Economical Assistant*, p. 27.
[25] Santina M. Levey, *Lace: A History* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983), p. 60.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.15, V&A Museum of Childhood, T.47-1943, infant shirt, linen with bobbin and hollie point lace, England, eighteenth century.**

Thread width average range: vertical <0.1-0.2mm. Horizontal: 0.1-0.2mm
Thread count per cm: 64 x 60
Thread count per inch: 161 x 152

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.16, V&A Museum of Childhood, Circ.210B-1923, infant shirt, linen with lace Britain, c.1700-1760.**

Figures 1.15 and 1.16 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.17, V&A, T.49-1969, infant shirt, linen and Binche bobbin lace, England, eighteenth century.**

**Figure 1.18, V&A, detail of T.49-1969, showing stamped design on sleeve.** A heart was also embossed under the middle of the neck.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.19, V&A, T.49-1969, infant shirt, linen, England, eighteenth century.**
Thread width average range, vertical: 0.1-0.3mm. Horizontal: 0.1-0.2
Thread count per cm: 46 x 44
Thread count per inch: 120 x 120

Figures 1.17 to 1.19 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

the billet books. A key difference between extant elite infant headwear and the Foundling swatches is the common use of Irish cloth for the body of Foundling caps. The meaning of this is ambiguous. Linen produced in Ireland was generally higher quality, however the two named pieces of Irish in the Foundling billet books shown in figures 1.13 and 1.14 are neither translucent nor very coarse. Headwear made from these Irish textiles would have presented a very different appearance to translucent garments. Contrast figures 1.10 to 1.12 with 1.13 and 1.14 for an idea of the effect. However the number of layers worn under the cap also influenced how marked the

difference in translucency was, therefore a similar translucent effect could be achieved in plebeian clothing by edging or bordering caps with translucent linens or lace.

Elite and plebeian shirts also had decorative similarities. The Foundlings' shirts were typically decorated with trimmings, lace or ruffles. These adornments were also deployed on the shirts in figures 1.15 to 1.19. Less than 12 per cent of Foundling shirts were 'plain' or untrimmed. The majority were trimmed and/or laced and/or ruffled. A couple were marked with initials. Trimming was by far the most common form of decoration and was used at the neck and hands. It is not clear whether it was also used on the front edges of the shirts as in figure 1.15. In 1789, an anonymous author recommended adding a Hanover lace trimming, at only 0.5d. per shirt, intended for lying-in boxes for the poor because it 'makes them look neat', a rare aesthetic justification for the trimmings.[26]

A wide variety of materials were used for trimming plebeian infant shirts: cambric, clear lawn, long lawn, Irish, kenting, calico and muslin, again both linens and cottons were used. The shirt body and trimmings were never the same type of fabric: they were different in twenty-nine instances. Combinations used for the shirt body and trimming/s were long lawn and cambric/clear lawn/calico; Irish and muslin/long lawn/lawn/kenting/clear lawn/calico; holland and muslin/long lawn/clear lawn/cambric; dowlas and Irish/cambric; Russia and long lawn/Irish; Irish and cambric. Popular combinations were Irish shirts and long lawn trimmings, holland shirts with clear lawn and holland shirts and cambric trims. There were aesthetic implications to the trimmings. Holland and clear lawn was a popular combination as was holland and cambric, all three of these textiles were typically higher quality goods, so these shirts could have been made from finer, more translucent textiles. If the trimming was made from a different material to the shirt body it would have been more visible. The use of typically translucent textiles such as clear lawn and muslin for trimmings matches the decoration on extant baby shirts (figure 1.19) and also the aesthetic of translucent trims on infant headwear. In contrast, the other most popular combination was Irish with long lawn. The latter was implicitly less translucent than 'clear lawn'. Overall there is the suggestion that higher quality textiles were used to

[26] Anon., *Instructions for Cutting Out Apparel*, pp. 75-77. Half a yard of lace was needed.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.20, V&A, T.42-1969, Bib, linen with ruched bobbin lace, Britain, eighteenth century.**

**Figure 1.21, V&A, T.50-1969, Bib, double thickness of linen, Britain, eighteenth century.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.22, detail of T.50-1969, bib, showing left side join, x65**. Location of seam marked on figure 1.21.

**Figure 1.23, detail of T.50-1969, bib, showing right side join, x65.** Location of seam marked on figure 1.21.

Figures 1.20 to 1.23, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

trim the hands and neck of Foundling babies' shirts rather than for shirt bodies. Trimmings would have been seen peeping out of garments and might even have been softer around babies' necks and wrists.

Ruffles were only listed in the February 1760 billets which probably indicates a change in the way information was recorded rather than a fashion change. On the few occasions where the ruffle textile is given it was cambric or muslin. The low

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.24, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14495, '1 Clout Diaper marckt F with Blew silck', linen.** This is the only clout piece in the sampled billet books. © Coram

incidence of named ruffled textiles indicates that ruffles were typically made from the same material as the body of the shirt. Cambric ruffles were mentioned for shirts that were made from Irish and long lawn as well as for a shirt of unknown textile. Five shirts were described as laced and one shirt had laced ruffles. This suggests lace was not commonly used for plebeian baby shirts, appearing on only 4 per cent of the Foundling shirts, a much lower percentage than for headwear. Headwear was more noticeable than shirts when babies were wrapped up, so focusing decoration on headwear offered a means of achieving the greatest effect using the fewest resources.

In contrast to fashionable headwear and shirts, the Foundling's bibs were rarely decorative garments and none were as impractical as the example in figure 1.20. Fifteen Foundlings' bibs were described as a clout, or either a bib or a clout, which suggests that they were square or rectangular pieces of cloth tied at the neck. Clouts and bibs both used a double thickness of linen. Their limited ornament was more subdued than the bib in figure 1.20. Only six mentioned coloured decoration: two flowered cottons, three checks and a red and white handkerchief. The twenty damask and diaper bibs would have been subtly decorative, but the majority of bibs had no decoration listed. These could have been similar to the bib in figure 1.21 which emphasises the utilitarian purposes of bibs. The double thickness of linen used for this extant bib made it more durable and gave better protection from dribble, vomit and food. The construction of the bib shows economy. The straps were

extended using extra pieces of linen, seamed at the point of the arrows on the image, but the same quality cloth was not used for the extra pieces. As figures 1.22 and 1.23 show, the extra piece of cloth attached for the left strap was coarser than the body of the bib and the corresponding right strap piece.

Unsurprisingly clouts were not decorated. Some of them had decorative weaves – diaper and huckaback – such as that shown in figure 1.24. However it was the absorptive properties, not the decorative nature of these weaves that led to their use for clouts – the floating yarns in diaper and huckaback weaves aided absorption therefore these decorative weaves were more absorbent than tabbies. Clouts were made from a double thickness of linen for better absorption and liquid retention, which is apparent from the thickness of the left side of the clout swatch in figure 1.24.[27] Eighteen children were left with diaper or huckaback clouts and two had diaper rags. Diaper only totalled 14 per cent of all clouts; they were less popular than might have been expected given the current use of the term ‘diaper’ in America for nappies. Evidently most of the Foundlings’ parents considered tabby linens sufficiently effective for clouts. Diaper was not essential.

Gowns were highly decorative garments. Swatches were taken from the gown or gown cuffs of 87 out of the 115 children with a textile scrap and clothing description. The sample supports Clark and Styles’ identification that flowered, striped and checked designs were the most popular printed designs for gowns and cuffs made from cotton mixes, linen and calico.[28] Striped linsey-woolseys were more unusual but they also produced decorative gowns. Check swatches from gowns or cuffs were left with 22 children, stripes with 17 children and flowered designs with 40 children. Figures 1.25 to 1.30 show some of the range used for gowns as do figures 6.15 to 6.18. These designs represent two decorative techniques. Checked and striped designs were produced cheaply on the loom by using coloured warps and wefts. Plain linens and cotton-linens were printed by the textile printing industry that had burgeoned after the 1701 and 1721 bans on the importation and use of printed calicoes in England.

[27] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 21.
[28] Clark, ‘Infant Clothing’, p. 51; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 114-122.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.25, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13319, gown 'flowered Cotten', cotton-linen.**

**Figure 1.26, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13358, gown 'Cheeke', appears to be a cotton-linen.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.27, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13362, gown 'flowered Cotten', cotton-linen.**

**Figure 1.28, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/158, Foundling 14422, gown 'checkt', cotton-linen.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.29, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14419, gown 'Blew flowerd lingging', linen.**

**Figure 1.30, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundling 12425, pure cotton, gown 'flowered Cotten'. Paste print.**

Figures 1.25 to 1.30 © Coram

Prints and checks were novel fabrics reflecting the latest technological developments. Prior to 1650, colour-fast printing on textiles was not practiced in Western Europe. Knowledge and skill transfers from India, the Ottoman Empire and Armenia were necessary before the development of printing in Western Europe. Riello emphasises the flexibility of printing; designs could be changed rapidly compared to existing European techniques of decorative weaving, so access to design was democratised. Riello argues that European technological developments related to consumer demands. European consumers preferred prints on white grounds (figure 1.29) rather than traditional Indian dark ground aesthetic (figure 1.30). This spurred technological innovation: cold vats, introduced in 1734 allowed indigo dyeing at lower temperatures that did not melt the wax resist (figure 1.28) while the development of 'English' blue allowed direct indigo printing on white cloth (figure 1.29). Indigo was also pencilled onto textiles (figure 1.27). Therefore the Foundling billet books include textiles decorated using the latest printing technology. Figure 1.30 is a paste print, produced using a resist on the fabric and then it was dyed blue repeatedly with indigo using a cold vat until the desired colour was achieved. These cheap designs survive in significant numbers in America, but are absent from most British museums, therefore they are an important discovery in the Foundling billet books, providing that they were not a vernacular American print style. Copper plates which created superior quality prints on linen were popular from 1754 and therefore would have been available for sale in 1759 and 1760. In 1753 a three-colour roller press was invented in England which produced fabrics at a much greater speed. It is not possible to tell whether the Foundling textiles were roller printed due to the small swatch sizes.[29]

Meanwhile, Styles reports that there are few references to linen or cotton checks in seventeenth-century England.[30] However the evidence of the Billet Books indicates they were commonplace within plebeian women's dress by 1759. Furthermore, by this date, plebeian infants were also wearing fashionable printed cottons and checks. They were even dressed in designs that imitated silks.[31] While it is possible that designs were several years old when used for baby gowns, babies were still brought

[29] Linda Eaton, *Printed Textiles: British and American Cottons and Linens* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2014), pp. 17, 24, 140-142. My thanks to Linda Eaton. Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 160-81.
[30] Styles, personal communication, 10 January 2015.
[31] Riello, Cotton, p. 132.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.31, V&A Museum of Childhood, MISC.188-1982, waistcoat, dimity, England, 1770. Written in ink, 'Hugh Hill born 1770'.**

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

**Figure 1.32, detail of MISC.188-1982, waistcoat showing printed cotton and linen mix cuff with dimity sleeve featuring diamond pattern.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 1.33, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13359, '1 Roller [flannel] overcast with red Worsted'.** Only one roller appears in the billet book sample. © Coram

into the adult fashion cycle through the act of making these recycled textiles into gowns. They wore gowns decorated according to the clothing textile aesthetics that predominated among both plebeian women and those of higher status at the period.

Waistcoats were typically linen, cotton or a mix of both and were decorated through textured weaves (figure 1.31). Dimity, diaper and damask were commonly used. Around 70 per cent of waistcoats had decorative designs listed. The majority of waistcoat textiles were white, either cotton, linen, or a mix with subtle textured

designs created in the weave (figure 1.31). Arguably, the garment shown in figures 1.31 and 1.32 was a waistcoat (although described as a shirt on the V&A catalogue as of November 2014), because it is made from a decorative dimity design and it is similar to garments identified as waistcoats by Linda Baumgarten.[32] Dimity was most frequently used for waistcoats for the Foundlings while no Foundlings entered the Hospital in dimity shirts. Cuffs were not mentioned for any of the sixty-nine Foundling waistcoats but they were often described on gowns. Either Foundling babies did not have cuffed waistcoats when they entered the institution, or the cuffs were not recorded by the clerks. The flowered cotton cuffs on the Museum of Childhood waistcoat are similar to those in printed cotton used on gowns worn by the Foundlings. Waistcoats and gowns were worn together on fifty-three occasions in the billets, so perhaps cuffs were considered superfluous on waistcoats because they were already present on the gowns.

In contrast to the delicate decoration on plebeian infants' headwear and shirts, the beautification of woollen garments was much more basic. As established, most of the blankets were made of flannel, a poor material for printing (figure 1.7). However, this did not preclude their decoration. Around half the flannel blankets featured some sort of decoration. Bindings were common – ferret, cotton, tape, quality and worsted. Blankets were also overcast in coloured worsted yarns: pink, purple, white, red, blue and black. Figure 1.33 shows an example of overcasting in red and pink. Binding and overcasting were both used to prevent the flannel from fraying but were also aesthetically pleasing. The colourful overcasting produced a jolly effect in contrast to the typically white flannel. Bindings were also most frequently white and the white bindings on white flannel matched the white on white of the baby's headwear. Some rollers were decorated. There was more variation in location of the design for rollers than blankets. Coloured overcasting was used on flannel rollers and one made from linen (figure 1.33). Stripes, ribbons, silk and ferret were used to decorate the ends of cotton, shalloon and flannel rollers. Bindings were also described for example tape, silk and ribbon. Designs on the body of the roller were uncommon, there were just four striped rollers.

[32] See also Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, pp.159-60. In contrast Buck does not identify these garments and considered knitted garments (like those that Baumgarten describes as waistcoats) as an undergarment for warmth, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 74.

In summary, several infant fashions appear in the billet books. Decorations on plain linens were more delicate than those on woollens, but the same white on white aesthetic was predominant. Plebeian infant clothes were decorated with non-essential trimmings, borders and edgings. Despite the poverty of their parents, these decorations were considered essential for baby clothing. Texture and translucency were also valuable tools in achieving decorative effects on plebeian infant clothing. On headwear and shirts, trimmings and bindings were often made from a different textile from the body of the garment which would have created subtly different effects, particularly when translucent linens or muslin were used, while white waistcoats were decorated through textured weaves. Linens and cottons were used interchangeably for printed gowns, however those with cotton content would have been more expensive due to higher fibre prices. Furthermore, cotton dyed better, creating darker blues for checks and stripes and brighter printed designs, hence the billet books reveal that plebeian infants had access to the wide variety of designs produced to suit the different material properties of linen and cotton. Babies' gowns were fashionable within plebeian clothing cultures; they were made from dress fabrics that could have been or were worn by adult women.

## Dressing Foundling Infants

In contrast to the wide variation in garments and patterns worn by babies before they entered the Hospital, the children received standard issue clothing once accepted into the Hospital. The infants were placed with a wet or dry nurse in the countryside before they were transferred to the main Hospital sites at the age of four to eleven. Initially children returned to the Hospital aged four, but the General Reception pressed resources therefore in 1768 the vast majority of children returning to the London Hospital were aged nine to eleven.[33] Table 1.2 shows the standard list of garments provided for children at nurse in 1760. All of the garments apart from the blankets and possibly the petticoats and pilches were made entirely of linen or had linen content. The only differences at this date to the clothing provided for infants when the Hospital opened in 1741 was that elements of swaddling had disappeared – long stays and rollers, as well as neck cloths – while two new items had been introduced – cloths to pin before and petticoats. Cloths to pin before must have been

[33] Allin, 'The Early Years', pp. 147-50.

**Table 1.2, Garments provided to Foundlings at nurse, 1760**

| | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Printed Linnen Cloths to pin before, at 6d. each | 1 | 0 |
| 2 Biggins, at 3d. each | 0 | 6 |
| 3 Caps, at 6d. each | 1 | 6 |
| 3 Shirts, at 9d. each | 2 | 3 |
| 10 Clouts, at 10d. ½ each | 8 | 9 |
| 1 Linsey Mantle | 0 | 11 |
| 1 Pair of Linsey Sleeves | 0 | 3 |
| 2 White Bays Blankets; at 9d. each | 1 | 6 |
| 2 Pilches, at 4d. each | 0 | 8 |
| 1 Linsey Coat | 2 | 2 |
| 1 Linsey Bodice-Coat | 1 | 0 |
| 1 Petticoat | 1 | 0 |
| 1 Comb | 0 | 5 |
| 1 Comb-brush | 0 | 2.5 |

Source: LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/27, Inspectors' Accounts, A-B, 1760.

pin cloths which were alternatives to bibs and aprons. Buck states that they were 'made from a single piece of cloth meeting at centre back, it was hollowed at the neck with slits for the arms and almost completely covered whatever was worn beneath'. Buck suggests that they were worn by older infants, those who had been short-coated, however bibs were not given to the Foundling children at nurse so pin cloths must have been used for infants of all ages under the care of the Hospital.[34] In addition in 1741 children received larger numbers of garments than in 1760; four biggins, four caps, four shirts and twelve clouts.[35]

In 1790 the list of garments and prices remained the same, apart from the omission of a pair of linsey-woolsey sleeves. Hospital officials therefore still considered this list of garments and hair cleaning tools most appropriate for their charges. The list is notable for excluding gowns, the most common form of outer garment worn by the babies who entered the Hospital in 1759 and 1760. Instead a wider range of outer garments were given to infants by the Hospital: a mantle, sleeves, a coat and bodice coat. A shorter list of garments was provided to a smaller number of nurses, simply two checked linen pin cloths worth 1s., three caps valued at 1s. 6d., three shirts at 2s. 3d. in total and one linsey-woolsey coat at 2s. 2d. The cause of this difference is unclear, particularly why checked rather than printed pin cloths were given to the

[34] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 71.
[35] McClure, *Coram's Children*, p. 190.

**Table 1.3, Garments produced by twenty-five girls in the Foundling Hospital 24 June 1750 to 20 June 1751**

| work done by 25 Girls in the London Foundling Hospital in the year to Mids.r Last vizt | |
|---|---|
| Shirts & Shifts | 283 |
| Day Caps | 74 |
| Night Caps | 38 |
| Bib aprons | 94 |
| House Maids Do [Ditto] | 8 |
| Tuckers | 120 |
| Cuffs | 114 pair |
| Cloths to pin before them | 92 |
| Sheets made | 40 pair |
| Do. turned & mended | 18 pair |
| Table Cloths | 21 |
| Pillow-bears | 13 |
| Jack Towels | 12 |
| Hand Do | 62 |
| Pudding Bags | 41 |
| Knit Stockings | 63 pair |
| & marking all the linnen of ye House | |
| | |
| For the Use of the Children in the Country | |
| Shirts & Shifts | 489 |
| Caps | 348 |
| Cloths to pin before them | 180 |
| | |
| For the Reception of Young Children | |
| Shirts | 333 |
| Caps | 443 |
| Biggins | 378 |
| Long Stays | 328 |
| Neck Cloths | 320 |
| Sleeves | 206 pair |
| Cloths to pin before them | 280 |
| Clouts | 130 doz & 5 |
| besides sleeves & Cuffs made of old things | |

Source: A/FH/A/03/001/001, General Court Rough Minutes: Quarterly and Annual General Meetings, 1739-1751, 26 June 1751. These figures are from before the period of the General Reception.

children provided with fewer garments.[36] The linsey garments were grey for children until the age of four when they were given the brown uniform of the older children.[37] The Foundlings' mothers and the Hospital shared the same priorities for linen garments, specifically biggins, caps, clouts and shirts. When children outgrew their

[36] LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/027, Inspectors' Accounts: Surnames A-B, 1760-1761. Children under the care of Rev Mr Brewer, Guildford, for example Judith Cope (number) 10685, Jonathan Oakes 10717, Samuel Frye 10737, John Gaines 10837, Selah Nutcomb 11770, Margaret Nichols 13745, Phyllis Jackson 7357, Thomas Malton 7430.
[37] Cunnington and Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, p. 176.

**Table 1.4, Garments made by the girls in the London Hospital from 23 January to 6 February 1779**

| By the Girls | |
|---|---|
| 12 Gowns made | 19 Tuckers made |
| 12 Petticoats | 112 Clouts |
| 12 Waistcoats | 15 Girls Aprons |
| 12 Gray Ditto [waistcoats] | 22 Boys Ditto |
| 1 pair Stays | 24 Pin Cloths |
| 4 Gowns mended | 6 Pair Stockings Knit |
| 18 Shirts made | 30 Caps made |
| 33 Open ditto | 16 Towells |
| 15 Shifts | 5 Table Cloths |
| 20 Biggins | |

Source: LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/014, Sub-Committee Minutes, 1778-1779, 6 February 1779.

clothing, the inspectors were required to write to the Hospital matron requesting further garments. Once received, the outgrown clothes were returned to the Hospital. However there were two exceptions: 'Shoes and Stockings, as they are to be fitted to the Children, the Inspectors will be pleased to buy'. The 1760 receipts also noted that 'No Caps are allowed for Boys after the first Year. Shoes and Stockings are to be furnished in the Country by the Inspectors'.[38] The abandonment of boys' caps after twelve months is earlier than many peers; Buck suggested that boys typically gave up caps within three years.[39]

The garments worn by the infant Foundlings were produced in large numbers by girls at the Foundling Hospital. Twenty-five girls in the London Hospital produced the 6404 garments listed in table 1.3 in a year, which averages at 256 each. The last two sections of the table list the garments produced for infant Foundlings when at nurse and the clothing given to them before they were sent to nurse. Many of these garments were linens; shirts, caps and biggins. The textiles used for pin-cloths, neckcloths, long stays and sleeves are unknown. In-house production meant that the correct quantity and quality could be produced in the right time and at a lower price (see Chapter 2). Garment production was high in the years of the General Reception when vast quantities of pin-cloths were produced at an extremely rapid rate. In twenty-one days in 1763, 78 girls produced '21 House Shifts made, 12 Day Caps, 16

[38] LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/027, Inspectors' Accounts, 1760-1761; A/FH/B/01/018/107, Inspectors' accounts 1789-1790.
[39] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 73.

Night Caps, 48 Tuckers, 14 Aprons, 264 Pin Cloths and 8 ½ lb Flax Spun'.[40] On 9 January 1779, the Matron reported the textiles and garments under her care which included 516 pincloths.[41] A greater variety of garments were produced in 1779 (table 1.4), including gowns, petticoats and clouts showing a widening of production, while no household linens were listed in contrast to 1751.

How far did these garments adhere to the advice of Dr William Cadogan? Cadogan's *An Essay upon Nursing and the Management of Children from their Birth to Three Years of Age* (1748) was published on the orders of the Foundling Hospital. He warned against children being placed under 'Incumbrance and Confinement of [their] Cloaths' and stated that a poor child covered 'loosely' in rags was healthier than one 'languishing under a Load of Finery, that overpowers his Limbs'.[42] Cadogan warned firstly that 'a new-born Child cannot be too cool and loose in its Dress; it wants less Cloathing than a grown Person, in proportion; because it is naturally warmer, as appears by the Thermometer', challenging the widespread view that 'a new-born Infant cannot be kept too warm; from this Prejudice they load and bind it with Flannels, Wrappers, Swaths, Stays, &c. commonly called Cloaths'. He warned against the restriction of the bowels, weakening of limbs and pressure on bodies, attributing 'Distortions and Deformities' of the body to tight clothing, thus blaming disabilities on swaddling.[43]

Cadogan also provided detailed advice on appropriate clothing for infants. He specified linens and flannels for specific garments.

> A little Flannel Waistcoat without Sleeves, made to fit the Body and tie loosely behind; to which there should be a Petticoat sew'd and over this a kind of Gown of the same Material, or any other, that is light, thin and flimsy. The Petticoat should not be quite so long as the Child, the Gown a few Inches longer; with one Cap only on the Head, which may be made double, if it be thought not warm enough.

The head should not be bound and head garments made from linen. Cadogan considered that

[40] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/005, Sub-Committee Minutes 1761-1764, 22 January 1763.
[41] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/014, Sub-Committee Minutes, 1778-1779, 9 January 1779.
[42] Dr William Cadogan, *An Essay Upon Nursing and the Management of Children from their Birth to Three Years of Age* (London, 1748) pp. 7-8.
[43] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

> Shoes and Stockings are very needless Incumbrances, besides that they keep the Legs wet and nasty, if they are not chang'd every Hour and often cramp and hurt the Feet: a Child would stand firmer and learn to walk much sooner without them. I think they cannot be necessary 'till it runs out in the Dirt. There should be a thin Flannel Shirt for the Night, which ought to be every way quite loose.

These clothes should be worn until the age of three.[44]

Intriguingly, few of these garments were given by the Foundling Hospital to their infants, despite the fact that this was medical advice given to the Hospital. No flannel waistcoats or gowns were provided. A petticoat was given, but biggins and caps were provided as standard headwear, thus children wore two caps. Shoes and stockings were provided for the children by the inspectors which is particularly surprising given Cadogan's warning that they 'keep the Legs wet and nasty'. Surplus garments provided by the Hospital were 'cloths to pin before', blankets, pilches, a coat and bodice coat. Perhaps the sleeveless mantle could be considered to take the place of the sleeveless waistcoat, although the former would have been much longer. It is unclear whether a flannel night shirt was given to the children.

The provision of ten clouts, does however suggest a closer adherence to Cadogan's suggestion that

> There is an odd Notion enough entertained about Change and the keeping of Children clean. Some imagine that clean Linnen and fresh Cloaths draw and rob them of their nourishing Juices. I cannot see that they do any thing more than imbibe a little of that Moisture which their Bodies exhale. [...] I think they cannot be changed too often and would have them clean every Day; as it would free them from Stinks and Sournesses, which are not only offensive, but very prejudicial to the tender State of Infancy.

Cadogan's comments are ambiguous. While suggesting that clouts 'cannot be changed too often' he seemingly undermines this with the comment that children should be 'clean every Day'.[45] The two remarks imply different changing frequencies. During the eighteenth century expectations of cleanliness varied (see Chapters 3 and 4), therefore it is possible that a fresh clout daily was all that Cadogan was suggesting. Ten clouts was modest compared to higher ranks. The elite woman Mary Thresher, whose husband's status is unknown, recorded her ownership of 106

[44] Ibid., pp. 11-12
[45] Ibid., p. 12.

clouts in 1698.[46] The provision of ten clouts by the Foundling Hospital did mean that whichever standard of cleanliness Cadogan was advocating, nurses could have provided it, either with a fresh clout daily for ten days or multiple changes a day with regular washings. The Foundling Hospital still provided ten clouts in 1798 which was stingy in comparison to charitable publications. *Instructions for Cutting Out Apparel* and *The Lady's Economical Assistant* recommended twenty-four napkins or clouts as the minimum for lying-in clothing for poor women.[47] This difference probably related to the mother's need to rest after birth, a higher number of clouts allowed more time before washing.

Quantities of other garments were also lower for Foundlings than those recommended for lying-in boxes in the two cutting-out books. *Instructions* recommended six shirts, six caps and six under caps for babies significantly more than were given by the Foundling Hospital. They also suggested two frocks, two bed gowns, two robe blankets and 1.75 yards of bays flannel for the baby. No swaddling garments were suggested. The Foundlings were not given frocks. *The Lady's Economical Assistant* recommended four shirts and caps, one more than the Foundlings were provided with, but fewer than recommended in *Instructions*. The range of garments given also differed; two frocks, two bed gowns, two rollers, two pairs of stays and flannel coats and two upper petticoats were suggested, along with two flannel blankets, the same number as the Foundlings were given.[48] These garments were generally looser, although there was still an element of swaddling through the rollers provided, a contrast to recommendations in the *Instructions*.

In contrast to the linens used by the Foundling Hospital, *The Lady's Economical Assistant* recommended 'cambric muslin' for caps and shirts, in other words cotton instead of linen, suggesting that the price was becoming sufficiently low to offer a cost-effective alternative to linen. The author recommended cambric muslin because although 'Some persons disapprove the use of cambric muslin for poor infants' shirts; but as want of cleanliness in the parents is the only real cause of objection, the advantage in warmth, price and quality, should be considered'.[49] Clearly there were material and price benefits to the use of cotton for poor infants' clothes

[46] Pamela Clabburn, 'My small Child bed Linning', *Costume*, 13 (1979), 38-40 (p. 39).
[47] Anon., *Instructions for Cutting Out*, p. 85; Anon., *Lady's Economical Assistant*, p. 25.
[48] Anon., *Lady's Economical Assistant*, p. 25.
[49] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

although the author's justification illustrates that cambric muslin had not widely replaced linen for clothing the poor. *The Lady's Economical Assistant* recommended Irish cloth for shifts for children aged one to two, replacing the cambric muslin of babies' underwear.[50]

Inspectors were required to procure shoes and stockings and record these purchases to claim for their expenses. Buck was not able to identify the age when shoes and stockings started to be worn. Stockings were most likely made of worsted which was cheaper than cotton. Shoe materials are not known. They could have had textile or leather uppers.[51] Some inspectors itemised shoes and stockings by child which allows examination of how frequently new shoes and stockings were given to the infants. Samples were taken from the inspectors' accounts for October 1760 to September 1761 (64), October 1778 to September 1779 (159) and January to December 1798 (65). It was typical for the children in the 1760 to 1761 sample to be given one to four pairs of stockings a year and one to three pairs of shoes. However, a few children did not receive new shoes or stockings every year.[52]

For 1778 to 1779, it was typical for the children to receive two to six pairs of stockings and one to three pairs of shoes. A few of the youngest children aged around three or four months just received shoes and 'leaders'. Leading strings were reins used on children who were beginning to walk and were sometimes sewn onto clothing.[53] This period gives the only information on types of stockings bought. John Lamb's receipts for the inspector Thomas Bromwich of Highgate included some information on colour and knit. Bromwich bought eight pairs of stockings to be divided between three children. Four pairs were 'knit Ribs' (14d. or 18d.), one pair was 'plane Blk' or black (15d.) and three pairs of 'Grays' (14d. or 17d.): four prices for stockings for three children indicates that size was not the only influence on the

[50] Ibid., p. 31.
[51] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, pp. 43, 74.
[52] LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/027, Inspectors' Accounts, 1760-1761, sixty-four children under the care of Rev Mr Brewer, Guildford, Mr Baker, Lyssom Green Middlesex and Mr John Breckworth of Shelly Hall Essex; A/FH/B/01/018/090, Inspectors' Accounts, 1778-1779 159 children under the care of Thomas Bromwich, Highgate, Mrs Gorden, Hadham, Mr William Lee, West Peckham; Jos Law, Luton and Mr Living, Chertsey; A/FH/B/01/018/107, Inspectors' Accounts 1789-1790, sixty-five children under the care of Mr Thomas Turnivall, Hempstead and Mr Living, Chertsey. The middle sample is significantly larger because Mr Living's more detailed records were added to bulk up William Lee's records.
[53] LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/090, Inspectors' Accounts, 1778-1779, children under the care of William Lee, for example Elizabeth Harrison (number) 17345, William Oliver 17366, Ann Overton 17367, Henry Loddington 17457, John Owen 17472; Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, pp. 64-65.

price of stockings bought for the Foundlings.[54] Ribbed stockings were only produced from the 1730s and the subdued colours confirm Buck's identification of a trend towards less colourful stockings.[55] Knit and colour altered the price but this information is mostly concealed within the inspectors' accounts. Finally in 1798, shoe mending was much more frequent than in 1760 to 1761 and 1778 to 1779. It was typical to get one or two pairs of new shoes and/or two pairs of stockings in 1798.

In summary, children received set quantities of linens, exchanged for Hospital supplies as the infants grew. Footwear provision was less rigid because inspectors were responsible for sourcing shoes and stockings. Unlike the uniformity of centrally supplied linens, the shoes and stockings provided for infants at nurse could vary significantly in terms of numbers received per child, colour and knit. They were therefore the most 'individual' garments that the Foundling infants received.

## Conclusion

The material properties of fibres determined the use of flax or wool for infant garments. Linen was soft and could be washed while wool was a good insulator. However, despite these material differences there was little seasonal alteration in the clothing worn by plebeian children on their entrance to the Foundling Hospital. Age also had little influence on linen garments, apart from the anomalous result that bibs were only worn by children at two months or under. In contrast, there were differences according to age for ribbons, waistcoats and shoes and stockings. Only ribbons, which were left more frequently with children over a week old, show a different level of clothing investment by mothers at specific infant ages. Plebeian infants' headwear, shirts and gowns were frequently decorated using the same techniques as extant elite baby linens despite the extra expense and featured more delicate decorations than woollen infant garments. Gown textiles were printed using technology that was only a few decades old and plebeian babies and their mothers had access to the latest textile fashions through the wide range of designs available, therefore they were part of the fashion cycle.

[54] LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/090, Inspectors' Accounts, 1778-1779, children under the care of Thomas Bromwich, stockings bought for unknown children, bill dated 21 December 1778.
[55] Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, p. 179.

Infants were given identical clothing once accepted into the Foundling Hospital. Their linens were mostly produced in-house. Linens were given to the nurses in charge of infants in lower quantities than was recommended in cutting-out books for charity lying-in boxes because the nurses did not need to rest after childbirth and could wash linens more frequently than poor mothers. Shoes and stockings were the only individual garments worn by infant Foundlings because they were not purchased centrally. Only durability and price differentiated cotton from linen for use for infant clothing and in an institutional setting linen remained the textile of choice in the second half of the eighteenth century. The next chapter examines the continued use and the manufacture of linen by older Foundlings at the Ackworth Branch Hospital, Yorkshire.

## Chapter 2. Childhood: The Foundling Hospital, Child Labour and the Textile Business, 1758-1772

Hundreds of thousands of people were reliant on institutions to provide them with clothing during the long eighteenth century. Overseers of the Poor, workhouses and charities sourced clothing for the poor based on the principles of decency, durability and economy. This institutional provisioning is a major research thread due to the extensive survival of records. John Styles emphasises the high level of need: varying by parish, 10 to 20 per cent of the population received assistance from Overseers in 1800. Much of this assistance came in the form of clothing to provide the basic necessities of dress. Steve King's statement that Overseers provided garments that could not be differentiated from other plebeian dress and fashionable clothing that might have been on a par with 'non-elite farming families' has been disproved by Peter Jones.[1] Jones instead emphasised that pauper clothing was relatively uniform and was standardised for practical reasons. He suggested that paupers would have considered themselves 'well dressed' by parishes in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, although hardly fashionable, because members of penny clothing clubs chose the same durable textiles as those provided by the parish.[2] Further proof against King is that men in receipt of parish relief and their families were legally obliged to wear a badge from 1697 to 1810 which marked them out as respectable poor. Steve Hindle discovered that 1697 Statute which introduced badging was enforced in many parishes until the 1750s and in some parts of Somerset until the 1780s and emphasises that although the badges were a mark of shame for some, they were the subject of pride for other paupers, denoting their respectable status.[3]

This thesis explores the factors that influenced the provision of clothing for children in the Foundling Hospital from 1758 to 1772 which was a challenging time because the thousands of children accepted into the Hospital under the General Reception required hundreds of thousands of garments. Branch Hospitals were set up

[1] Steven King, 'Reclothing the English Poor, 1750-1840', *Textile History*, 33:1 (2002), pp. 37-47; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 257-60, 265, 270-74, 392 (n.3).
[2] Peter Jones, 'Clothing the Poor in Early-Nineteenth-Century England', *Textile History*, 37:1 (2006), pp. 17-37; Peter D. Jones, '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent": Pauper Letters, Parish Clothing and Pragmatism in the South of England, 1750–1830', *Rural History*, 20:1 (2009), pp. 31-49.
[3] Steve Hindle, 'Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c.1550-1750', *Cultural and Social History*, 1:1 (2004), pp. 6-35.

**Table 2.1, All children alive and under Hospital care when the annual 'General Abstract' was taken, 1760-1772**

| | Under the several Inspections or Nurseries | London Hospital | Ackworth Hospital | Shrewsbury Hospital | Aylesbury Hospital | Westerham Hospital | Chester Hospital | Other | In the Country for their Health | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1760 | 5522 | 262 | 122 | 58 | 51 | 47 | | 1 (Lock Hospital) | 5 | 6068 |
| 1761 | 4955 | 170 | 174 | 115 | 52 | 101 | | | 48 | 5615 |
| 1762 | 4374 | 268 | 279 | 182 | 52 | 159 | | | 46 | 5360 |
| 1763 | 3821 | 333 | 347 | 272 | 52 | 161 | 59 | 35 (Barnet) | 91 | 5171 |
| 1764 | 3210 | 407 | 568 | 435 | 52 | 215 | 59 | 40 (Barnet) | 45 | 5031 |
| 1765 | 2458 | 357 | 778 | 567 | 52 | 250 | 64 | 40 (Hadley) | 53 | 4619 |
| 1766 | 2005 | 400 | 884 | 658 | 51 | 201 | 66 | 38 (Hadley) | | 4303 |
| 1767 | 1640 | 425 | 725 | 675 | | 221 | 71 | 37 (Hadley) | | 3794 |
| 1768 | 973 | 374 | 354 | 617 | | 195 | 70 | | | 2583 |
| 1769 | 241 | 352 | 239 | 309 | | | | | | 1141 |
| 1770 | 153 | 175 | 170 | 97 | | | | | | 595 |
| 1771 | 94 | 180 | 131 | 93 | | | | | | 498 |
| 1772 | 129 | 218 | 81 | 1 | | | | | | 429 |

Source: LMA, A/FH/A/09/012/002, An account of the children from the first taking-in. These numbers include children that were at nurse and were not resident at their branch. The number of children in each branch fluctuated throughout the year due to transfers and apprenticeships.

elsewhere in England to cope with the vast numbers. The branch in Ackworth, Yorkshire was the largest offshoot and is used as a case study of institutional provision due to its exceptional archive. Ackworth was the longest running branch outside London (table 2.1) and received 2664 children between 19 August 1757 and 31 December 1772.[4] It closed in 1773 because Parliament came to regret its generosity and gradually reduced payments to the Foundling Hospital from 1767, forcing the frantic apprenticeship of children aged seven and even younger. Parliament made its final payment in 1771.[5]

The Ackworth case study is significant because it uncovers the experiences of thousands of children. It also illuminates two types of relationships between children and textiles: the making and wearing of cloth and clothing. Children at Ackworth carded, combed, spun and wove woollen and flaxen cloth that was worn by their peers at Ackworth and the London Foundlings. The chapter structure mimics the

[4] LMA, A/FH/A/15/002/005, Account of the Children in the Foundling Hospital at Ackworth, 1771-1772.
[5] Allin, 'The Early Years', p. 4; McClure, *Coram's Children*, pp. 116-20. It took a couple of years of wind down the Hospital's business. Final inventories were taken in 1774.

order in which the decisions were made at Ackworth: object life cycles are used but not through a linear chronology. The clothing and household textiles that the children required were identified by the Committee, then the manufactory was set up. Clothing, bedding and furnishings are therefore discussed first followed by the manufacture and procurement of textiles. Comparison of flaxen and woollen cloth and garments provides insight into a range of routes used for institutional textile procurement in the eighteenth century. Location made particular approaches more viable and cheaper than others, for example the Master of the Ackworth Hospital, Richard Hargreaves bought Yorkshire linen for the London Hospital. Hargreaves was Master until his death in November 1772.[6]

Although the Ackworth archive is unusually detailed, two key books are missing; the tailors' book and the manufactory account. The latter is most important because missing information about linen and underwear production would be in that book. However the richness of the archive compensates for these absences. Multiple documents are used for the study, the monthly expenditure on clothing and linen book, the daily journals which are the best surviving record of manufactory work, the household inventory book, bills, correspondence between the London Hospital and Ackworth Branch and the sub-committee records for both locations provide exceptional levels of detail about production and procurement. As with all sources these manuscripts have weaknesses. Sometimes information jumps between books for example linen weaving was recorded in the clothing book and then jumped to the daily journal. Problems are noted when relevant.

The Foundling Hospital met the children's physical needs through shelter, food and clothes and provided for their future by organising apprenticeships. They also pursued criminal trials in cases of physical abuse or murder and forced the release of children who were victims of sexual abuse.[7] The provision of appropriate clothing was a clear part of the remit of the Foundling Hospital. When investigating the death from fever of children apprenticed to the woollen cloth manufacturer Mr Brown, Ackworth staff queried 'they hope the Children were properly fed and Cloathed and

[6] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Ackworth Management Committee Order Book, 1757-1774, p. 119.
[7] McClure, *Coram's Children*, pp. 134-36.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 2.1, British Library, Shelfmark Cartographic Items Maps K.Top.25.23.f., John Sanders, 'Views of the inside of the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital', London, 1774.**

**Figure 2.2, BL, detail of Shelfmark: Cartographic Items Maps K.Top.25.23.f.** The check aprons are just visible.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 2.3, T. Jefferys, plate illustrated for 'Regulations for the Foundling Hospital', *Gentleman's Magazine* (1747), p. 284.**

Figures 2.1 to 2.3 © British Library, London

not over exercised with Labour'.[8] Suitable clothing was therefore considered as essential to the survival of the children as food. The Foundlings were dressed in a Hospital 'Uniform' at its opening. The *Gentleman's Magazine* contained a description of the Foundlings' clothes in 1747.

[8] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book: Ackworth to London 1766-1770, p. 58, Jonas Hanway to Mr Brown, April 1768.

> The boys have only one garment, which is made jacket fashion, of *Yorkshire* serge with a slip of red cloth cross their shoulder; their shirts lapping over their collar resembling a cape; their breeches hang loose a great way down their legs; instead of buttons is a slip of red cloth furbelow'd. The girls petticoats are also *Yorkshire* serge; and their stays are covered with the same, of which a slip turns back over their shoulders, like that of the boys and is of the same colour: their cuffs, bib and apron are linen, the shift is gathered and drawn with bobbin, in the manner of a close tucker. The boys and girls hats are white and tied round with red binding. These children [...] are clothed in this manner proper for labour [...] and a number for each is to be fixed to their cloaths, in some manner, so as to be always visible.

In summary, the boys had a coat and breeches. Both were lined. The breeches were not buttoned at the knee but were decorated with ruched red cloth (figure 2.3). Waistcoats were only added in 1772 in order to keep the male Foundlings warm. The girls' gowns were cut in the adult style, with their shifts gathered at the front in the style of a tucker or frill at the neckline (figures 2.2 and 2.3).[9] Girls' shifts were decorated with bobbin lace at the neck. Cunnington and Lucas emphasise that 'White neckwear [...] was indispensable' in charity school uniforms. Caps and bands or collars were given to all charity school children even when other clothing was not provided.[10] The prominent white linen neckwear literally represented the respectability of the children and that the institution was fulfilling its role because the cleanliness of linen was a marker of personal decency (see Chapters 3 and 4).

At Ackworth, the girls were dressed in serge coats and bays petticoats while the boys were dressed in 'cloth' or broad cloth typically used for men's tailoring with 'Scarlet Bands' and 'lined with red serge'.[11] Figure 2.4 shows samples of the textiles produced by the children at Ackworth.[12] Copper coloured serges were produced by the manufactory for the children and were most likely to have been used for the girls'

[9] 'Regulations for the Foundling Hospital', *Gentleman's Magazine* (1747), p. 284; Cunnington and Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, pp. 178-80.
[10] Cunnington and Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, pp. 125, 135-37.
[11] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 26 February 1763; A/FH/D/01/002/005, Correspondence from London, letter 26, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 28 November 1767 [letters were not numbered in other volumes]; LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, p. 13; A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1762-1766, p. 19, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 21 October 1766; p. 177, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 8 September 1770.
[12] The sheet is not dated. The LMA catalogue dates it to 1763, but wool cloth patterns were only referred to in correspondence in 1762.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 2.4, A/FH/M/01/005, Documents Bound in a Volume, pp. 96-97, Ackworth Manufactory, Samples of Frieze and Broad Cloth, Ackworth, Yorkshire, 1762 or 1763.** © Coram

coats.[13] Although the surviving swatches are a very dark off-purple colour, they may have been described at the time as brown, supported by the description of 'brown copper' camblets in the Foundling billet books.[14] The colour of bays used is unclear.

[13] LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/002, Daily Journal, pp. 93, 149, 171, 185, 201, 343.
[14] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 118.

**Table 2.2, Foundling Hospital expenditure on clothing, 1787**

| **Boys** | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Suit of Clothes & making | 0 | 12 | 6 |
| 2 Shirts | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 Pair Stockings | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Shoes & mending & Clasps | 0 | 12 | 3 |
| Boys Clothing pr Annum | **1** | **9** | **3** |
| | | | |
| **Girls** | | | |
| 1 Gown, lining & Binding | 0 | 4 | 9 |
| 2 P.r Diaper Cuffes at 1 ½ d | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 2 Tuckers at 1 ½ d | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 2 Bibs & Aprons at 11 ¼ d | 0 | 1 | 10.5 |
| 1 Waistcoat | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 1 Upper Petticoat | 0 | 1 | 7.5 |
| 1 Under Do [petticoat] | 0 | 0 | 11.5 |
| 2 Shifts at 1s 4 ½ d | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| 2 Caps at 4 ¼ | 0 | 0 | 8.5 |
| 1 Nightcap | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Needles & Thread to make up the Clothes | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 Pair Stockings at 7d | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Shoes, mending & Clasps | 0 | 12 | 3 |
| | **1** | **7** | **6** |
| Clothing at the above rate for 360 Children | **510** | **0** | **0** |

Source: A/FH/M/01/005, Documents Bound in a Volume, p. 145.

The colour was not listed for all of the bays sold by the Ackworth manufactory to the clothing account but much was red or blue. In 1766, 1158 yards of red bays was bought. Therefore it is highly probable that the girls had copper-brown coats and red bays petticoats due to the purchase of such a large quantity of cloth. Although the *Gentleman's Magazine* stated that the boys wore serge, it seems more likely that the boys at Ackworth wore either brown or copper broad cloth of which hundreds of yards were bought annually. Broad cloth was a typical textile for men's tailored garments.[15]

The boys' breeches were originally made of leather but in June 1760 the Ackworth Committee ordered that they should be made from 'Cloath (as 'tis the Manufactory of this Hospital) lined with Coarse and strong Linnen', differing from London policy.[16] In 1757 it was ordered that the boys should also have leather aprons and that their

[15] For example LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/001, Daily Journal, p. 319; A/FH/D/01/016/003, Daily Journal, pp. 3, 39, 139, 171, 201, 215; A/FH/D/01/016/004, Daily Journal, p. 18; A/FH/D/01/016/005, Daily Journal, p. 267; A/FH/D/01/016/006, Daily Journal, p. 92.
[16] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, pp. 13, 42.

stockings should be grey. There were no similarly detailed orders about the girls' clothing in the Ackworth Committee order book. In 1764 there was a minor change in the boys' clothing when the Ackworth Committee required that the red band on the boys' coats should be replaced with a collar.[17] The motivation for this decision was not specified. 'Red Long Ell' a woollen textile was used to line the boys' coats. White flannel was used for under petticoats for the girls in London, but none appears in the Ackworth clothing book therefore the textile used for the under petticoats of girls in Yorkshire is not known.[18]

A 1787 calculation of annual expenditure on the children's clothing at the London Hospital, shown in table 2.2, lists the majority of clothing given to the children. Outdoor garb is missing, hats, cloaks and perhaps outer coats for the boys. The boys received a single suit of clothes: coat, waistcoat and breeches. In contrast the girls received a gown worn with an upper and under petticoat, as well as a waistcoat which could also be worn with the petticoat. This extra versatility was provided by the waistcoat which only cost 8d. This relatively cheap price probably explains why girls received a waistcoat and a gown. Boys' clothes cost 21d. more than girls' garments. This difference could relate to construction costs. Boys' clothes were made by professional tailors who were paid 11d. for each pair of jacket and breeches bought in 1769 and 1770, thus the price difference can be partially explained through the payment of external tailors rather than internal mantua makers. Ackworth had one mantua-maker in 1769 who received an annual salary of £5 whilst being in charge of the clothing for 200 girls.[19] In 1787 identical sums were spent on items of clothing for both genders: two pairs of stockings cost 14d. while shoes, clasps and mending were 147d. The main difference was that girls received more garments of a lesser value.

When children were apprenticed from Ackworth in the 1760s and early 1770s they were provided with the clothes listed in table 2.3, more garments than in 1787.[20] Apprentices were given two sets of outer clothes, double the quantity of jackets and breeches. More was spent on clothing for apprentices by the Hospital which matches

[17] Ibid., pp. 13, 68.
[18] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 13 December 1763.
[19] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, p. 147, Copy of Mr White's Remarks to the following Estimate, 13 December 1769; A/FH/Q/01/028, Ackworth Monthly Expenditure on Clothing and Linen, p. 77.
[20] A/FH/Q/01/011, p. 55, Richard Hargreaves to (assumed) Thomas Collingwood, 14 March 1768.

**Table 2.3, Clothing provided for Ackworth apprentices, 1768**

| with each Boy | £ | s. | d. | & Girl | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 Jacketts | {0 | 13 | 0 | 2 Coats | 0 | 9 | 6 |
| 2 p.r Breeches | | | | Stays | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 p.r Shoes | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 Petticoats | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 3 Shirts | 0 | 4 | 6 | 3 Shifts | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| 1 Hank.f & a Hat | 0 | 1 | 10 | 3 Bibs & Aprons | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| 2 p Stockings | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 Day Caps | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | | | | 2 Night Caps | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | | | | 2 p.r of Shoes | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | 2 p. of Stok.gs | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | | | | 1 Hank.f & Tucker | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | | | | Hat | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Amount of w.h is | **1** | **3** | **8** | | **1** | **5** | **6** |

Source: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, p. 55, Richard Hargreaves to (assumed) Thomas Collingwood, 14 March 1768.

Jones' and Styles' assertion that pauper children were often put out to service and provided with new clothing worth more than that supplied to adults. Higher expenditure on pauper children was considered a worthwhile investment to help them achieve a respectable place because if the apprenticeship was successful it reduced the number reliant on parish assistance.[21] Notably, Foundling apprentices received three shirts or shifts rather than the two given to the Foundlings annually. Three shirts meant that a higher standard of cleanliness could be achieved, with one in the wash, one being worn and a spare.

Some Foundlings were required to wear a uniform after apprenticeship. John Arbuthnot's indigo-pencilling apprentices were all female and were required by the Hospital Trustees to 'be Clothed in An Uniform after the manner of the Children in this Hospital that they may be known and observed when they go out of the bounds of the Manufactory'.[22] However institutional clothing was not appreciated by all. Judith Wardley was threatened with corporal punishment in 1779 for failings including her 'Carelessness in wearing her Shoes is such that they hardly last her above a fortnight'.[23]

[21] Jones, 'Clothing the Poor', p. 28; Jones, '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent"', pp. 38-43; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 267-69.
[22] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/004, Sub-Committee Minutes, 1759-1761, pp. 81, 86.
[23] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/015, Sub-Committee Minutes 1779-1781, p. 5.

## Household Textiles

**Table 2.4, Annual expenditure on flocks, 1757-1766**

| | £ | s. | d. | Price per lb. where calculable (d.) | Number of children at Ackworth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1757 | 4 | 0 | 0 | | unknown |
| 1758 | 14 | 10 | 2 | | unknown |
| 1759 | 7 | 0 | 8 | | unknown |
| 1760 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 4.5 | 122 |
| 1761 | 38 | 7 | 7.75 | 3.9, 4.0, 4.1, 4.8 | 174 |
| 1762 | 22 | 7 | 0 | 4.4 | 279 |
| 1763 | 12 | 2 | 10 | | 347 |
| 1764 | 55 | 8 | 9 | | 568 |
| 1765 | 35 | 4 | 4 | | 778 |
| 1766 | 3 | 7 | 0 | | 884 |
| Total | **196** | **18** | **0.75** | | |

Source: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory book of household and farm goods. The table includes carriage prices.

The Committee at Ackworth considered suitable beds and bedding essential to the children's health. The investigator of the deaths of Brown's apprentices noted that

> the Beds the Children lie upon I think by no means proper, being Corded and a thin Mattrass laid upon those Cords, which must be very unfit to refresh those weary Limbs that have been kept the whole day to hard Labour.[24]

Linen was used at Ackworth for sheets, pillow covers and possibly for bed ticks. Flaxen or hempen cloth was used for sacking bottoms, tied onto the bed frame to hold the mattress up. During the period 1757 to 1772 a minimum of £223 9s. 3d. was spent on linen for sheets, towels and table linen for the Foundlings.[25] Wool was used to stuff the ticks and as flocks for blankets: £196 18s. 0.75d was spent on flocks alone and £158 0s. 1d. on blankets. Flocks were bought at least once a year from 1757 to 1766 (table 2.4). High annual expenditure in 1761, 1764 and 1765 probably related to the increasing number of children and need for more furnished beds to house them because there was a jump in numbers the following year. The fabric used for the Foundlings coverlets is not known. More was spent on woollen bedding than linen, specifically due to filling and re-filling bed ticks with flocks.

[24] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, p. 59, letter No. 3, T. Cope to unknown, April 1768.
[25] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory Book of Household and Farm Goods. This includes any carriage costs listed.

More than one child must have slept in each bed because when Ackworth closed in 1774 there were 156 ‘children’s bedsteads’ along with ten large bedsteads, presumably for adult staff and ten small bedsteads.[26] Support was provided by the twenty-nine straw beds and twenty-nine flock beds listed, clearly insufficient for the population. Feather beds seem to have been limited to the adults from their low number and high cost.[27] However, the children’s bedding was not lacking. Bed ticks which could have been linen, cotton or cotton-linens were bought relatively regularly. The carriage of bed ticks was listed in 1758 and from 1760 to 1765. Bed ticks were expensive. In 1760 ‘18 peices Bed ticks’ were bought for £25 7s. 0d. or £1 8s. 2d. each (338d.). This high price is likely to have led to the 1762 order that Hargreaves ‘buy also a Coarser sort of Bed Tick for the use of this Hospital that used at present being though too good for the purpose’.[28] Bolsters were used to support the children’s heads, 382 were listed in 1774, two bolsters for each of the 176 adults’ and children’s bedsteads. Other types of bed maintenance are unusual within the inventory. Sacking bottoms were rarely mended and only in small quantities. Bed cords, used to keep the sacking bottom taut on the bed and thus provide a flat surface for sleeping, were bought in small numbers indicating their durability which is unsurprising given that they were made of tough bast fibres.[29]

Several different types of bed covering were listed, blankets, coverlets, quilts and rugs. Woollen blankets were originally bought from Thomas Keighly in 1757 and 1758. Eighty-nine and a half pairs of blankets were bought from Keighly during these two years, ranging from 5s. 8d. to 6s. 11.5d. for a pair. After this date blankets were added or replaced from time to time. They were produced by the children in the manufactory from 1760. In 1761, 118 pairs were purchased from the manufactory. A few pairs were bought in 1762. Twelve pairs were scoured or cleaned in 1763 and an unknown quantity were scoured and raised to maintain the surface in 1773. At the closure of Ackworth in 1774 there were 1075 blankets at Ackworth, with pairs valued at 18d. to 72d. and single blankets at 8d. to 18d.[30] This number must have included under blankets and equated to six blankets for each bedstead. Each bed probably

[26] Ibid., p. 48.
[27] Ibid., pp. xvii, 2, 14, 25, 44, 48, 50, unnumbered 1757 sheet contained inside the volume. NB, only part of the book is paginated. All references in Roman numerals refer to section that is not paginated.
[28] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, p. 58.
[29] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory, pp. ix, xv, xvii, xix, 50.
[30] Ibid., pp. vii, xv, xvii, 9, 12-15, 17, 23, 37, 48.

had fewer blankets because in 1770 the Ackworth governors' committee noted that 'there are a Number of Blanketts and Coverlitts not in use and [...] they will spoil if kept unused'.[31] The expensive bed constructed in 1756 for a senior member of staff had three blankets as well as quilts.[32]

Coverlets, quilts and rugs were also used on beds. Coverlets significantly depreciated in value. Items worth 78d. to 127.5d. in the 1750s and 1760s were reduced to 3d. to 54d. in 1774. Quilts must have been restricted to staff due to the higher prices, with one quilt costing £1 2s. 10d. in 1757 and another at 16s. in 1760. It should be noted that quilts were not necessarily elite items, but simply that a few, expensive quilts were purchased for use at Ackworth. The use of rugs, another form of bed cover, at Ackworth is more ambiguous. Based on price, all thirty-four rugs purchased were silk therefore they were unlikely to have been used by the children because silk was not sufficiently durable. There were only three references to bed hangings or curtains, suggesting another a material differentiation between the beds of children, staff and senior staff. Bed lace was bought for a few staff beds but not all.[33]

Bed linens are harder to trace within the Inventory book than other textiles. Pillow and bolster covers are missing, with only twelve listed in 1774. Sheets were better represented. In 1773 and 1774, 169 pairs of sheets were listed, totalling at nearly two sheets per bedstead. Originally worth around 9s. per pair, the sheets had reduced in value to 3s. per pair. Sheets were not recorded systematically, 324 were listed in the clothing account book and daily journals from 1760 to 1767. New sheets were made in 1760 and 1763 to 1765 when linen cloth 'for sheets' and 'sheeting' was purchased. There appear to have been major additions in the numbers of sheets and replacements in 1764 and 1765 when £75 11s. 0d. and £55 11s. 10d. were spent respectively on sheeting.[34]

[31] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, p. 109.
[32] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory, unnumbered separate sheet.
[33] Ibid., pp. ix, 8 12-15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26, 27, 29, 32, 50, unnumbered separate sheet.
[34] Ibid., pp. 6, 21, 25, 27, 28, 31, 38, 42, 44; LMA, A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen, p. 24; A/FH/D/01/016/001, Daily Journal, pp. 40, 103, 319; A/FH/D/01/016/002, Daily Journal, pp. 27, 73, 185, 285, 331; A/FH/D/01/016/003, Daily Journal, p. 107; A/FH/D/01/016/004, Daily Journal, pp. 110, 140.

Table linens and towels appear infrequently in the Inventory book and were held in smaller quantities than sheets. Fifteen tablecloths, twelve of which were old, three breakfast cloths and twelve napkins were listed in the 1773 and 1774 summaries of goods. The only purchases listed were four tablecloths, six towels and a small unknown number of towels in 1757. Some of the tablecloths and towels used were probably made from the huckaback purchased in 1763 and 1764. There was also unused huckaback when the inventory was taken in 1773.[35] It is unclear how many towels there were at Ackworth but their numbers were apparently low compared to other textile goods, suggesting that each child was not allocated a single towel, supporting the idea that they did not wash their bodies extensively (see Chapter 4).

## Production and Provisioning

External suppliers and in-house manufacture were used to clothe the Foundlings. The Hospital relied on external suppliers for services that required apprenticeships to gain sufficient skill and thus could not be done by the Foundlings such as tailoring, cobbling, dyeing and finishing cloth. The Ackworth Committee's preference was for work to be completed on-site because it was cheap, reliable, there was greater quality control and it trained the Foundlings to be industrious from a young age, a key Hospital aim. The Ackworth Foundlings spun and wove woollen, worsted and flaxen cloth and made linen underwear and other garments, household linens and knitted stockings. Woollen cloth was used by Ackworth Foundlings, children in other branches and sold externally for income.

The manufactory was a key part of the Ackworth hospital. It produced clothing for the children and taught them textile production skills that some, particularly the girls would use during their adult lives. The intention was not to teach them a trade, but 'to give them an early Turn to Industry by giving them constant employment', even the 'Lame and infirm'.[36] The importance of this work is emphasised in the minutes of the London sub-committee when discussing proposals to allow Arbuthnot to apprentice a number of the female Foundlings to pencil calico. Their training would not be limited to indigo pencilling but also include plain sewing, knitting, spinning, reading and

[35] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory, Ibid., pp. ix, 22, 26-28, 30, 38, 42.
[36] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, p.121, Thomas Lee to Thomas Collingwood, 16 August 1769.

household work in case they were dismissed from the print works or got married.[37] In the London Hospital the children were set to work for 9.5 hours a day in the summer and at least 5.5 hours in the winter; the difference related to light level. These hours included a break for lessons every day.[38]

Manufacturing skills were potentially one of the factors that contributed to the sum paid for the apprentices. The London Committee suggested that fees should relate to 'Consideration of their Age, Strength, Health, Knowledge in Knitting, Spinning, Weaving'.[39] The Foundlings therefore received a similar education to pauper factory apprentices (PFAs) in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century who worked in textile factories and were also taught literacy and numeracy. Again girls were taught domestic tasks to make them widely employable post apprenticeship. Katrina Honeyman posited that PFAs were crucial for the expansion of the textile industry due to the skills needed and critically, learning how to work for long hours, close to other people in a dangerous environment. It was harder to get adults to adhere to factory conditions.[40] Without tracing the subsequent life histories of the Foundling children it is not possible to confirm the role of child apprentices within industrialisation.

Child labour did not automatically equate to child abuse in the period. Honeyman concluded that although the conditions in which the PFAs laboured were 'unacceptable' when viewed by standards of later decades, 'In comparison with the alternatives that existed for poor children [...] the conditions appear less bleak'.[41] Workhouse and factory regimes were comparable. Hours were longer at factories than workhouses but factory apprentices were more employable than workhouse children. Therefore the conditions at Ackworth were superior to workhouses, the main institutional alternative for the Foundlings. Ackworth staff considered the physical effect of work on the children's health and their regime appears to have been effective on this front. They also checked on apprentices as parishes did for

[37] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/004, Sub-Committee Minutes, 1759-1761, pp. 81, 86.
[38] Allin, 'The Early Years', pp. 158-59.
[39] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book: Ackworth to London, 1762-1766, A/FH/D/01/002/006, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 12 March 1768.
[40] Allin, 'The Early Years', p. 172; Katrina Honeyman, *Child Workers in England, 1780-1820: Parish Apprentices and the Making of the Early Industrial Workforce* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 129-49, 261-64.
[41] Honeyman, *Parish Apprentices*, p. 262,

factory apprentices later in the century.[42] When a large number of the woollen cloth manufacturer Brown's apprentices died from fever, it was discovered that those remaining suffered physically from spinning worsted without remission. Brown's business declined changing his working practice which meant that he required the children to spin worsted constantly. The Hospital investigation concluded that

> as the Children were thereby obliged to stand upon their Feet Continually, such Children as were not strong enough to endue that Labour are thereby become so lame in their Hips, thighs and Knees that it is with great Difficulty that they can walk over the Floor; He also observes, that if Mr Brown's Circumstances had been such as to have enabled him to have employed the said Children in Carding and Spinning of Wool as usual, 'tis probably that this Lameness wou'd have been prevented; as in that Case the Children wou'd have had an opportunity of sitting and standing alternately [...] that Whilst the Children were employed in Carding and Spinning, they never had the least Complaint of that kind.[43]

The physical damage to the children was so severe that it was concluded that it would 'be a long time before they became usefull Members, or can be placed out again; not so much for want to Health but the use of their Limbs'.[44] It was important that the children were able to work to ensure that they could support themselves in their future lives. However despite this, only thirty children returned to the Hospital quickly, while twenty stayed for half a year and Ann Ford remained permanently. This decision was taken despite the Committee's concerns about allowing children to return to Ackworth especially when they were still apprenticed, which stresses that it was seen as an essential action.[45]

The remit of the Foundling Hospital meant that it accepted children with conditions that impeded development, physical disabilities and learning difficulties and trained them in skills deemed appropriate for their ability. The Ackworth Committee was clear that all children should undertake work that matched their capabilities. In November 1769, Dr Lee expanded on this

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[42] Ibid., p. 262.
[43] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, pp. 59-60, unknown author and recipient, April 1768.
[44] Ibid., p. 62, unknown author and recipient, April 1768.
[45] Ibid., p. 60, unknown author and recipient, April 1768, pp. 66-67, Committee Minutes, pp. 68-69 John Hargreaves to unknown, 8 May 1768.

> we have no Child but can do something except Rebecca Baker even Bob Brown at sometimes can both pump Water and drive up the Cows. Humphrey May and Sampson Jones can work at the pump and tease Wool, Drucilla Bruce can Knitt a little but Rebecca Baker less, however both these will be taken this week and tried at Carding and Spinning: and I have the satisfaction of telling you that we leave no stone unturned to make them all of some Utility and that we have brought them all into such good order, as that, not one of them now is mischievious

thus showing that the Hospital aimed to make the best provision for all children under the care of Ackworth by making them industrious. This is further emphasised by the order that those classified as 'idiots' should stay at Ackworth for the time being in 1771 'as they are taught to do something and improve very much by the Care that is taken of them'.[46] All children with disabilities working in the manufactory were described as 'Idiots'. Four of the thirty-three boys with disabilities were in the manufactory: Philip Whitehead, Edward Barnard, Thomas Fitzland and Vernon Noak. Five of the thirty-three girls were involved with textiles: Alice Bright 'sews a little', Rebecca Lane spun as did Elizabeth Rickett who also suffered from bad eyes. Drucella Bruce and Mary Coleby both knitted.[47] In 1764, two girls with other medical conditions were mentioned. Clarissa Cripps, a dwarf, was set to 'Knit, Sow & Spin Line' and Ann Valley, who was piteously described as having 'a bad look, but not Lunatic as supp.d when sent' spun flax.[48]

The Hospital's requirement that the Foundlings work was typical of its time, although this study is a couple of decades earlier than other research. Jane Humphries identified that the average age that children started work was ten but this was dependent on male wages. From 1790 to 1850 it was common for the sons of low-paid groups such as miners, factory workers, casual workers and soldiers to start paid work under the age of ten. Any factor that interfered with income provision by the male head of the household led children to start work early, so the Foundlings were no different to their peers. They were required to work at an early age to breed

[46] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, p. 113.
[47] A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, pp. 149, 151-52, Thomas Lee to unknown, 13 November 1769.
[48] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 23 May 1764.

**Table 2.5, Employment of children at Ackworth in 1759**

| Born in … | Age in December 1759 | Numbers born in each year | | Household business | | Husbandry | | Linen manufactory | | Netting | | Woollen manufactory | | Garden | | Knitting | | Sewing | | School | | Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys |
| 1741 | 18 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1746 | 13 | 2 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1747 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 1 ‘Idiot’ | | | |
| 1748 | 11 | 3 | | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1749 | 10 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 ‘Idiot’ apothecary’s servant | | | |
| | 9 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 sickly | | | |
| 1750 | 8 | 9 | 15 | | | | | | | 4 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 1 | | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | | | |
| 1751 | 7 | 10 | 17 | | | | | | | 1 | 11 | 2 | 5 | | | 5 | 1 | 2 | | | | | |
| 1752 | 6 | 3 | 5 | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | |
| 1753 | 5 | 21 | 9 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 15 | | | | 5 | | | |
| 1754 | 4 | 3 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | | | | 3 | | | |
| 1755 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | **57** | **59** | **4** | **0** | **2** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **7** | **18** | **6** | **16** | **1** | **0** | **26** | **0** | **4** | **0** | **9** | **3** | **1** | **0** |

Source: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/065, Monthly account of children at Ackworth, 1757-1767, Employment 1757-1759

industriousness into them, typically aged four to five. Humphries' examples were apprenticed at fourteen, much later than the children under seven apprenticed by Ackworth, as a means of responding to the gradual reduction of Parliamentary support for children accepted during the General Reception.[49]

The most detailed manufactory breakdown was for mid-August 1757 to 31 December 1759 (table 2.5). In December 1759 there were 144 children under the care of the Ackworth Branch. Fifty-nine boys and fifty-seven girls were living in the Branch Hospital. The girls were spread across more forms of textile production than the boys, woollen manufactory, linen manufacture, knitting and sewing compared to woollen manufacture and netting (producing silk purses rather than fishing nets). There were sixteen boys in the woollen manufactory aged five to ten and six girls aged seven to twelve. Only girls were listed as in the 'linen manufactory'. It is unclear what work this included, whether it was just spinning or included weaving. These girls were aged five to eleven. Girls also knitted woollen stockings and sewed shirts and shifts and it is highly likely that they also made outer clothing for their female peers, like Foundlings did in London. All girls also 'assist in the Business when wanted'. Although the children started work at four or five, all children only worked part-time and also attended school. Those specified in the school category were unable to work due to age, illness or weakness.[50]

The children were more heavily concentrated in woollen textiles than linen textiles throughout the life of the Ackworth branch. Table 2.6 shows that significantly more boys and a higher proportion of them worked in the manufactory than girls in 1767. The declining numbers of boys overall related to increasing apprenticeship. The majority of girls were listed as in school full time: in the first quarter this was as high as 82 per cent.[51] The reason for this disparity is unclear; there were relatively similar proportions of girls and boys of the same ages. Perhaps it relates to the categorisation of their work, that the girls in school also sewed female garments and shirts and shifts when needed.

[49] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/065, Monthly Account of Children at Ackworth, see employment 1757-1759; Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 172-86, 210-52, 366-71.
[50] LMA, for example A/FH/A/03/005/005, Sub-Committee Minutes 1761-1764, pp. 123, 127; A/FH/Q/01/065, Monthly Account of Children at Ackworth, see employment in 1757-1759.
[51] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/065, Monthly Account of Children, employment in 1767.

**Table 2.6, The number of children employed in the Ackworth manufactory, 1767**

| | Boys | Percentage of total | Girls | Percentage of total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 December 1766 to 31 March 1767 | 152 | 38 | 62 | 14 |
| 31 March to 30 June 1767 | 125 | 34 | 61 | 14 |
| 31 June to 30 September 1767 | 125 | 33 | 61 | 13 |
| 30 September to 31 December | 84 | 30 | 54 | 12 |

Source: A/FH/Q/01/065, Monthly Account of Children, Employment in 1767

The Foundlings' shirts and shifts were made from linen. Cotton was rarely purchased and only appears as check and a single purchase of cotton flannel. Only one purchase of cotton fibre was made at Ackworth.[52] In contrast, £154 6s. 8d. was spent on flax fibre over twelve years from 1760 to 1771. Some of this yarn was used for the mixed-fibre cloth linsey-woolsey to clothe infant Foundlings (see Chapter 1). The vast majority of this fibre was specified as 'line' or tear (see Introduction). Tow does not appear which suggests that the Hospital considered it more useful for the children to spin wool, worsted and flaxen tear. After the flaxen yarn was spun by the children it was woven into cloth. It appears that plain linen cloth was woven by external suppliers more frequently than linsey-woolsey from August 1765. The only caveat is that it is not clear whether all payments for weaving linen and linsey were recorded in the Daily Journals (the daily records of Hospital expenditure) due to the absence of payments for weaving flaxen cloth in 1763 and 1764. A loom for weaving linen was set up in the Ackworth manufactory in 1762, payments for weaving woollen and worsted textiles in the Ackworth manufactory were recorded in the Daily Journals but linen weaving was not recorded for 1763 or 1764. Widow Greenfield and James Lambert were paid for weaving linen cloth in the manufactory from 1760 to 1762.[53] From August 1765 to April 1771 plain linen cloth was regularly woven for the Hospital by Garvis Carnelly and sometimes John England. Both also wove linsey-woolsey for the Hospital. There was some weaving specialisation: different

[52] LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/001, Daily Journal, p. 174; LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/002, Daily Journal, p. 27; A/FH/D/01/016/003, Daily Journal, pp. 63, 183; A/FH/D/01/016/005, Daily Journal, p. 66.
[53] LMA, A/FH/A/Q/01/016/001, Daily Journal, pp. 8, 13, 134, 204.

external weavers were paid for woollen and worsted textiles.[54] The quality of cloth produced must have varied, for example in 1767 Carnelly charged 2d. per yard of linen woven for 48 and 96 yards, 2.5d. for 38 yards and 3.5d. for 38 yards, prices that were not simply linked to the length of the piece of cloth as these examples indicate.[55] The ratio of internal production to external linen purchases is not known. Linen cloth was purchased from suppliers and at Knaresborough fair, Yorkshire.[56] Knaresborough was a major centre of linen production.[57]

The main business of the Ackworth manufactory was the production of woollen and worsted textiles. It is unclear why these were the priority rather than flaxen cloth. The manufactory accounts have to be reconstructed through the extensive Daily Journals which list manufactory purchases and internal and external sales of woollen cloth. Vouchers or bills also provide information on equipment and cloth processing undertaken offsite.[58] The manufactory was not a charitable enterprise, it followed a business model. Cloth was sold internally to the clothing account book and the inventory, to the London Hospital and externally. Equipment to establish the manufactory was ordered in September 1758 and it expanded over time.[59] Specific work was undertaken by the children. They carded the wool and combed the worsted to clean it and align the fibres for spinning; spun it into woollen and worsted yarn and wove the yarn into cloth.[60] Lists of tools made before the opening and after the closure of Ackworth show the minimum holdings at Ackworth. Four linen wheels were purchased from John Jackson in 1759 for 72d. per wheel. Five months later in May 1760 John Turton repaired eight linen wheels for 8d. each and made six woollen wheels at 24d. per wheel. Two further wheel purchases of an unknown type

[54] LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/001 to 005, Daily Journals. For example A/FH/D/01/016/001, Daily Journal, pp. 1, 8, 13, 71, 134, 204, 292, 306; A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 31 May 1762.
[55] LMA, A/FH/D/01/020/002, Vouchers, bills 7, 10, 12, 14.
[56] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen, pp. 72-73, 76-77, 83, 89.
[57] Harrogate W.E.A. Local History Group, *A History of Harrogate & Knaresborough* (Huddersfield: The Advertiser Press Limited, 1970), pp. 216-18, 263.
[58] A/FH/D/01/016/001 to 006, Daily Journals; A/FH/D/01/020/002, Vouchers, for example March 1767 bills 9, 10, July 1767 bills 1, 6. There are also two surviving summaries of 'goods on hand' from 1760 and 1762. However, these lists do not allow the calculation of the quantity of cloth produced annually; A/FH/A/15/002/002, Manufactory Account and Account for Parcels Sent, 1760; A/FH/M/01/005, Documents Bound in a Volume, pp. 102-05.
[59] A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, pp. 21, 51.
[60] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 375.

were made in 1760.[61] Thus in 1761 there were a minimum of sixteen spinning wheels in use.

The Ackworth manufactory started with a limited range of products and expanded them. On 5 February 1762 Hargreaves informed Collingwood that 'know I have begun the Manufactory of Serges & hope to have a few p.s for you by the end of this Month & further as you have Occasion'.[62] In March Hargreaves sent Collingwood two pieces of serge 'the first of our Manufactory', woven between 7 January and 12 March.[63] By the end of May 1762, there was a loom set up for weaving linen in the manufactory, apparently for the first time.[64] Some cloth manufacturing work was outsourced. John Whittaker's 1767 bill for serge charged for yarn and weaving processes: weaving, winding, sizing and warping. This cloth was woven offsite because Hargreaves was charged with carriage from Halifax. Whittaker ended the bill with the note 'Desires you would send me some more weft. for Hall that I have is short of 4 p.s wefts which is in y.e Weavers Hands'. Ackworth weft was used to reduce costs.[65] Perhaps this related to the skill of the Foundlings. Weft yarn was potentially quicker and easier to produce than warp yarn. It could be spun with less twist because it was not under tension like the warp.[66] John Ashworth charged for weaving, 'twining', milling and pearching (inspecting cloth for damage) for an unknown woollen or worsted textile later in 1767.[67] In these two instances, it appears that the Hospital only provided the weft, while the warp and other work was undertaken by paid external staff. It is unclear how much finishing work was undertaken in the Hospital. In December 1764 Hargreaves informed Collingwood that he could not send the serges yet which were still wet due to 'the badness of the Weather'.[68]

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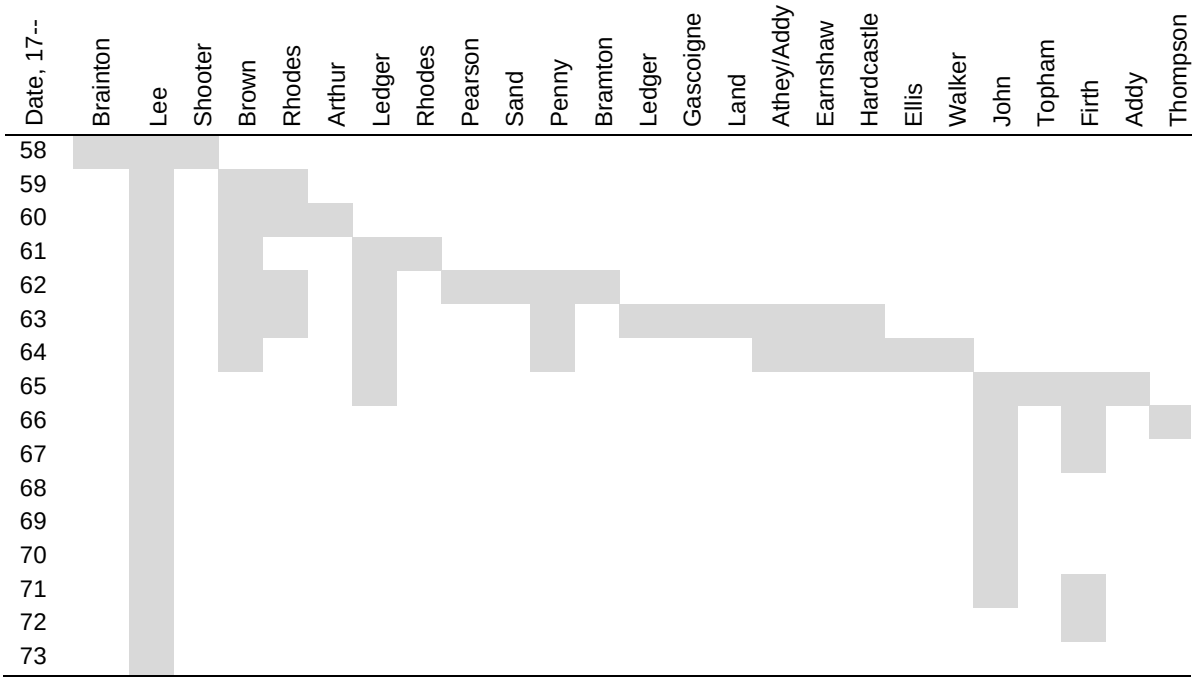
[61] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory, pp. 3, 5, 10.
[62] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 5 February 1762.
[63] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, p. 58; A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 13 March 1762;
[64] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 31 May 1762.
[65] A/FH/D/01/020/002, Vouchers, bill 9, March 1767. See also bill 1, July 1767.
[66] Styles, 'Fashion, Textiles'.
[67] A/FH/D/01/020/002, Vouchers, bill 6, July 1767. See also bill 2, December 1767; bill 15, October 1767.
[68] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 24 December 1764; 31 December 1764.

The Ackworth manufactory did not constantly manufacture every type of cloth. A variety of widths could be produced. This did not always end successfully for the Ackworth manufactory. Blankets 1.75 yards wide at 4.5 yards were sent to London in July 1762 instead of the twenty pairs of 2 and 2.5 yard wide blankets requested by London which could not be made at that time: 'As we have none now in the make it wou'd take ~~some~~ Months before we cou'd get you the quantity & Size you want'.[69] On receipt of the new larger blankets the London Committee responded that 'there are a large quantity of the same size that you have at your Hospital, now in this House, which have not been used, they came from your Manufact.ry' and that all would now be returned. Clearly the difference in size was considered problematic.[70] The larger blankets sent from Ackworth were 'as large as are generally used in this Country', so this problem could have related to the difference in temperature between Yorkshire and London.[71] Blankets with a width of 2 yards were later produced by Ackworth after an order in 1763. Further insight into the manufactory was given in March 1764 when Hargreaves stated that an order for red linings for clothes could not be fulfilled quickly because 'we have only one Boy that Weaves the Linings'.[72] A London order for 40 pieces of 'Long Ells' used for linings could not be met as quickly as London wanted because 'we have no yd wide in the Made at present & it will be some Months before we can get you 40 p.s'.[73] This specialisation is not surprising.

Ackworth required large quantities of products annually and thus needed reliable suppliers who provided good quality products in sufficient quantity. Suppliers were sought through advertisements and handbills and perhaps also informally, although these approaches were not recorded. The commissioning process was rapid. Handbills advertising for suppliers of coats and breeches were ordered to be printed and distributed on 6 March 1766 and on 3 April the agreements with Richard Crossley and Richard Nelstrop and William Clayton were recorded. External garment and shoe orders for Ackworth were commissioned from patterns which helped the Committee make the initial choice of supplier, style and introduced greater

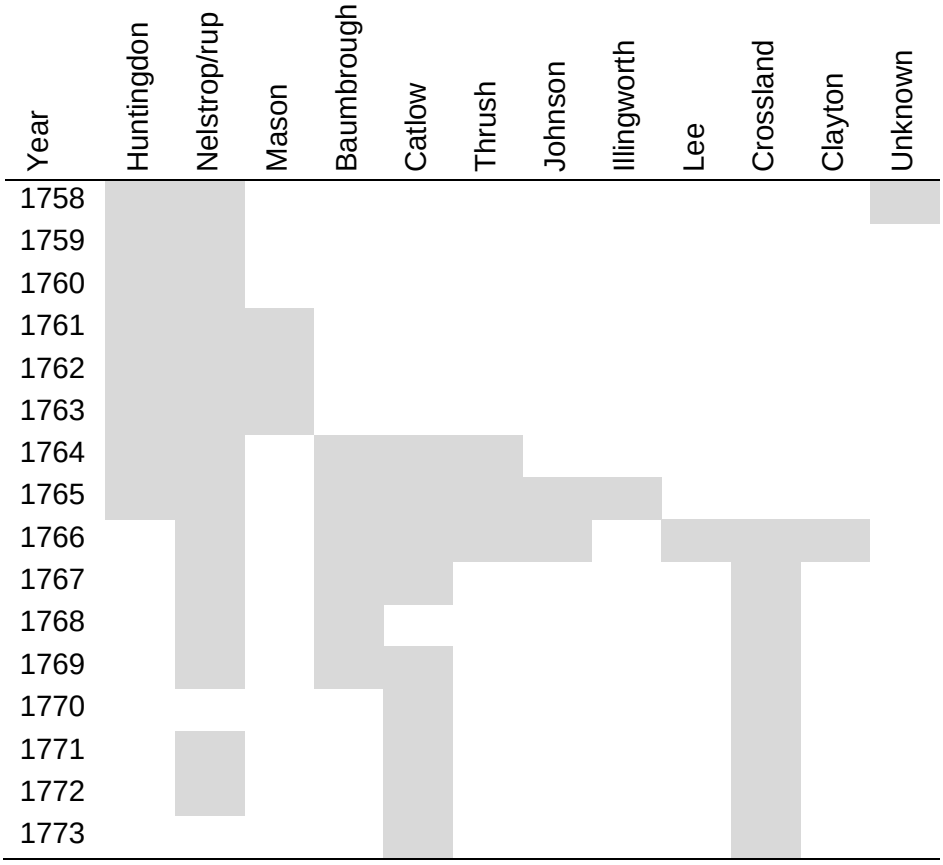
[69] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 17 July 1762; 26 July 1762.
[70] Ibid., Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 3 August 1762.
[71] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 17 June 1762.
[72] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 7 March 1763; 14 March 1764.
[73] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 4 March 1765.

**Table 2.7, Shoemakers and cobblers who supplied Ackworth Hospital, 1758-1773**




Source: A/FH/Q/01/028, Ackworth Monthly Expenditure on Clothing and Linen.

**Table 2.8, Tailors who supplied Ackworth Hospital, 1758-1773**




Source: A/FH/Q/01/028, Ackworth Monthly Expenditure on Clothing and Linen.

accountability into the process.[74] In contrast to Styles' findings there was a regional focus to textile purchases for Ackworth.[75] Suppliers were concentrated in Yorkshire and Lancashire. Implicitly this was due to the exceptional collection of textile manufacturing in the adjoining counties, with plain linen and broad cloth production in Yorkshire and plain and decorative linens and cotton-linens produced in Manchester. John Nicholson the Hospital's linen supplier was in York. Large quantities of linen were also purchased annually between 1761 and 1771 at the Knaresborough linen fair. Messers Low and Pierpoint of Manchester supplied haberdashery and check. Richard Sugden supplied serge, buckram and haberdashery from his business in Pontefract, Yorkshire. Relationships with suppliers were sufficiently cordial for them to accept Foundlings as apprentices.[76]

The Ackworth Management Committee found it difficult to find reliable garment suppliers able to cope with the quantity of goods required by its charges. Only one garment type had a single supplier to Ackworth: Bambrough Grice provided hats from 1759 to 1773. The scale of orders for shoes and boys' tailored clothing required multiple suppliers. As table 2.7 shows, twenty-five people sold shoes to the Hospital over a period of sixteen years. Orders ranged from one pair to 288 pairs which implies supply and quality issues. The erratic use of multiple shoemakers from 1758 to 1764 suggests problems with identifying suppliers that could provide enough shoes, in the range of required sizes and at a sufficient quality while the number of children rose from 122 in 1760 to 568 in 1765 (table 2.1). Presumably suppliers dropped off after a few years due to failures in quality, price, to meet deadlines, or retirement or bankruptcy. The focus on Thomas Lee, John Thompson and John Firth from 1766 to 1773 indicates that the Hospital governors preferred to work with a smaller number of trusted suppliers, an approach that held during the peak years 1765 to 1767 when more than 700 children were under the care of Ackworth and remained as numbers dwindled to eighty-one in 1772. Thomas Lee remained the

[74] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, pp. 10, 13, 80-81. For example in December 1765, 'proposals' from tradespeople for a year's supply of beef and shoes were sought through the 'Leeds Courant' (sic).
[75] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 275.
[76] LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/001, Daily Journal, p. 101; A/FH/D/01/020/002, Vouchers, bill 7; A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen, see for example pp. 26, 55, 83; A/FH/Q/01/058, Inventory, pp. 17, 18; A/FH/Q/01/062, Register of Children Received and Apprenticed. Markham Rosbee, Ackworth number 110, was apprenticed to Richard Sugden in 1766.

only consistent supplier of new shoes and he mended old shoes throughout the existence of the Branch.

The pattern of supply of boys' clothes from tailors differed slightly to shoes. Table 2.8 shows that one supplier, Richard Nelstrop, was used nearly continuously. This offered continuity and echoed the continuous use of Thomas Lee for shoes. However, unlike shoe provisioning, the highest number of suppliers were needed slightly later from 1764 to 1767, when Ackworth was at peak capacity with 568 to 884 children under its care. This pattern indicates two things. Firstly that the Ackworth Committee found it easier to find suppliers of the correct quality, quantity and price for boys' suits than shoes. Secondly it speaks to potential differences in products. Foundling uniforms could only be sold to the Ackworth Hospital and therefore the garments had to be ordered in advance. In contrast, as far as is known, there was no shoe style limited to the Foundlings, therefore the Foundlings shoes were interchangeable with those worn by children outside the institution and could be stockpiled before sale.

Alternatively these differences could reflect issues of workforce and production time. It appears that it the tailors supplying Ackworth produced a coat and breeches for a Foundling in less than a day. In 1767 Nelstrop was paid 11d. per set of coat and breeches and was separately paid 12d. for a day's work, the standard tailors' day wage at the Hospital.[77] It is not clear from the records how many shoes a cobbler produced a day, but if they could make more than one pair of shoes it would be easier to supply large orders of shoes than boys' clothes. Furthermore the difference may also reflect the size of the suppliers' businesses. Clearly a larger workforce manufactured higher quantities of goods. However speculative business expansion in response to high demand from Ackworth was not a sensible proposition. It was not necessarily a permanent institution and orders were not guaranteed, therefore for the tailors the most sensible business strategy was not to expand their workforce.

Difficulties with suppliers of shoes and boys' clothing emphasise the importance of the in-house production of other garments. Prices could be managed, there was a sufficient work force and quality control could be undertaken during the production

[77] LMA, A/FH/D/01/020/002, Vouchers, bill 31; A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen, pp. 46-49, 52, 56, 58, 65, 72, 77-87.

process. The girls' clothing appears to have been produced in the Ackworth Hospital indicating that this was the preferred option where possible. However boys' tailoring required a skill set that the Hospital was not able to teach the children within their relatively short residences. The children were set to work on tasks where they could achieve reasonable efficiency and create a durable product.

Linen shirts and shifts for the Ackworth Foundlings were produced within the Hospital's manufactory from 1761 to 1770. In 1758 shirts were supplied by the tailor Robert Heptonstall/Heptinstall. In-house production appears to have begun in 1761 when the first payment was made to the manufactory for the making of shirts and shifts.[78] During this ten-year period 13,442 children's shirts and shifts were churned out by the manufactory. It is not clear how many children undertook this work because plain sewing was a general female duty and was not limited to the manufactory. In 1767, 448 to 460 girls were resident at Ackworth. If all of the girls worked on 1680 pieces of underwear, they would each have produced around 3.7 shirts or shifts in a year, a very low rate. If all the girls working in the manufactory produced this number, they made 27 shirts or shifts each.[79] In 1769, a year of exceedingly high production, the Ackworth Committee ordered

> Should Apprentice fees be again given and more Children be sent from London as was the case last year, it appears to this Committee that 12 of the best sewers should be set apart for the Service of the Hospital lest all the best hands go off first and there be not sufficient left to make Shirts and Shifts as fast as they may be wanted. therefore this Committee are of opinion and do order that the 12 following Girls be set apart for that purpose Cicely May, Ann Peach, Deborah Rouse, Jane Morley, Catharine Powell, Mary Crouch, Sarah Hosier, Frances Mills, Elizabeth Tuston, Mary Foot, Mary Tirdall, Rose Carpenter & Hannah Bellamy.[80]

Apprenticeship did indeed continue and 830 shirts and shifts were made in the Ackworth manufactory in 1770 which would equate to sixty-nine shirts or shifts each for the twelve best sewers. There were up to 312 working days in a year therefore one shirt or shift was produced every 4.5 days. This is a relatively slow level of

[78] LMA, A/FH/D/01/016/005, Daily Journal, pp. 189, 217, 241; A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen, p. 2.
[79] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/065, Children at Ackworth, quarterly summaries for 1767.
[80] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/008, Order Book, p. 98.

**Table 2.9, Numbers of shirts and shifts made for the Ackworth Foundlings, 1761-1770**

| | Number of shirts and shifts made | Number of children at Ackworth | Number per child |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1761 | 32 | 174 | 0.2 |
| 1762 | 352 | 279 | 1.3 |
| 1763 | 740 | 347 | 2.1 |
| 1764 | 1218 | 568 | 2.1 |
| 1765 | 1428 | 778 | 1.8 |
| 1766 | 2022 | 884 | 2.3 |
| 1767 | 1680 | 725 | 2.3 |
| 1768 | 2860 | 354 | 8.1 |
| 1769 | 2280 | 239 | 9.5 |
| 1770 | 830 | 170 | 4.9 |
| Total | **13442** | | |

Sources: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen; A/FH/D/01/016/001 to 005, Daily Journals.

production given that some of the garments were for small children and therefore required less stitching. The twelve girls therefore did not make underwear fulltime.

In-house production offered convenience and a reliable supply of underwear, an important consideration when producing thousands of shirts and shifts annually. It was also cheaper because the Foundlings were not paid for their work. Plain sewing continued while woollen cloth declined later in the 1760s when woollen and worsted textiles were no longer sold to individuals outside the Hospital in large quantities. Necessity drove production of linen underwear. From 1761 to 1763, the manufactory was 'paid' 3d. for each shirt or shift and 6d. for each 'couple' of shirts or shifts. Costs reduced in June 1764 to 5d. for a 'couple' of shirts or shifts. This lower price continued until 1770.[81] The 0.5d. saving per garment was significant when such large quantities were being produced. In 1765, 1428 shirts and shifts were made in the Ackworth manufactory, therefore 714d. or £2 19s. 6d. was saved. The reduction in costs related to the mass production of garments – 478 more items of underwear were produced in 1764 than 1763 (table 2.9). However it is not clear why the spike in production reduced costs given that the manufactory faced different commercial pressures from independent businesses who required a steady flow of orders to stay

[81] LMA, for example, A/FH/D/01/016/001, Daily Journal, p. 277; A/FH/D/01/016/002, Daily Journal, pp. 127, 285, 377; A/FH/D/01/016/003, Daily Journal, pp. 39, 191; A/FH/D/01/016/004, Daily Journal, pp. 6, 184; A/FH/D/01/016/005, Daily Journal, pp. 66, 189; A/FH/Q/01/028, Order Book, p. 2.

**Table 2.10, Stocking procurement at Ackworth, 1758-1772**

| Year | lb. of stocking yarn bought by clothing account (% spun at Ackworth) | Stocking pairs produced by manufactory | Stocking pairs purchased from external supplier | Total expenditure on stockings (d.) | No. of children resident at Ackworth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1758 | 11 (0) | | 163 | 1339.5 | unknown |
| 1759 | 6lb 2oz / up to 14* (0) | | unknown* | 338.0 | unknown |
| 1760 | 160lb 12oz (57) | | 288 | 5779.0 | 122 |
| 1761 | 143 (86) | 96 | | 3046.0 | 174 |
| 1762 | 120 (100) | > 328 | | > 4600.0 | 279 |
| 1763 | 527 (100) | 864 | | 14156.0 | 347 |
| 1764 | 1040 (100) | 2525 | | 29642.0 | 568 |
| 1765 | 1402 (100) | 3625 | | 32057.0 | 778 |
| 1766 | 1946 (100) | 3326 | | 26610.0 | 884 |
| 1767 | 1787 (100) | 3581 | | 31587.0 | 725 |
| 1768 | 703 (100) | 1720 | | 13656.0 | 354 |
| 1769 | 535 (100) | 819 | | 9213.0 | 239 |
| 1770 | 954 (100) | 2264 | | 18240.0 | 170 |
| 1771 | | | | | 131 |
| 1772 | 20 (100) | | | 240.0 | 81 |
| Total | **9354lb. 14oz** | **19148** | **451+** | **190503.5** | |

Source: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen. *Includes two parcels containing an unknown quantity of stockings and stocking yarn.

afloat. In a business, prices could be reduced through negotiation for bulk orders, but this was internal production, it is hard to see where labour costs could be cut. There are two possible causes, firstly that less supervision by the seamstress was needed or that her/their wages were negotiated down. Secondly that cost cutting related to juggling the accounts. Manufactory goods were sold internally therefore funds were transferred from the clothing account to the manufactory account to cover the cost of

production and materials, therefore the 0.5d. reduction could relate to a change in the way that the Hospital decided to manage its books. It is not clear how children were provisioned with underwear after 1770. Perhaps the accounting system changed and these garments were listed in a book that no longer survives.

Stockings are an ideal comparison to shirts and shifts because they also absorbed smelly bodily secretions therefore each child received more than one change of each garment. They were also the only garments other than girls' coats and petticoats where nearly the whole production process was undertaken at Ackworth. The clothing and linen account book lists payments for stockings, stocking yarn and sometimes knitting and dyeing stockings from 1758 to 1773. Around half a pound of fibre was needed for a pair of stockings based on averaging the figures in table 2.10. Stocking production at Ackworth was limited, if non-existent, in the first few years as table 2.10 shows. In 1758, 163 pairs of stockings were purchased at 6.5d. per pair while 288 pairs were purchased at 6 to 7d. per pair. Boys' stockings cost 0.5d. more than girls' in 1760 but this gender difference was not recorded again. Stockings were grey, blue and brown. The Ackworth stockings at 14d. a pair were twice as expensive as those from external suppliers when the children's labour was priced in by Hospital staff. However the only real costs, given the free labour, were the wool and the dyeing. Woollen and linen cloth and yarn was dyed by external craftspeople, therefore it is likely that the stocking yarn was also dyed externally. Dyeing cost 2d. per lb. of yarn in 1761 and 3d. per lb. in 1762, therefore it cost 1d. per pair and 1.5d. per pair respectively. The average price paid for a stone of wool in 1763 was 8s. 7d. therefore a half pound of yarn cost 3d. and the lowest price that could be achieved was 4d. per pair. Similarly in 1773, 404 pairs of 'New Stockings' were valued at 3d. a pair, half the price of externally supplied garments, therefore a substantial saving was in fact achieved by in-house manufacture. Stockings were valued differently within the clothing book to 'balance' the Ackworth books.[82]

Large numbers of stockings were produced annually, peaking at 3625 pairs or 7250 individual stockings in 1765. The Ackworth manufactory had an output of 19,184

[82] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/028, Clothing and Linen, pp. 13, 14, 21-24, 27, 91; A/FH/Q/01/047, Receipt Book for Wool 1763-1765, samples from pp. 1, 20-22. In 1761 Ackworth stocking yarn was valued at 16d. per lb. and the cost of knitting and dyeing was 6d. per pair with 0.5lb of yarn needed for a pair of stockings, Ackworth stockings cost 14d. for a pair. The knitting was undertaken in the manufactory, evidenced by the purchase of knitting needles.


**Figure 2.5, Shirts, shifts and stockings produced at Ackworth Manufactory p.a., 1761-1770.**

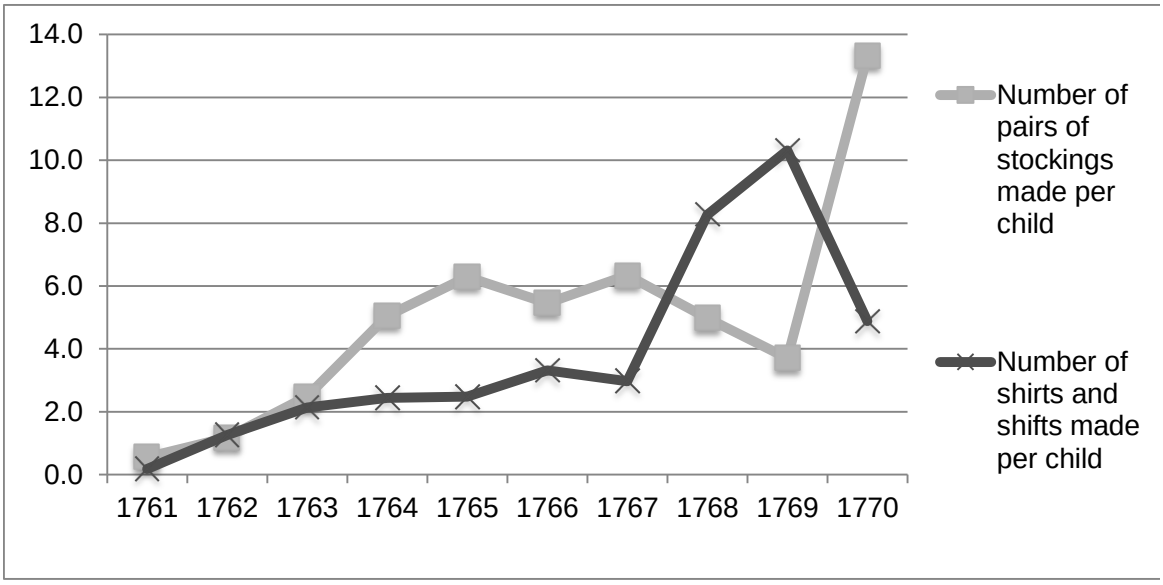



**Figure 2.6, The number of shirts and shifts and pairs of stockings produced per child under the care of Ackworth, 1761-1770.**

pairs of stockings in ten years. The Ackworth Foundlings spun 9177lb. of stocking yarn to produce these 38,296 individual stockings. The correlation between the number of children under Ackworth's care and the number of stockings produced in the manufactory is limited. There was a general increase in the numbers of pairs as more children entered Ackworth, however there are anomalies: 2264 stockings were knitted in 1770 when only 170 children were under Ackworth's care. There was only limited correlation between the production of stockings and underwear as figure 2.5

**Table 2.11, 'An Account of the CHILDREN in the FOUNDLING HOSPITAL at *ACKWORTH*, from *December* 31 1769, to *December* 31, 1770'**

| | | | | Boys | Girls | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Remained in the Hospital the 31st of December, 1769 | | | | 46 | 193 | 239 |
| Received from London and Salop in the Course of this Year | | | | 65 | 170 | 235 |
| Total to account for | | | | 111 | 363 | 474 |
| | Boys | Girls | Total | | | |
| Of which have been apprenticed | 62 | 234 | 296 | | | |
| Dead | 1 | 7 | 8 | 63 | 241 | 304 |
| Remain in the Hospital the 31st of December 1770 | | | | 48 | 122 | 170 |

Source: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/016/A/15/002, see table title.

illustrates. For the first three years, stockings and underwear were produced in similar quantities, then for four years stocking production was higher than shirts or shifts and then they swapped over for 1768 and 1769. Underwear production declined in 1770 as the numbers of children at Ackworth reduced. Figure 2.6 emphasises the disparities between the number of children and the number of garments made. In 1773, only 404 pairs of stockings were transferred to the London Hospital which was not enough to explain the disproportionate number of stockings produced in 1770. Given that the children were allocated two new pairs of stockings annually, there were large surpluses every year from 1764. In contrast the numbers of shirts and shifts per child remain within the expected range of two to three from 1763 to 1767 (table 2.9). There was a contrasting jump in the numbers of shirts from 1768 to 1770. These changes were due to apprenticeship. There was a dramatic drop in the number of children from 725 in December 1767 to 354 in December 1768 (table 2.1). Boys were easier to apprentice than girls: there were 276 boys and 449 girls in the Hospital in December 1767, a disparity which continued in 1769 and 1770 as table 2.11 illustrates.[83] Only girls produced shirts and shifts therefore the disproportionate production of underwear in 1768 and 1769 related to girls continuing their plain sewing at high rates, presumably to keep them occupied, despite the declining numbers of children. The dip in the numbers of pairs of stockings produced in 1768 and 1769 is likely to relate conversely to the declining numbers of boys. In the London Hospital boys knitted stockings, presumably it was

[83] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, p. 67, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 7 May 1768.

the same at Ackworth.[84] Furthermore, more children were needed to produce stockings because yarn had to be spun, doubled and then knitted. The final jump in stocking production in 1770 could relate to leftover worsted yarn which had been spun for cloth production but could have been doubled to be made into stockings.

## Cloth for the London Foundlings

The Ackworth branch came to supply the London Hospital with much of its fabric during the former's short existence through production of woollen and worsted cloth within the manufactory and proxy purchasing of linen. By December 1765, production levels at Ackworth were sufficiently high that Hargreaves suggested 'as we are now making greater Quantitys I was in hopes of Supplying both your & our Hospital with all that is wanted without buying any'.[85] Orders placed by the London Hospital with Ackworth were essentially business transactions and there were few compromises in the quality of cloth procured. Typical business concerns were expressed in letters from the London Hospital. The trade between Ackworth and London was mutually beneficial. While Hargreaves begged for orders in his letters, the London Hospital was equally reliant on Ackworth. The Ackworth branch solicited and chased orders from London. Stockpiling by the London Hospital led to reduced need. Hargreaves regularly notified Collingwood when textile goods were sent down to London, presumably to reassure Collingwood that the orders were being fulfilled and for a quicker awareness of the theft of goods on route.[86]

Hargreaves was asked for a quote for making twenty pieces each of brown serge and bays in November 1767 but the London Committee specified that if these could not be manufactured the cloth should not be purchased in Yorkshire because they were 'of opinion that they can buy it of a better quality and cheaper in London'.[87] Although the cloth trade was mutually beneficial, Ackworth products were not paid

[84] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/004, Sub-Committee Minutes 1759-1761, pp. 47, 76, 97, 123.
[85] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 12 December 1765.
[86] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/001, Correspondence from London, letter 14, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 3 August 1762; letter 27, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 22 May 1762; A/FH/D/01/002/007, Correspondence from London, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 22 April 1769; LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 13 March 1762, 28 April 1762, 10 June 1762, 18 January 1763, 7 March 1763, 11 April 1763, 2 May 1763; LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, letter not numbered, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 26 February 1763.
[87] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/005, Correspondence from London, letter 26, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 28 November 1767.

for unquestioningly. Certain standards were required. Cloth was expected to stand up to comparison with that sold in London. In April 1762 Collingwood informed Hargreaves of the results of a comparison between an Ackworth serge and a serge purchased in London already in use by the Hospital. Collingwood reassured Hargreaves that the letter was 'not out of a spirit of Criticism but only for your government for it is a spirit of Industry not gain that is apprehended must be the consequence of any Infant Manufactory'. Still he condemned the Ackworth serge as too light and too expensive. A yard of London cloth 26.1 inches wide weighed 9.6oz., had a warp count of 58 ('threads Chain') and 38 in the weft and cost 17.5d. while that from Ackworth at 33.4 inches weighed 8.75oz., with a thread count of 50 x 26 and cost 20d. If scaled down to the London cloth, the Ackworth serge weighed only 6.75oz. therefore 'the price should be no more than 15d. ¾ Hence you will be pleased to observe that you must try to better your Manufacture making it both weightier & cheaper if you can'.[88] However perfection was not always essential. The linen yarn spun by children at the London Hospital and woven into cloth in Ackworth was referred to as inferior quality to linen to that to be externally commissioned, 'it will be some thing like these 2 p.s of yours which Comes in this parcel but rather better'.[89]

Hargreaves' letters to Thomas Collingwood, the London Hospital secretary contained assurances of the quality of cloth, for example in 1762 after sending the first Ackworth serges to London, Hargreaves noted 'Am only afraid you'll think them too good'.[90] Attempting to get an order for blankets in 1764 Hargreaves wrote of the blankets in stock, 'they are very stout Good Wool'.[91] Soliciting an order in June 1765 Hargreaves wrote to Collingwood, 'I shou'd be glad to receive your further Commands as I make no doubt but the Prices when Compared with the Goodness of the Cloaths will exceed your expectations'.[92] Only one instance of a discount for lower quality workmanship appeared in Hargreaves' letters, when in October 1765 he informed Collingwood that of the serges sent 'part of these & part of last Pack are inferior to what I used to send you which hath been the cause of my charging them

[88] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/016/004, Secretary's Papers, 1762-1767, Letter from Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 1 April 1762.
[89] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 19 March 1763.
[90] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 13 March 1762
[91] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, October or November 1764.
[92] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 6 June 1765.

so much lower'.[93] Collingwood was particular about the width of cloth, specifying 300 hundred yards of brown cloth at width 0.94 yards 'as it will cut out to most advantage'. However need trumped economy of materials with a request that 'however if you have any read of a different width on hand, you may send it'.[94]

Typical business methods were used to establish the appearance and the quality of linens and woollens traded between the Ackworth and London Hospitals. References to 'paterns' of cloth appear in the letters and samples of Ackworth products survive from 1762. Samples were used to send potential products for the London Hospital's approval and to research the commissioning of cloth which was standard business practice.[95] In December 1762 for example, samples of strong unbleached and bleached linens purchased for use at Ackworth were sent to the London Hospital when the latter considered changing supplier. A variety of qualities were sent. The strong flaxen cloth at 20 yards long and 1 yard wide was priced at 18s., 19s., 20s., 21s. and 22s., while the bleached flaxen cloth at 0.875 yards (length unknown) cost 18s. 6d. to 25s. 6d. per yard. Samples of Ackworth wool textiles were also sent by the same package (probably the samples shown in figure 4.4) although Hargreaves warned that 'the Quantity is very uncertain as 'tis fluctuating every day we having a demand equal to our make (that is) we sell them as fast as we can get them finish'd'.[96] A sample of linen cloth was sent from London to Ackworth for Hargreaves to research whether they could produce the cloth and at what price: 'the Consumption of which is very great in this Hospital'.[97]

[93] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 7 October 1765.
[94] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, letter not numbered, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 26 February 1763.
[95] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/001, Correspondence from London, letter 6, John Tucker to Richard Hargreaves 27 November 1762; letter 8, Thomas Collingwood to Sir Rowland Winn, 11 December 1762; Lesley Ellis Miller, *Selling Silks: A Merchant's Sample Book 1764* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2014); Giorgio Riello, *Cotton*, for example, pp. 145-46, 167-69. Pattern or sample books for different types of eighteenth-century textiles survive in multiple museums, including the National Archives, London, the Metropolitan Museum, New York, Winterthur Museum, Delaware and the V&A. Silk, cotton, mixed cotton and linen, wool and worsted textiles are more typical in sample books than plain linens.
[96] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 1 December 1762.
[97] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/001, Correspondence from London, letter 22, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 19 June 1762.

## Linen for the London Foundlings

**Table 2.12, Number of pieces of ell-wide linen sent from Ackworth to the London Hospital, 1763-1766**

| | 1763 | 1764 | 1765 | 1766 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | | 19 | | 50 |
| February | | | 22 | |
| March | 18 (or 466 yards) | | | |
| April | | 40 | | |
| May | | | 50 | 50 |
| June | | | | |
| July | 10 | | | |
| August | 24 plus 293.5 yards | | 50 | 50 |
| September | 1 | | | |
| October | | 28 | | |
| November | | | | |
| December | | | | 51 |
| Total | **53 plus 293.5 yards** | **87** | **122** | **201** |

Sources: LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766 and A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770.

The purchase of sufficient linen cloth was a concern for the London Foundling Hospital. Linen cloth for the London Hospital was often purchased outside London, with references to purchases from fairs in Chester and Knaresborough and commissions for the production of linen.[98] It appears that linen cloth was only purchased by Ackworth staff for the London Hospital from 1763 to 1766 (see table 2.12). The start date is uncertain because no correspondence exists between Ackworth and London before 1762. During 1762 discussions focused on weaving-up flaxen yarn spun by the London Foundlings and the various qualities of linen cloth that could be purchased in in Yorkshire. There were no linen orders. After 1766 linen cloth was no longer referred to by Hargreaves or Collingwood.

The London Hospital commissioned Hargreaves to organise the weaving of 224lb. of flaxen yarn spun by the London Foundlings. On 31 May 1762, Hargreaves stated that he could ‘make tryal’ of some of the flaxen yarn spun in London, enough to

[98] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/001, Correspondence from London, letter 19, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 1 July 1762.

make one or two pieces because 'we have now a Loom up in y.t branch'.[99] On 10 June Hargreaves agreed to take the commission, adding 'I only desire you'll not send too much till we see wheather the Yarn is Weavable or not'.[100] However his wish to trial the yarn to check whether it produced good cloth was apparently ignored and on 5 July 1762 all of the yarn was sent to Ackworth. The London spinning mistress had trained the children to produce four different qualities of yarn which were packaged separately to be made into four different qualities of cloth at Ackworth. The quality of the yarn and cloth is unknown: they are only described in reference to one another in terms of 'finest' and 'coarsest'. J. Denham emphasised to Hargreaves the importance of keeping the different yarns and cloth separate and identifiable 'Each Sort pack'd by itself, & mark'd distinctly' and 'the Produce of each Sort they would have to be distinctly Noted' which perhaps implies the Hospital officials' lack of expertise in linen quality, that the four grades of flaxen yarn were relatively similar qualities or that this commission was part of an experiment in which yarn quality was most efficient to spin and weave and was most durable when in use.[101] The 224lb. of yarn produced 293.5 yards of linen. However, the lengths of cloth produced by each quality of yarn was not recorded, so the weights of the final pieces are unknown. London was only charged for weaving, bleaching and carriage, totalling at £6 14s. 6.5d., or 5.5d. per yard of cloth.[102] There were no later discussions of the linen qualities in the correspondence between London and Ackworth.

Linen cloth was purchased in vast quantities for the London Hospital during the 1760s driven by the thousands of children accepted during the General Reception. Sir Rowland Winn, baronet, resident of Nostell Priory and treasurer of the Ackworth Branch Hospital was commissioned by the London administrators in February 1763 to send 1000 yards 'of your Ell wide Linen' for 'Shirting & Sheeting the Children' at London from the Ackworth manufactory to be shipped from Hull. In the same letter, another 2000 yards 'with the blue Stripe in the middle' was ordered 'to be set about

[99] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/001, correspondence from London 1762, 5 July 1762; A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 31 May 1762.
[100] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 10 June 1762.
[101] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/001, Correspondence from London, letter 18, J. Densham to Richard Hargreaves, 5 July 1762.
[102] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 3 August 1763.

as soon as your Manufacturey conveniently can'.[103] The blue stripe was necessary 'for the distinction' of this cloth, to show that it belonged to the Foundling Hospital. This type of material identifier was also in use at Greenwich Hospital.[104] Just over a week later, Winn was requested to purchase 3000 yards of linen again one ell wide at Knaresborough linen fair, while the 1000 yards without a blue stripe was to be sent and the other 2000 yards still to be manufactured.[105] Hargreaves sent 468 of the 1000 yards on 19 March, but warned Collingwood that it 'is impossible to buy the Quantity of Ell wide Lin.n you want in any Market in this Country without bespeaking it a long before'. An order of 2000 yards or 'raw Linns Ell wide w.th ye Stripe' would 'be a long time in making'. He suggested an alteration in width for ease of purchasing, that yard wide cloth should be used for shirts and shifts 'because that Comes Cheaper & I can send you any Quantity of it on very Short Notice'. An alternative option was ell wide cloth at 18d. a yard, 'very good of ye Piece' however it would have to be produced without the blue stripe.[106]

In July the 2500 yards was still missing. Requests were made with an air of desperation. On 4 July, Collingwood wrote 'as soon as you are able to procure any more Linen be pleased to forward it' while on 9 July he asked Hargreaves 'that you will immediately procure for the use of this Hospital two thousand five hundred yards of Ell wide Linen Cloth of the same sort as the 468 yards last sent'.[107] Twenty pieces of linen, possibly 400 yards, was sent in July while Hargreaves was waiting on 'a promise' of thirty pieces at the end of August. Hargreaves again suggested an alternative, the same fabric in a different width, 1.125 yards which would allow for speedier delivery of the order.[108] Twenty-four pieces were sent in late August and London was still begging for linen in September. Hargreaves sent a sample of an alternative type of ell wide linen in September, 'the Sort I sent before is very scarce,

[103] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, Thomas Collingwood to Sir Rowland Winn, 26 February 1763; Allin, 'The Early Years', p. 82.
[104] LMA, A/FH/A/03/006/001, Clothing and Furniture Committee Minutes, 1757, 23 and 30 June 1757.
[105] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, Thomas Collingwood to Sir Rowland Winn Baronet, 5 March 1763.
[106] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 19 March 1763.
[107] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 9 July 1763.
[108] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 16 July 1763; 30 July 1763.

'tho I do expect I can send you another parcel of it in a Short time'.[109] However, on 25 October, this ell-wide Sheeting linen remained untested in London. Collingwood stated that it had 'to be washed & tryed, before any order is given thereon'.[110] The timing of linen orders was again a problem in 1764 when Hargreaves informed Collingwood that 'I had great difficulty in procuring these P[iece]s at the usual price If you sho'd want more you must let me know in time'.[111] Sourcing larger quantities of linen was therefore a major problem for the London Hospital. This had implications for cleanliness. Smaller quantities of linens meant that they would be washed less frequently, although it is not clear whether the production of underwear or sheets was prioritised during these linen shortages.

In times of high demand, price triumphed over quality for proxy purchases by Ackworth, which was unpopular with the London Committee. In September 1764 Hargreaves wrote: 'I agree with you that the last parcel was not so good as that sent before notwithstanding that the Demand was then so great it was with great difficulty I got them for less than 40/ p p.s [shillings per piece]'.[112] Weavers were in a precarious position. With twelve days to go before the completion of an order of 50 pieces of 'Ell wide Sheetings' in April 1765, Hargreaves asked Collingwood whether the quantity was still needed by the Hospital 'otherwise you'll please to give me a line Immediately that I may not disappoint the Maker'.[113] Nicholson also supplied cloth bought for the London Hospital and was always remunerated with a draft that could be paid a month after issue.[114]

## Conclusion

The case study of the Ackworth branch of the Foundling Hospital has revealed that the procurement of clothing for the children was primarily driven by business decisions. Issues of quality, price and reliable production, combined with a desire to train the children into industrious behaviour and to provide girls with skills for their

[109] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 30 August 1763; 24 September 1763.
[110] LMA, A/FH/D/01/002/002, Correspondence from London, Thomas Collingwood to Richard Hargreaves, 25 October 1763.
[111] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 30 April 1764.
[112] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 19 September 1764.
[113] Ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 19 April 1765.
[114] For example, ibid., Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 15 October 1764; Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 6 May 1765.

future lives influenced key decisions. Linen underwear and stockings were produced in the manufactory as well other items of girls' clothing because it taught useful skills, there was a reliable workforce, quality control and it saved money. In contrast boys' clothing and shoes were made externally because a more complex skill set was needed for their production. Woollen and worsted cloth manufactured at Ackworth supplied the Branch and the London Hospital and produced profits through external sales. It is unclear why wool not flaxen cloth was produced at such high levels at Ackworth. There was some supplier loyalty and new suppliers were recruited when quality was unsatisfactory or current suppliers had reached maximum output. Finally, the sale of cloth from Ackworth to London complicates the regionality of the story. The Ackworth Hospital bought from Yorkshire and Lancashire, but London benefited from this trade at a distance with goods delivered from Hull via sea, therefore it is not simply the case that the Foundling branches were supplied from their surrounding counties.[115]

In this respect, Foundling Hospital practice differed slightly from the choices made for children under parish care. Although both aimed for decent clothing for the children, in-house cloth manufacture was rare at parish level. The Ackworth manufactory in contrast was a business venture. The London Hospital did not accept textiles of any quality from Ackworth. The Ackworth textiles were local by default rather than design, because linens and woollen cloth for the London Hospital were also from Yorkshire, matching Styles' assertion that parishes bought textiles from across the country to clothe their poor. The Foundlings were not badged as many of their poor peers were, but they were uniformed and numbered, alternative forms of public identification that were definitely not fashionable, undercutting King's argument that fashionable clothing was provided to the poor.

The experiences of the Foundling children at Ackworth parallel Humphries' and Honeyman's findings on child labour and apprenticeships. The parents of the children Humphries and Honeyman discuss were low-paid and they started work before the age of 10. They were more vulnerable to various types of abuse in factories than the children from the Hospital's branches, but they were taught varied

[115] LMA, A/FH/A/03/006/001, Clothing and Furniture Committee Minutes, 9 June 1757; A/FH/A/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, p. 7, Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 26 May 1766.

skills to widen their chances of future employment, including domestic work for girls, literacy and knitting. There were two major differences between the Ackworth Foundlings and the children studied by Humphries and Honeyman. Firstly the Foundlings were apprenticed at earlier ages than Parish Factory Apprentices. Secondly, their work in large, single-site manufactories was undertaken in the decades before the studies by Humphries and Honeyman. It appears that the education and apprenticeships of the Ackworth Foundlings were at the forefront of manufacturing methods.

A counterpoint to this study appears in the following chapter which examines family life. The work undertaken by the plebeian Latham family to support the household is explored. This domestic study still features child labour. The temporalities of production are uncovered in greater detail. Essentially the two chapters offer contrasting yet complementary pictures of the integration of textiles into daily life that hundreds of thousands of people experienced in England during the long eighteenth century.

## Chapter 3. Family Life: Temporal Influences on Domestic Linen Production and Care

Linen manufacturing grew exponentially in Britain during the eighteenth century.[1] Parliament actively promoted the trade from the late seventeenth century to reduce the heavy reliance on foreign imports. Linen manufacture unlike woollen production relied heavily on domestic production. A substantial proportion of linen was manufactured independently on small farms because flax spinning was only fully mechanised in the 1820s. Domestic production offered securer profits than the putting-out system, because for example in Armagh, Ireland manufacturers who put out yarn needed to sell it for more than 7d. a hank for a profit while weavers purchasing yarn needed it to buy it for less than 7d.[2] These farms undertook all processes from growing to bleaching, or a few of these, such as spinning yarn. Fibre from Ireland and the Baltic was used by English farmers if they did not cultivate it themselves. As well as production for sale these farms manufactured linen for their own use.[3] The scale of this production is unknown.

This chapter takes a micro approach to these manufacturing trends by analysing the account book of the Latham family from Scarisbrick, Lancashire. With six daughters and only one son, the Lathams were reliant on spinning to sustain family income therefore they are an ideal example to examine linen production by farmers. They grew and bought flax which they then spun and they bleached cloth. They also spun cotton yarn under the putting-out system, most likely for Manchester manufacturers, therefore they bridged different organisational systems of textile manufacturing. This micro approach allows consideration of fluctuations in household production relating to the life cycle which can be lost in macro narratives of industrial change. The Lathams are also an example of Jan de Vries' 'industrious revolution'. They worked

[1] A version of this chapter was published as 'The Fabric of Life: Time and Textiles in an Eighteenth-Century Plebeian Home', *Home Cultures,* special issue 'Domestic Practice in the Past: Historical Sources and Methods', 11:3 (November, 2014), pp. 353-74. The main difference is a primary focus on domestic linen production rather than domestic practice. N.B. the first edition of Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1780) is used in the thesis rather than the second edition, published in London in the same year which is used in the article, because there is more detail in the former.
[2] Jane Gray, *Spinning the Threads of Uneven Development: Gender and Industrialization in Ireland during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), p. 107.
[3] Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry*, pp. 1, 38-40, 109; Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry,* pp. 1-2, 151; Gill, *Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, pp. 1-3, 31-32; Hastings, 'The North Riding Linen Industry', pp. 67-75.

in the proto-industrial linen industry. De Vries considers proto-industry a key means of the intensification of work that denoted the industrious revolution.[4] The Lathams' household economy was market oriented, for example they grew flax when prices rose and a combination of 'necessity and opportunity' dictated their work choices. However, one of de Vries' major tenets cannot be assessed – the intensification of work over time. Comparison with a seventeenth-century example would be inconclusive due to the low sample size. Furthermore we cannot fully read how household labour was deployed through the account book. Time spent on agricultural work, reproductive labour, housework, waged cotton spinning, laundry and other work is concealed, therefore the intensity of work cannot be fully assessed.

The Lathams' linen activities were not solely related to manufacture, the care of linen also features in their account book. Amanda Vickery identifies women as almost universally responsible for the management of linen, from purchasing and making, to laundering and marking. Vickery emphasises the role of women in maintaining the whiteness of clothing, the mark of family respectability and reveals that single adult males relied on their mothers and sisters to manage their linen.[5] The cleanliness of underwear was a marker of respectability (see Chapter 4); the production and proper care of linen were therefore essential domestic tasks, maintaining the household and its reputation through time-intensive spinning, weaving, bleaching and washing. Linda Baumgarten, Aileen Ribeiro, Daniel Roche and Margaret Spufford also note female responsibility for linens in Great Britain, France and America. There has been no quantitative study to determine the proportion of female to male provisioning, but their qualitative evidence strongly suggests that linen created work for women in the majority of cases.[6]

The life cycles of objects and people are juxtaposed in the chapter to analyse their overlapping temporalities.[7] This is the only chapter with a linear analysis of the linen life cycle. This new method for studying the temporalities of daily life is tested throughout the chapter. It provides an alternative method to Hans-Joachim Voth's

[4] de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution*, pp. 73-121.
[5] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 58-59, 63-64, 115, 118-122, 128; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 77-82, 131.
[6] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, pp. 84, 88; Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 72-73; Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, pp. 104, 118-19; Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 155.
[7] Appadurai, 'Introduction', pp. 3-63; Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', pp. 64-91.

innovative *Time and Work in England 1750-1830* for uncovering daily experiences of time.[8] The production and care of linen were strongly influenced by life cycle; age, relationship status and number of children affected domestic roles and responsibilities. The Lathams spun and washed linen as domestic and commercial activities. Linen was essential for the Latham family who used it for their underwear, bed linen, on the farm, for sewing thread and potentially on their table and for window curtains. They bought no bed or table linen and rarely purchased shirts and shifts, consequently the Lathams must have spun the yarn for their linen. Spinning and washing were the major forms of work for the female Lathams living at home. They spent around 434.5 weeks, or eight years and four months spinning flax part-time across the period 1724 to 1767. If it was possible to calculate time spent on cotton spinning, the time spent spinning would be even higher.[9] The chapter reveals the flexibility of the household economy with adaptations related to household size, rises in the price of fibre and farming failures.

Stages in the life cycle of an eighteenth-century linen shirt were growing, harvesting and preparing the flax, spinning, weaving, bleaching and purchasing the linen (if it was not homespun), making, wearing, washing, mending and eventual discarding or repurposing. Of these stages, Richard Latham's account book only contains sufficient information to reconstruct the growth and preparation of flax, spinning, bleaching and washing. Despite this limitation, the life cycle of the Latham family's linen remains a useful tool to understand their domestic practice because these activities had different relationships with seasonality and human life cycles. The seasonal rhythms of rural life are also important; seasonality, with its biological imperatives, organized the timing of domestic activities within rural communities as

[8] Hans-Joachim Voth, *Time and Work in England 1750-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). This is not the only study of that brings together time and work, for example, Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift, *Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping in England and Wales 1300-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), for example pp. 104-10, 116-33; Anne L. Murphy, 'Time and Work at the Bank of England', *VOX* (May, 2011); de Vries, *Industrious Revolution*.

[9] A total quantity of 1086.26lb. of flax fibre was purchased. This length of time is based on a rate of 2.5lb. in a six day week. See the 'Spinning and Growing Flax' section for an explanation of the calculations.

Barbara Pidcock found in her analysis of spinning in the late seventeenth-century account book of the elite Quaker Sarah Fell.[10]

Existing scholarship on Richard Latham's exceptional account book has inspired and informed this chapter. A transcript of Latham's account book was published by Lorna Weatherill who recognized its value for the study of non-elite life. Her introduction contextualizes the lives of the Lathams and their purchases. Weatherill's transcript has been criticized for inaccuracies by Sylvia Harrop and Patricia Perrins who note the presence of errors.[11] This chapter uses John Styles' database of Weatherill's transcript. Lines with flax, linen, soap and starch have been checked against the original manuscript for a third of the volume and there were thirteen errors in the thirteen years examined.[12] Significant errors, for example price differences of more than 2.5d. or weight differences of more than 2lb. are unusual and it is hoped that most of these, if not all, have been caught through identifying anomalous quantities (related to their price) and prices (in relation to the total value of the line) which were checked against the original. Charles F. Foster provided new insights into the Lathams' lives through identifying the potential location of the land, employment, lenders, loans, textiles and family finances, analysing the latter two through life cycle.[13]

Styles used a case study of the Lathams to emphasize that plebeian ownership of clothing was not static but varied in relation to the poverty cycle, using the Lathams to test 1790s estimates of labouring expenditure by David Davies and Sir Frederick Eden. Life cycle was also used by Styles in three stages: 1724 to 1741, when the children were fifteen or younger and expenditure on clothing remained below 'a modest 50s.'; 1742 to 1754 when the children were older and some had left home, with around three times more spent on clothes and 1755 to 1766, later in Richard's life when most children had gone into service, with an 81 per cent decline in clothing

[10] Barbara Pidcock, 'The Spinners and Weavers of Swarthmoor Hall, Ulverston, in the Late 17th Century', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 95 (1995), 153-67 (pp.156-57).
[11] Weatherill, *The Account Book*; Sylvia Harrop and Patricia Perrins, 'Review of Lorna Weatherill ed. *The Account Book of Richard Latham, 1724-1767*', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire for the year 1990*, 140 (1991), pp. 234-36.
[12] These errors are from Weatherill's transcription not Styles' database. The manuscript is too fragile to view, therefore the transcription has been checked against a microfiche copy.
[13] Charles F. Foster, *Seven Households: Life in Cheshire and Lancashire 1582-1774* (Northwich: Arley Hall Press, 2002), pp. 142-70.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 3.1, DP/385, First page of annual accounts in Richard Latham's account book, 1724.** © Lancashire Record Office.

expenditure.[14] The same life cycle phases are used in this chapter which builds on Styles' findings to uncover the temporal nature of textile labour.

Account books are invaluable sources for examining the temporalities of daily life, allowing insights into the life cycles of people and their possessions over extended periods of time. Scholars have used account books to illuminate material culture through life cycle and gender roles in early-modern England.[15] Account books are

[14] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 230-40.
[15] For example, Ehrman, 'Dressing Well in Old Age', pp. 28-38; Foster, *Seven Households*; Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Pidcock, 'The Spinners and Weavers' pp. 153-67; Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 229-45; Vickery, 'His and Hers', pp. 12-38; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, for example pp. 112-136; Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early*

not however without their problems. Limitations include that they are produced by the wealthier and literate sections of society; it is not possible to tell who bought and used goods; purchases might not have been recorded; the date of purchase is often uncertain and only expenditure not income might be recorded.[16] Richard Latham's account book is subject to these difficulties but unusually he is of a low status. Despite these problems account books are one of the best means of addressing questions of time within daily life because births, deaths and marriages were commonly recorded amongst the purchases, making them an ideal tool to access family life cycles alongside personal or household consumer activity.

## The Latham Account Book

Richard Latham's (c.1690 to 1767) account book kept from 1723 to 1767 is a testament to his life (figure 3.1).[17] Forty-four years of expenditure by his resident family are recorded alongside significant life events including births and deaths of children. It is an exceptional manuscript. Richard is the lowest status eighteenth-century individual with a surviving account book containing a 'long run' of accounts and thus provides privileged access into a plebeian home.[18] The account book begins on 25 December 1723, four months after Richard's marriage aged around 33, to Ann or 'Nany' Barton (1691 to after 1767) aged 32 and ends with his death in 1767.[19] Nany's illiteracy, demonstrated by her mark on the 1767 farm lease indicates why she did not contribute to the account book.[20] The Lathams lived in Scarisbrick, Lancashire on a nineteen acre farm and rented an additional acre. Nany bore eight children from 1726 to 1741, seven daughters, one of whom died in infancy and a son. Richard's niece Bety may have lived with him after the death of his brother

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*Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[16] Vickery, 'His and Hers', pp. 19, 21-22.

[17] Lancashire Record Office (LRO), DP/385, Account book of Richard Latham, Scarisbrick, 1723-1767.

[18] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 229-30.

[19] Foster, *Seven Households*, p. 142. Richard's age is contentious. His baptism was not registered. Weatherill (p. xiii) states that he was born in 1699. Foster argues that Richard was the eldest son born c.1690. Foster's reason (pp. 166, 167 n.3) is that Richard was the first son named on the 1699 lease for the smallholding; leases were typically inherited by the eldest son and the risk of infant mortality makes it doubtful that he would have been listed on the 1699. Foster's estimate is used in the chapter. The 1767 lease reveals, Nany Latham was born in 1691 therefore it is more likely, although not certain, that her husband was a similar age rather than six years younger.

[20] LRO, DDsc 27/288, Lease renewal, 1767.

Thomas, however the length of her residence is unknown therefore she is excluded from the analysis.[21]

Richard Latham was a small scale arable and pastoral farmer, growing wheat, barley and oats, trading cattle and possibly carting goods. As well as spinning flax, his wife Nany and their daughters spun cotton for a wage under the putting-out system and they took in laundry from 1741. The Lathams' annual expenditure (after exceptional expenses such as renewal of the farm lease and excluding the incomplete year of 1767) ranged from £6 15s. 8d. to £27 0s. 10d. Median expenditure was £15 2s. 9d.[22] Richard's status in contemporary terms is difficult to determine. He described himself as a yeoman in his will, however comparison with labourers' and a sample of husbandmen's inventories and their corresponding wills indicates that he was a husbandman.[23] The probate records used come from the Deanery of Amounderness, Lancashire which was north of Scarisbrick and were chosen for the location and because they are catalogued by occupation. Twelve labourer's inventories survive for the period 1724 to 1767.[24] Husbandmen's inventories are more populous and were sampled for the years 1724, 1734, 1744, 1745, 1754, 1764, 1765, with twelve to eighteen a decade.[25] No known inventory survives for Richard

[21] Foster, *Seven Households*, pp. 144-45, 147.
[22] Foster, *Seven Households*, pp. 149-51, 161-62, 168-69. Richard bought several carts (Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 5, 7, 37, 85) but he also paid for carting, for example, Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 3, 18, 21, 39, 83, 93, which complicates but does not negate ideas of him carting for a living; Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 235.
[23] LRO, Richard Latham will, 1767.
[24] LRO, W/RW/A/R24C/6 October 1724 (date of probate), Thomas Clarkson; W/RW/A/R25C/11 April 1735, George Crozier; W/RW/A/R25A/50 March 1740, Thomas Clark; W/RW/A/R29C/22 April 1728, Thomas Dobson; W/RW/A/R50C/53, August 1736, Richard Hull; W/RW/A/R81A/79, November 1739, John Singleton; W/RW/A/R92C/37, August 1724, William Winterbottom; W/RW/A/R099b/93, January 1753, Henry Sudel; W/RW/A/R100b/42, August 1754, William Whalley/Whales; W/RW/A/R100b/70, March 1754, William Wilkinson; W/RW/A/R106/42, January 1762, Joshua Wardley; W/RW/A/R095/143, July 1753, Robert Brown.
[25] For 1724: W/RW/A/R4B/17, October, William Arthwright; W/RW/A/R24A/33, January, Roger Cartmell; W/RW/A/R29C/28, March, William Dobson; W/RW/A/R35B/9, December, Robert Fletcher; W/RW/A/R35B/27, August, John the younger Fox; W/RW/A/R39A/44, September, James Garner; W/RW/A/R49A/43, July, George Harrison; W/RW/A/R49C/6, January, John Holme/Helme; W/RW/A/R52C/4, December, Henry Jaxon/Jackson; W/RW/A/R61B/6, April, James Mellin; W/RW/A/R68B/19, November, James Parkinson; W/RW/A/R80B/24, March, Richard Simpson; W/RW/A/R80C/31, October, Richard Sowerbuts; W/RW/A/R80C/45, October, John Sturzaker; W/RW/A/R85A/44, July, James Thornton; W/RW/A/R85B/2, February, George Tolnson/Townson; W/RW/A/R92C/33, August, James Winder. For 1734: W/RW/A/R15A/24, October, Thomas Bayliffe; W/RW/A/R15A/26, November, Thomas Baynes; W/RW/A/R15C/1, November, George Bradshaw; W/RW/A/R25C/30, June, John Crooke; W/RW/A/R31B/13, August, Thomas Ellet; W/RW/A/R35A/37, January, Lawrence Fish; W/RW/A/R50A/5, March, James Hall; W/RW/A/R58B/13, May, Thomas Leach; W/RW/A/R61A/32 July, Robert Masheder; W/RW/A/R61B/24, July, John Miller; W/RW/A/R72D/2 May, Christopher Rogerson; W/RW/A/R81A/1, March, Richard Salisbury; W/RW/A/R81A/40 March, John Sharples/s; W/RW/A/R81A/82, January, John Singleton. For 1744:

or Nany. The analysis is based on goods and spaces listed within the inventories and wills and clearly there may be omissions. Chapter 5 contains further discussion of the limitations of inventories.

Richard's agricultural work was similar to other Lancashire husbandmen. Cows and swine are listed throughout the account book and a working mare until at least 1757. The majority of husbandman owned these beasts at their death. A third of husbandmen in the sample died owning swine which appear in most years of the account book. Geese, sheep and chickens were also mentioned by Richard but are less common in the inventories. Richard's main income must have come from trading cows. During the term of the account book he bought forty-eight cows and calves and cows were bulled 102 times, excluding repeated bullings for a cow in a year. Seventeen cows and calves died according to the account book. The highest number of different cows listed by Richard was five in 1764. If these were the only cows that Richard owned, he was in the 52 per cent of husbandmen who owned one to five cows. Richard owned a mare from 1724 to at least 1757. Sixty-five per cent of sixty-six husbandmen in the sample owned at least one horse.[26] Fifty-nine per cent owned carts as did Latham. Richard's literacy was not exceptional, over a third of the husbandmen with wills signed rather than marked their wills. He was firmly within the middle of the sample of Lancashire husbandmen at his death, although he overlapped with a wealthy labourer, Joshua Wardley.[27] Determining Richard's rank is

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W/RW/A/R25A/36 December, William Chapman; W/RW/A/R50B/49, November, Thomas Hodgson; W/RW/A/R50C/54 March, Thomas Hull; W/RW/A/R52B/43, January, Richard Jackson; W/RW/A/R61B/36 October, William Miller; W/RW/A/R94A/29, October, James Ward. For 1745: W/RW/A/R25C/45 June, William Cumpsty; W/RW/A/R50C/39, November, Richard Hudson; W/RW/A/R55A/5 December, John Kellat/Kellet; W/RW/A/R61B/33, March, Thomas Miller; W/RW/A/R72B/17 May, John Rhodes; W/RW/A/R72D/28, January, James Rossall; W/RW/A/R85A/2, January, Thomas Tayler. For 1754: W/RW/A/R096/76, January, George Cragg, W/RW/A/R096/93, June, John Cross; W/RW/A/R096/132, October, John Dixon; W/RW/A/R097b/68, October, Thomas Holme; W/RW/A/R098a/36 June, Richard Kennion; W/RW/A/R098b/32, February, Abraham Mitchell; W/RW/A/R099b/89, February, James Stodart; W/RW/A/R100b/50, February, Edward Whiteside; W/RW/A/R100b/83, March, William Wilson; W/RW/A/R100b/85, November, Edmund Winder. For 1764: W/RW/A/R101/86, March, Richard Bleasdale; W/RW/A/R103a/36, February, George Eccles; W/RW/A/R103b/62, February, John Hodgson; W/RW/A/R104/29, June, Thomas Lawrenson; W/RW/A/R104/141, August, Robert Preston; W/RW/A/R106/72, March, William Whiteside. For 1765: W/RW/A/R101/19, October, James Atkinson; W/RW/A/R101/114, August, Richard Briers; W/RW/A/R104/47, August, Thomas Lupton; W/RW/A/R104/147, October, Richard Proctor; W/RW/A/R106/80, November, James Wilkinson; W/RW/A/R106/83, November, Robert Wilkinson.

[26] LRO, W/RW/A/R92C/37, August 1724, William Winterbottom.

[27] LRO, W/RW/A/R106/42, January 1762, Joshua Wardley.

a challenge due to established difficulties in framing the middling sorts.[28] Based on the £40 a year income requirement specified by the commentators Gregory King and Joseph Massie and used by Keith Wrightson, or the £50 suggested by Peter Earle, Richard appears to have been in the lower sorts for the majority of his life.[29] The family's total annual expenditure, including £40 lease purchases in 1728 and 1760 ranged from £9 12s. 9.5d. in 1731 to £55 2s. 6.5d. in 1728. The Lathams only spent more than £40 annually in three years and they spent less than £20 in 19 years.[30] Richard borrowed £34 toward the 1728 lease renewal suggesting that the Lathams saved little of their income in the early years.[31] Therefore the Lathams were most likely to have belonged to the lower ranks with possible movement to the lower middling sorts in some years.

Nany's 1767 lease renewal describes a 'dwelling house consisting of three bays and the outhousing of five bays' and land including a garden, orchard and meadow. 'Bay' described the number of windows across the front of the house. The rooms listed in Richard's account book are a chamber, barn, stable and cart house. In 1754, Latham paid for new windows for the 'house & chamber'. It is likely that the 'house' was a multipurpose living space. Thirty-six of the fifty Lancashire inventories with a multipurpose space described it as a house. The presence of only two domestic rooms within a three bay house seems unlikely. Without knowing all of the spaces that Richard and Nany had access to, it is difficult to locate spinning, bleaching and washing within the home and its environs. Spinning wheels are portable and were used inside and outside. The Amounderness inventories provide no clues; only three listed spinning wheels.[32] Linen was washed indoors, indicated by the installation of a six-gallon pot over a 'furnanc' or furnace in 1741, but unlike other counties such as

[28] Shani D'Cruze, 'The Middling Sort in Eighteenth-Century Colchester: Independence, Social Relations and the Community Broker' in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (London: Macmillan, 1994), 181-207 (p. 184), D'Cruze suggests that husbandmen were members of the middling sorts; Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (London: Methuen, 1989), pp. 3-17; Harvey, *The Little Republic*, pp. 17-18, her case studies start at an annual income of £50.
[29] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 14; Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 289-90.
[30] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. xxii.
[31] Foster, *Seven Households*, pp. 170-71.
[32] LRO, W/RW/A/R55A/5, December 1745, John Kellat/Kellet; W/RW/A/R101/19, October 1765, James Atkinson; W/RW/A/R81A/1, March 1734, Richard Salisbury.

Kent, no wash houses were mentioned in the Lancashire inventories.[33] Linen was dried outdoors on fine days. Bleaching also required indoor and outdoor space.

## Spinning and Growing Flax

The chapter focuses on linen but the spinning activities of Nany and her daughters were not limited to flax. They spun cotton for a wage as part of the putting-out system, indicated by the low quantities of cotton fibres bought alongside the purchase of five 'cotten' wheels.[34] The putting-out system was commonly used for cotton because the fibre could not be grown in England. The time that this work took is hidden because the quantities of cotton spun are not known. Alongside this commercial activity, wool was spun by the Lathams for stockings and linsey-woolsey.[35] It is also possible that they spun wool or worsted for a wage. The Lathams did not work with silk fibres and only purchased 34lb. of hemp fibre in a limited period, 1731 to 1749, compared to 1086.26lb. of flax over forty-four years.[36]

Styles' identification of connections between life cycle and the acquisition of textiles by the Lathams laid the foundations for the methodology used in the chapter. When Richard and Nany had young children from 1724 to 1741, they bought an average of 1.9 yards of linen a year, less than the three yards needed for an adult's shirt or shift, compared to an average of 5.25 yards of woollen cloth. Larger quantities of ready-made fabrics were bought as the family grew wealthier. Purchasing of woollen cloth increased to an average of 21 yards a year in the period 1742 to 1754 compared to an average of 4 yards of linen. The quality of the Lathams' textiles improved over the same period.[37] They prioritized the purchase of ready woven woollen cloth: spinning flax to produce their own linen meant that the Lathams maximised their resources allowing the acquisition of larger quantities of both woollen and linen cloth. In this way they are examples of de Vries' 'industrious revolution'.[38] The chapter explores

[33] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 48; Dolan, 'The Decline of the Multifunctional Hall?', pp. 67, 86; Foster, *Seven Households*, p. 162.
[34] Foster, *Seven Households*, pp. 161-62; Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 235; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 40, 41, 44, 86, 90.
[35] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 143.
[36] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 20, 22, 23, 26, 42, 58, 60, 76. This weight excludes 47lb. mumpins of unknown origin, which are included with the flax calculations, on the basis that where the fibre is specified there are 2lb. of hemp mumpins to 97lb. of flax mumpins.
[37] J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-house Laid Open*, p. 38; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 142-44, 235.
[38] de Vries, *Industrious Revolution*, for example, pp. 73, 82.

this idea further through analysis of clothing owned in relation to the intensity of flax spinning during the different life cycle periods.

Changes in the Lathams' domestic textile production can be identified by determining how long it took to spin a certain weight of flax fibre. Contemporary estimates vary in relation to three factors that are rarely revealed; the coarseness of the yarn (fine yarn took longer to spin); the type of spinning wheel used; marital status and number of children and one factor that is listed – the fibre. This chapter uses accounts of the spinning of coarse flaxen yarn, assuming that Nany would prioritize quantity over fineness. Two rates are used; 1.5lb. and 2.5lb. a week due to varying figures in contemporary accounts. These rates are slower than the 1lb. to 4lb. a day used by Styles and Craig Muldrew and 1lb. a day indicated in Latham's account book by a payment for 11lb. of flax and wool spun in eleven days.[39] However in contemporary commentary on the linen industry which prescribed quantities to be spun, there was a common agreement that 1lb. to 3lb. of flax was typically spun into coarse yarn in a week. Arthur Young noted that it was 'common' for women to spin 8lb. of 'flax for coarse linen' in twenty-five days or 1.9lb. in a six day week, with skilled spinners producing 2.4lb. a week.[40] Adrienne Hood combined personal experience and discussion with a weaver to state that 2lb. of flax for a coarse shirt would take 'five days of concentrated work' to spin.[41] Other weekly rates include 1lb. in Ireland and France and 3lb. in New England.[42]

The rates of 1.5 and 2.5lb. a week recognize that Nany Latham was married and had other demands on her time therefore she was likely to have been spinning part-time. An unmarried, highly skilled spinner had time to spin more than 2.5lb. a week and children or the elderly might spin less due to a lower level of skill or lesser dexterity. It is too speculative to estimate how much cloth the Lathams produced because a pound of yarn might produce 1.75 yards, 2 yards or 2.5 to 5 yards of cloth depending

[39] Craig Muldrew, '"Th'ancient Distaff" and "Whirling Spindle": Measuring the Contribution of Spinning to Household Earnings and the National Economy in England, 1550–1770', *EHR*, 65:2 (2012), 498-526 (p. 519) with the 'Online Supplement: Linen and Hemp Spinning Estimates', p. 7; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 142, 375-76 (n.35); Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 11.
[40] All weeks used are six day weeks. Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, I, p. 166.
[41] Adrienne D. Hood, *The Weaver's Craft: Cloth, Commerce and Industry in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 72, 188 (n.8).
[42] Anon., *An Abridgement of the Laws in Force and Use in Her Majesty's Plantations* (London, 1704), p. 91; John Horner, *The Linen Trade of Europe During the Spinning-Wheel Period* (Belfast: M'Caw, Stevenson and Orr, 1920), p. 50; Arthur Young, *Travels During the Years 1787, 1788 and 1789*, 2 vols (London, 1794) I, pp. 552, 563.

**Table 3.1, Average price of 1lb. of fibre, 1724-1769 (pence)**

| | Flax/Tear | Tow |
|---|---|---|
| 1720s | 7.3 | 4.6 |
| 1730s | 7.2 | 3.0 |
| 1740s | 9.0 | 3.2 |
| 1750s | 8.3 | 3.7 |
| 1760s | 8.8 | 3.7 |

Source: LRO, DP/385, Account Book of Richard Latham, Scarisbrick, 1723-1767.

**Table 3.2, Total weight of fibre purchased, 1724-1769 (pounds)**

| | Flax/Tear | Tow |
|---|---|---|
| 1720s | 60.5 | 47.5 |
| 1730s | 137.8 | 71.0 |
| 1740s | 110.5 | 90.0 |
| 1750s | 246.5 | 46.0 |
| 1760s | 147.5 | 78.5 |

Source: Ibid.

on the coarseness of the yarn.[43] A calculation of the length of cloth produced would also prove misleading because some of the Lathams' linen yarn was also used to make linsey-woolsey. It is not possible to separate these purchases out therefore flax used to make linsey-woolsey and thread is included in the calculations. Fibre prices varied over the period as table 3.1 shows. The Lathams spent more per pound on higher quality flax fibres from the 1740s, while tow (see Introduction) prices varied throughout. Larger quantities of flax or tear were bought than tow as table 3.2 shows. The proportions are most similar in the 1720s with the greatest deviation in the 1750s which reveals that the quality of the Lathams' textiles improved over time.

## 1724 to 1741

The family attitude was that it was worth dedicating more time to spinning in order to acquire more textiles, yet the Lathams were not aiming high. Nany did not receive a new gown during the first eighteen years of her marriage and her outer clothing was limited to three or four new petticoats, a waistcoat and a jacket. Richard fared a little better, he purchased at least one jacket and pair of breeches, but he never bought a full suit in one go. The Lathams were better supplied for footwear, the adults received a new pair annually. Garments for the children must have come from lengths of fabric with no specified purpose.[44] In this life cycle period, spinning flaxen

[43] Colonus, *Observations on Doctor Forster's Answer to Sir John Dalrymple* (Dublin, 1784), p. 10; Hood, *The Weaver's Craft*, pp. 72, 122; Houghton, *A Collection*, II, p. 396; Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, I, p. 166.
[44] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 3, 10; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 231-32.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 3.2, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/145, Foundling 13298, brown linen** © Coram © John Styles

yarn for cloth for the family was essential to maintain family respectability. The neck and cuffs of underwear were visible to all, making cleanliness immediately apparent. Owning more than one shirt meant that regular washing was possible, therefore the family needed more linen than wool long term to clothe themselves respectably. The Lathams already suffered material poverty in their clothing, purchasing underwear for all of the family would have been too great a strain on their budget, therefore they spun flax. Flax spinning was essential to clothe the household during this period.

The impact of life cycle is immediately apparent in Nany's spinning activities. In 1724, the year following Nany and Richard's marriage, they bought 50.5lb. of flax totalling at 18s. 4.5d., a quantity and sum that was not matched for another six years or exceeded for sixteen. To consolidate her home, Nany spent around twenty weeks and one day or thirty-three weeks and four days spinning part-time. Some of this yarn would have been woven into cloth for clothing, to furnish their home and for farm work. The rest would have been sold, a financial contribution to the household because 50.5lb. of fibre could potentially produce 252.5 yards of linen, an excessive quantity for a two-person household.

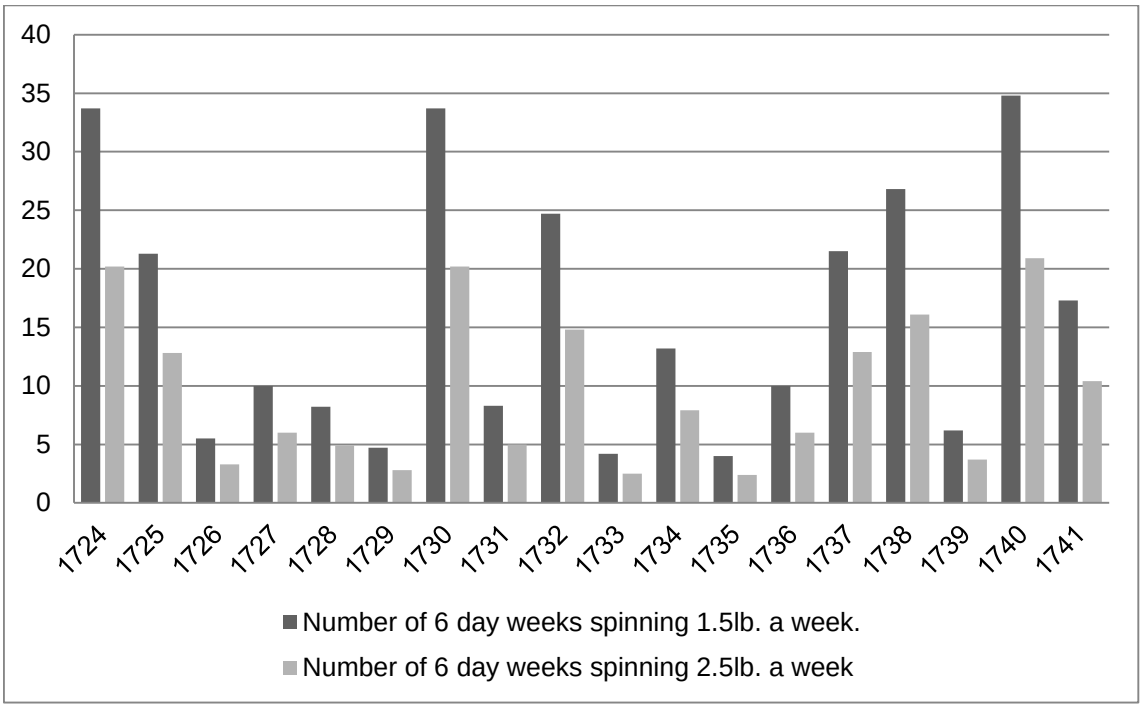


**Figure 3.3, The number of weeks spent spinning flax p.a., 1724-1741.**

In a number of instances the weight of fibre purchased was not listed and has been determined by John Styles based on the price of comparative fibre.

Figure 3.2 shows a brown linen token from the Foundling Hospital. It is one of the coarsest linens in the Foundling billet books. The coarse linen scrap is comparable to the product of Nany's spinning, in contrast the finest quality linen was translucent. The brown linen is an important reminder that the text in Richard's account book indicates physical processes that transformed tangible things – the bodily and tactile nature of these experiences is easily forgotten.

Nany's spinning activities varied during her childbearing years as figure 3.3 shows. She did not spin identical quantities of flax annually. Fluctuations must have related to negotiating the quantity of linen needed by the family and the work's financial contribution with the other demands on her time, including childcare and other housework, suggesting flexibility in Nany's domestic work. The intense demands on Nany's time are indicated by the fact that it was only in this life cycle period that the Lathams paid other women to spin for them in 1727, 1728 and 1736 to 1738.[45]

Troughs in the graph do not correlate with linen cloth purchases. Linen cloth was only bought in eleven out of eighteen years, peaking at 5.5 yards in 1728. In most

[45] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 142.

years insufficient cloth was bought to make new underwear for Nany and Richard. Cloth for shifts and the garments themselves were bought for Betty in 1726 and 1727 which were the only form of underwear bought in the period.[46] Nany's flax purchasing had a seasonal pattern. The majority of fibre was bought in autumn and winter. Little was bought in the summer, between 32 and 43.5lb. compared to 153.56 to 181.31lb. in the autumn.[47] Nany focused her spinning activities in autumn and winter and spun less in spring and summer due to different seasonal demands. This timing matches the seasonality of the linen production cycle, yarn would be ready for weaving, then bleaching in the sun.

While there is no consensus on the age that girls started to spin, the 1785 Rutland Quarter Sessions ruled that poor relief should not be allowed to children over nine who could not spin flax or wool.[48] The eldest daughter, Bety was nine on 19 February 1735; therefore from around 1734 Nany was likely to have combined her own work with teaching her daughter, a new demand on her time. Spinning was an essential part of the female Lathams' education given the family reliance on homespun linen and the value of this skill for their future lives regardless of marital status. Three new cotton spinning wheels used for waged cotton spinning were bought in 1739 and 1740, when raw cotton imports were at their highest for a quarter of a century. Three Lathams could therefore spin cotton simultaneously while another could spin flax on the wheel bought in 1724.[49] The area around Scarisbrick supplied Manchester cotton factories with yarn.[50] Cotton cards were bought in 1739 and 1740 showing that the Lathams had to prepare the cotton fibres before spinning them.[51] In summary, during this first life cycle period, Nany's spinning activities altered from spinning for a new home, to spinning alone with young children and outside assistance, to teaching her daughters to spin alongside her own work and spinning flax and cotton alongside her daughters.

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[46] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 9, 11.
[47] Winter is December to February, spring is March to May, summer is June to August and autumn is September to November. The range of figures relates to unclear seasons for some purchases.
[48] Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, R.Q.S.2/18, Rutland Quarter Sessions Minute Book, 1772-1802, Michaelmas, 1785. Thanks to John Styles for this reference.
[49] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 40, 41, 44; Styles, private correspondence, 1 May 2014.
[50] W. Farrer and J. Brownbill ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Lancaster*, 8 vols (London: Constable, 1907), III, p. 240 ; T. Pennant, *A Tour from Downing to Alston-Moor* (London, 1801), p. 51; Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 142.
[51] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 40, 44.

## 1742 to 1754

During the following period 1742 to 1754 expenditure on clothing was three times higher due to higher family income. Most of the children were old enough to spin and contribute to the running of the household. By 1741 seven children were living in the house. Betty, Sara and Rachel would all have been able to spin. Ann would have been learning the skill aged eight. Alice and Martha were too young and would have begun to learn in 1745 and 1749 respectively and the only son, Dicy, aged fourteen would have worked with his father until his death aged twenty. They also spun cotton for a wage and did paid laundry work. The only underwear bought in this period was cloth for shifts for Rachel and Ann in 1749 and shifts for Martha in 1744.[52]

An increase in income allowed the purchase of more clothing of a higher quality. Practical gowns of serge and camblet and a few fashionable printed and checked gowns were bought for the daughters. Nany finally had a new gown in 1742 and probably another in 1749, both made from the worsted textile, camblet. Richard received little clothing, but his son Dicy was well supplied and Richard would have inherited his clothes after Dicy's death in 1748.[53] The printed gowns bought for the eldest two daughters were desirable, fashionable items, unlike the plain worsted camblet gown worn by their mother. There was also a significant price difference. The camblet cost 14.5d. per yard while the print bought in 1749 cost around 28d. per yard. Richard also wore cheaper textiles than his daughters. For example, his new singlet or short jacket in 1742 was made of black shalloon, a cheap worsted at 13.5d. per yard.[54]

The intensity of flax spinning increased during this time of clothing prosperity. The striking gaps in figure 3.4 indicate a change in practice when the Lathams grew their own flax enabled by assistance from the children. Direct evidence from the account book combined with data from the graph in figure 3.4 suggests that the Lathams grew flax between 1744 and 1751. The Lathams made payments for seed in 1745 and entries for preparing or dressing the fibre appear from 1744 to 1748.[55] A payment was made for flax dressing in 1732 but there is no other evidence that the

[52] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 54, 57, 76. Possibly also in 1743, where Martha is bought '2 shints' – Weatherill interprets this as shirts.
[53] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 238-40.
[54] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 51, 52, 75.
[55] Foster, *Seven Households*, p. 163; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 58, 60, 62, 65, 66, 72.

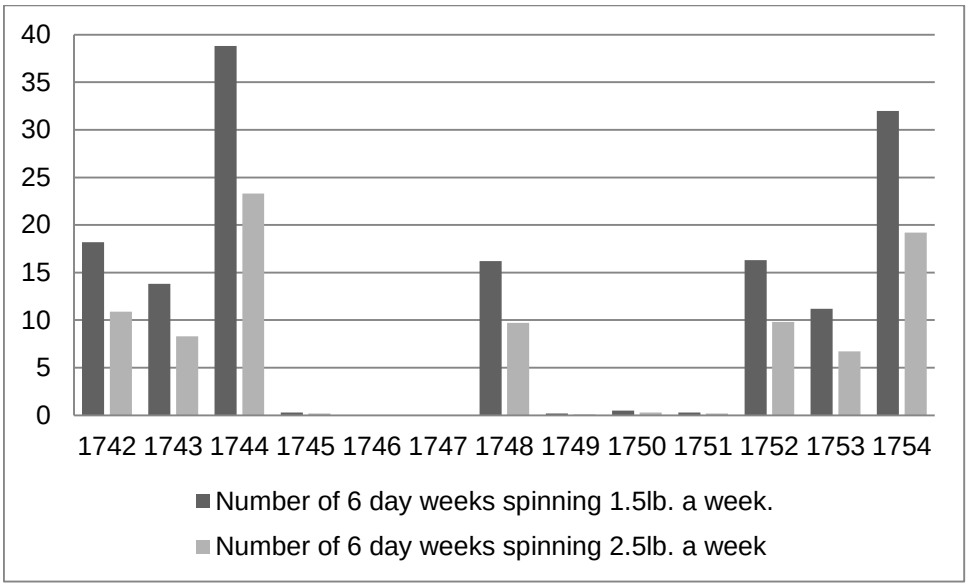


**Figure 3.4, The number of weeks spent spinning flax p.a. 1742-1754**

**Table 3.3, Expenditure on flax, 1735-1745 (pence)**

| | Number of purchases | Flax / Tear | | Mumpins | | Tow | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower range | Upper range | Lower range | Upper range | Lower range | Upper range |
| 1735 | 4 | | | 5 | | | |
| 1736 | 12 | 7.5 | 10 | | | 3 | 3.5 |
| 1737 | 8 | | 10 | 4.67 | 5 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| 1738 | 8 | | 8 | 4 | 5.83 | 1.5 | 4.83 |
| 1739 | 7 | 6.25 | 10 | | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| 1740 | 22 | 4 | 12 | 3.75 | 5.5 | 2.5 | 3 |
| 1741 | 18 | 7.83 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 2.67 | 4.5 |
| 1742 | 17 | | 12 | 3 | 4.5 | 3 | 4.25 |
| 1743 | 26 | 8 | 13 | | | 3 | 4.5 |
| 1744 | 19 | 7.33 | 14 | | | 3 | 3.67 |
| 1745 | 2 | | 12 | | | | |

Source: Source: LRO, DP/385, Account Book of Richard Latham, Scarisbrick, 1723-1767.

Mumpins were partially processed flax, possibly also hemp fibre. No description has been found of the dressing processes that mumpins had undergone.

Lathams were growing flax at this date rather than purchasing unprocessed flax and paying for the dressing.[56]

The decision to grow flax was price led. The average spent on tear by the Lathams increased by 1.6d. per pound from the 1730s to the 1740s as table 3.1 shows. Table 3.3 reveals that the Lathams started to purchase more expensive tear fibres from 1740, when the upper range expenditure increased from 10d. to 12d. There were

[56] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 23.

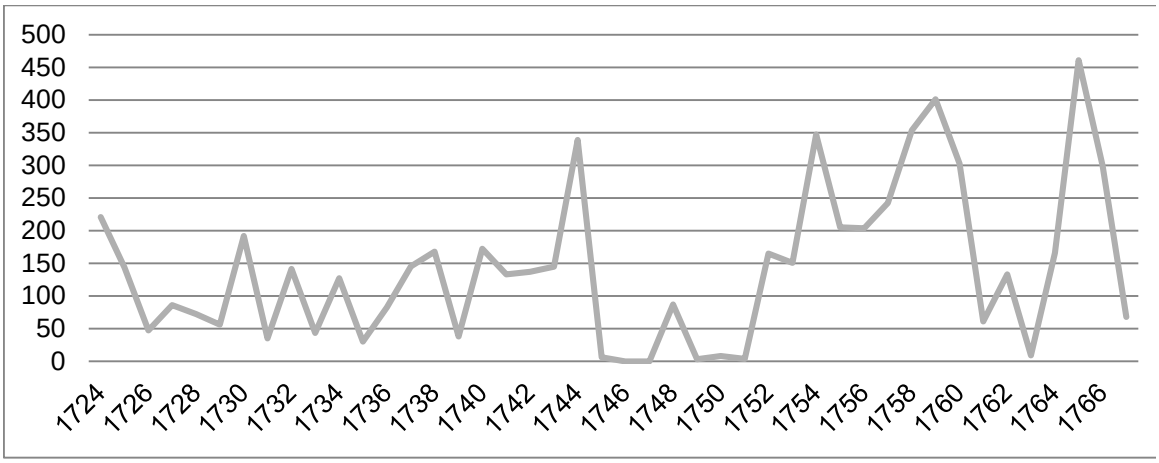


**Figure 3.5, Maximum annual expenditure on flax, 1724-1767 (pence)**

national price rises at this time. The price of a spindle of flaxen yarn from Perth increased from 19d. in 1741 to 23d. in 1743.[57] Furthermore as figure 3.5 demonstrates, the Lathams' expenditure on flax peaked in 1744, the year that they started to cultivate their own fibre. The Lathams may have continued to grow their own flax after 1751 and did so in the 1760s but there is no direct evidence for the intervening period.

These years mark a significant shift in the labour required to produce linen. The female Lathams continued to spin and contributed to the agricultural production of flax from sowing in March or April to harvest in late July or August and dressing the fibre in October. Flax preparation was time consuming. It was dried for a week to ripen the seed heads and then rippled to remove the seed. Finer fibres were produced if the plant did not go to seed, however the Lathams did not purchase seed annually indicating that they let all or part of their crop go to seed. The flax was retted which took four days in a pond according to Houghton and was dried.[58] Louis Crommelin, Overseer of the Royal Linen Manufacture in Ireland stated ten to twelve days in a pond in summer was needed for higher standard coarse flax or three to four weeks in winter, followed by grassing or dew retting, until any blackening disappeared.[59] The flax was then prepared in three stages: breaking, scutching or swingling and heckling (see Introduction).[60] Richard Latham paid for extra labour to

[57] Alexander Bald, *The Farmer and Corndealer's Assistant* (Edinburgh, 1780), pp. 435-36
[58] Houghton, *A Collection*, II, pp. 387-91, 395.
[59] Louis Crommelin, *An Essay Towards the Improving of the Hempen and Flaxen Manufactures in the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705), pp. 12-14.
[60] Hood, *The Weaver's Craft*, p. 50; Houghton, *A Collection*, II, pp. 391-95.

help with this work from 1744 to 1748, including employing sixteen people to prepare the flax, while implicitly in other years the Lathams completed the work themselves.[61]

Significantly higher quantities of flax were grown by the Lathams than they purchased which significantly increased the time spent spinning. The 0.75 of a bushel of seed purchased by the Lathams in 1745 could have been used to produce 11.4 stone of partly-processed flax from 0.38 of an acre, at two bushels used on an acre. Authors estimate that 18 to 48 stone of partly-processed flax could be produced on an acre, with Arthur Young giving a 'medium' of 30 stone. Young also noted that 8lb. of 'flax for coarse linen' and 3.5lb. of tow was produced by heckling 1 stone of flax fibre.[62] The Lathams could have produced 91.2lb. of 'flax for coarse linen' and 39.9lb. of tow after heckling, totalling at 131.1lb. This is significantly higher than the weight of flax purchased annually in the previous period and would have taken fifty-two weeks three days or eighty-seven weeks and three days for one woman to spin part-time, but would have been spun in less than a year by two or more women, or could have been sold unspun.

The gap between harvest in July or August and processing in October probably related to the demands of other harvests and work including bleaching linen. Home-grown flax could have been spun at any time by the Lathams but it seems likely that the majority of the family's spinning was done in winter and spring because a larger weight of fibre was bought in these seasons than in summer and autumn. This is different to the autumn/winter pattern of the previous period and could have related to laundry work, the vast quantity of home-grown flax which could have provided work for several years, or waged cotton spinning from 1739. Alongside the three cotton wheels purchased in 1739 and 1740, two new cotton wheels were bought in 1753 and 1754 for Sara and Martha and a spinning wheel in 1746 again showing that several women spun at the same time.[63] The Lathams could have achieved higher clothing expenditure without flax spinning if they had focused on waged cotton

[61] Foster, *Seven Households*, p. 163; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 58, 62, 65, 66, 72.
[62] Berkshire Record Office, D/Ewe/EP, Anon., 'Derections to Sow Fflaxe'; D. Bindon, *A Letter from a Merchant who has left off Trade to a Member of Parliament* (Dublin, 1738), p. 8; The Commissioners and Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland, *Directions for Raising Flax* (Edinburgh, 1772) p. 5, suggested that by harvesting fine flax on the yellowing of the stalk when only the lower leaves had fallen, 8 hanks per lb. could be achieved; T. Prior, *An Essay to Encourage and Extend the Linen-Manufacture in Ireland*, second edn (Dublin, 1749) pp. 8-9; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 60; Young, *Tour in Ireland*, I, pp. 163-66.
[63] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 62, 86, 90.

spinning and laundry. However they decided to continue spinning flax and to grow their own fibre to maximise their income. This extra income not only allowed Nany to have her first new gown in over 18 years, but also meant that fashionable clothing could be bought for their daughters at a much higher price than their parents' clothing. Household security, respectability and fashion in one.

### 1755 to 1767

The third life cycle phase was 1755 to 1767 when Richard and Nany were in their sixties and seventies and the household was reduced as Betty (1747), Rachel (1756), Sara (1748, 1749, 1751) and Ann (1749) took employment elsewhere which altered responsibilities for the production of linen yarn. There is no clear record of who constituted the household during the period. Between 1757 and 1761 potentially only Richard, Nany, Alice and Martha remained at home.[64] Clothing expenditure reduced overall. Richard and Nany spent about the same on their clothing as they had done during Nany's childbearing years, but they spent more on garments and less on shoes, probably related to their infirmity. Nany managed to get some fashionable clothing before retrenchment. She bought two to four gowns between 1755 and 1758, finally able to enjoy fashionable and pricy clothing with a silk camblet gown worth 22d. per yard.[65]

Flax spinning was more intense in this period as figure 3.6 shows. Fewer women spun a greater quantity of flax therefore the primary motivation of this work was supporting the household rather than maximising their wardrobes. Flax was also grown during this period, payments were made for flax dressing in 1761, 1762 and 1764. Figure 3.7 shows the periods that the Lathams grew their own flax against the Perth flaxen yarn spindle prices. Both were preceded by several years of price rises. The price of a spindle of Perth yarn jumped by 8d. from 1757 to 1759. After a second year of high prices the Lathams began to grow flax again although the price dropped by 8d. in 1761. In April 1761 Richard borrowed 1.25 bushels of flax seed potentially cultivating 215.6lb. of processed flax, taking just over eighty-six weeks to 143 weeks and five days to spin, or sold unspun as a less time-expensive means of making money. With three women at home this would equal to around 173 to 288 days spinning part-time each. However four new shifts were bought in 1755

[64] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 122, 124.
[65] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 235-40; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 93-94, 102.

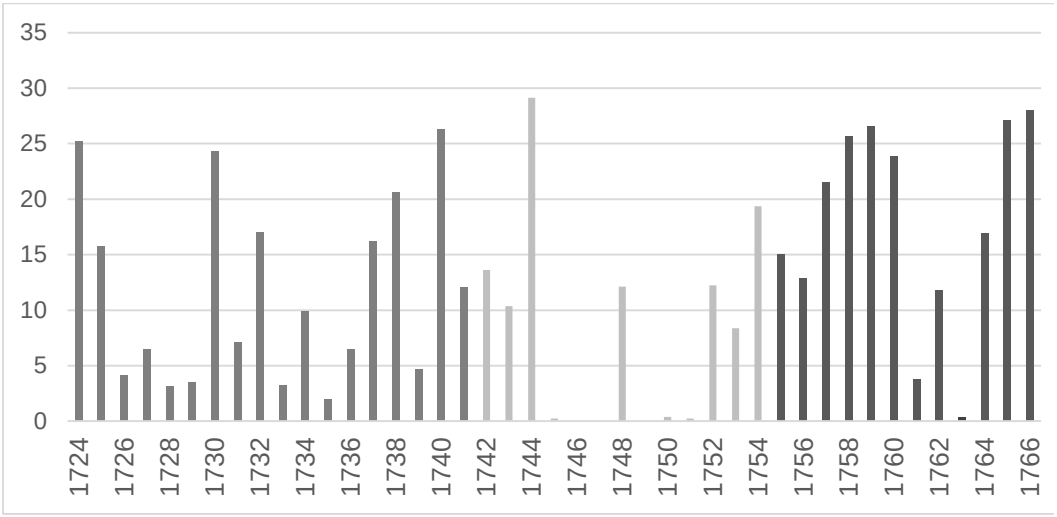


**Figure 3.6, The number of weeks spent spinning flax p.a. 1724-1766, colour-coded by life cycle period.**

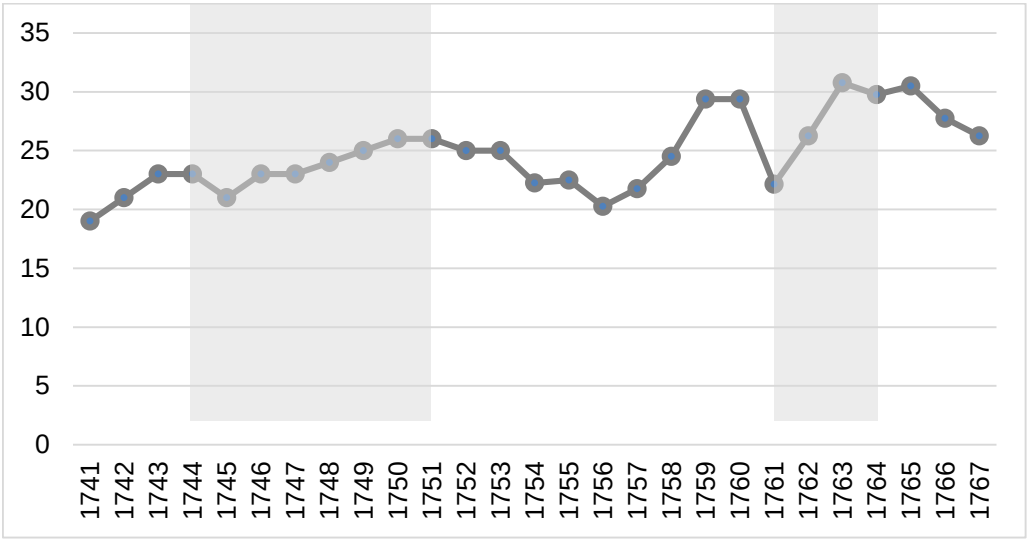


**Figure 3.7, Perth flaxen yarn spindle price series. Shaded areas mark the periods when the Lathams grew their own flax.**

alongside this spinning activity, indicating that it was sometimes deemed necessary to buy linen.[66]

In the 1760s Richard and Nany were in their seventies which necessitated changes in domestic practice. They were less physically fit and most likely made a smaller contribution to the physical challenge of dressing flax. Foster argues that Richard's arm injury in 1756 led to higher expenditure on assistance from agricultural labourers therefore indicating a change in the family economy.[67] It is likely that Martha and

[66] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 95, 109, 111, 112, 115.
[67] Foster, *Seven Households*, p. 150.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 3.8, detail of St Fagans, National Museum of Wales, 51-410/42, linen sheet, approximately 94 x 76 inches or 238 x 195cm, Wales, early nineteenth century.**
The ruler has a 1mm scale.

**Figure 3.9, St Fagans, 51-410/42, linen sheet.**

Selvage: 98 cm / 38 inches
Thread count per cm: 20 x 14
Thread count per inch: 50 x 34
Average thread widths, warp: 0.3-0.6 mm, weft: 0.4-0.6 mm

Alice, both named on the 1767 lease renewal were responsible for flax production in this period, preparing for their futures on the farm while supporting their parents. No new spinning wheels were bought but spinning clearly continued with a payment for repairs to Nany's spinning wheel for Ann's use in 1760.[68]

The seasonal pattern shifted again in this period with relatively similar weights of fibre bought in spring, summer and winter, while much less was bought in autumn. This broadening of purchasing could have been for several reasons, the demands on Martha and Alice of caring for their parents or perhaps Nany focused on spinning fulltime in her old age. A similar pattern appears in Pidcock's analysis of spinners used by the elite Cumbrian Quaker family, the Fells. During the period 1673 to 1678, spinners were paid in every month apart from August and October and most frequently from November to April.[69] The Latham account book shows that human life cycles had a considerable impact on their spinning activities and on seasonal experiences of time, with most fibre bought in autumn and winter from 1724 to 1741,

[68] LRO, DDsc 27/288, Lease Renewal, 1767; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 108.
[69] Pidcock, 'The Spinners and Weavers', p. 157.

winter and spring from 1742 to 1754 and spring, summer and winter from 1755 to 1767. Human life cycles cannot be used as a predictor of behaviour alone. Certain patterns, such as the decision to grow flax are not predictable.

The Lathams invested considerable time in spinning yarn to clothe themselves and get an income, achieving significant monetary benefits from domestic linen production for domestic use. It is possible to work out how long it took the Lathams to produce one sheet and to work out the potential savings made from domestic production, based on a linen sheet in the St Fagans collection shown in figures 3.8 and 3.9, which was produced in a 950 split reed (see Appendix 2). Young stated that 8lb. of flax could be spun into 5 spangles (or spindles) in 25 days and that 7.5 spangles were needed for a piece of 10 hundred cloth at 1 x 25 yards produced in a 1000 split reed.[70] Two lengths of linen were sewn together to make the St Fagans linen sheet so 5.2 yards of cloth were required. The yarn needed for a 38 inch x 5.2 yard piece of cloth could have been spun in just over 8 days, a significant investment of time.[71] Young does not provide weaving times for this cloth. However it is possible to calculate the time cost of the cloth for families like the Lathams who paid the weaver in linen yarn. The weaving costs of Young's 10 hundred cloth were 2.5d. a yard, so the sheet fabric would have cost 13d. to weave. Young's spinners were paid 3d. a day and it would have taken them around 4.5 days to spin the yarn needed to pay the weaver assuming that they were using home-grown flax. Thus it would have taken around twelve and a half days to spin the yarn needed to produce the cloth and pay the weaver for a sheet of the same dimensions as the St Fagans sheet.

The savings of this production in a domestic context, when the flax was home grown were significant. The Armagh weavers sold the 36 inch wide, 10 hundred cloth for 10.5 to 11.5d. per yard, unbleached.[72] 5.2 yards of this cloth would have cost 54.5d. to 60d. The spinning labour at 3d. a day for 12.5 days, was worth 37.5d. Thus a third of the cost of the cloth was saved by growing flax and spinning yarn for domestic linen, with further unknown savings from bleaching the cloth at home. Young's figures are for Ireland in the late 1770s but they still reveal the proportion of savings

[70] Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, I, p. 166.
[71] 94 inches x 2 = 5.2 yards. 7.5 = 25 yards = 12lb. = 37.5 days. 37.5 / 25 = 1.5 days to produce yarn for a yard of cloth (1 yard wide). 5.2 x 1.5 = 7.8 days. To cover the extra 2 inch width of the cloth: 7.8 / 36 = 0.22. 0.22 x 2 = 0.44 days needed to spin yarn for the extra 2 inch width. 7.8 + 0.44 = 8.24 days.
[72] Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, I, p. 166.

that the Lathams could have achieved because they are directly comparable. In 1776, Perth linen prices were 30.5d. a spindle and they were 30.75d. a spindle in 1763 when the Lathams were producing their own flax.[73] This high level of saving explains why time-expensive domestic linen production was undertaken in England.

Weaving followed spinning in the linen life cycle. Richard paid for spinning wheel parts but there are no similar payments for a loom. Only one payment was made for weaving plain linen cloth, 20 yards in 1723 around the time of Richard and Nany's marriage. The recipient of this payment was Richard's brother John, therefore it is possible that John wove all of the cloth needed for his brother's family, if so he probably would have been paid through barter or labour.[74] If an external weaver was used, it seems likely that they were paid in flaxen yarn due to an absence of payments in the account book. As has already been shown, in many years the Lathams purchased significantly more flax fibre than they needed. Flaxen yarn was an ideal payment for a weaver. The linen cloth was made up by Nany or her daughters into shirts, shifts, linen for the house and Richard's work and would have been regularly repaired, activity hidden by the account book.

## Bleaching and Washing

The temporalities of the bleaching and washing activities of the Lathams are more challenging to access through the account book. It is difficult to determine how much soap was used to wash linens and how often they were washed due to erratic soap purchasing by the Lathams. Each Latham would have owned more than one shirt or shift because it was a sign of poverty not to have a change of linen (see Chapter 4).[75] Therefore in 1743 when nine people lived in the house, there would have been a minimum of eighteen shirts and shifts of varying sizes. Starch, commonly used to stiffen linen, was rarely purchased by the Lathams therefore it is not included in the analysis. The purchase of soap by the Latham family is important – it was not a necessity. At this time, lye, an alkaline mixture of wood or fern ash and water was a widely used free alternative to heavily-taxed soap and its use was not limited to the

[73] Bald, *The Farmer and Corndealer's Assistant*, pp. 435-36.
[74] Styles, 'Clothing the North', p. 147; Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 143; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 125.
[75] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 80.

poor.[76] Commercial soap was made from lime, lye, potash (from ash), salt and a choice of fat: olive oil for the wealthy, otherwise tallow. The use of soap did not preclude washing with lye; bleaching instructions commonly required the use of both. Linen was bleached to turn its natural pale yellow or brown to white. It should be noted that soap was also used for cleaning houses.[77]

James Dunbar's detailed instructions for domestic bleaching reveal the time needed: three to five days to bleach flaxen yarn and sixteen to nineteen days to bleach linen cloth. His bleaching process is most overtly applicable to the Lathams because his method was aimed at 'the industrious farmer'. Firstly the cloth was washed in 'warm Water and *White Soap*' two or three times, then washed in running water for thirty minutes, wrung, laid on grass for a day and watered to keep it damp, then dried. The first bucking took place after this; the linen was soaked in warm lye for six to twelve hours then bleached on grass for four days with regular watering to keep it damp. After this the linen was bucked and bleached, soaked in sour milk and whey, then bucked again, a process that took ten to thirteen days including six to eight days bleaching outside with regular watering of the cloth. Dunbar stated that 'you must *buck* and *bleach* till you see your Cloath come to the true Colour; for it is not possible to give a certain Rule in this Art'.[78] The Lathams would have used wood ash from the farm or ferns because they heated the house with coals. While the whiteness of linen indicated social status and decency, the whitest linens were restricted to the elite due to the cost of a longer bleaching process, maintenance and use of blue to achieve a brighter white.[79] It is likely to have taken a minimum of nineteen days a year to bleach the Lathams' homespun yarn and newly woven linen. Bleaching was a seasonally regulated activity, dependent on good weather. The seasonality of bleaching is considered later alongside washing.

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[76] Wiltshire and Swindon Archives (WSA), 1720/744, Detailed Personal and Household Account Book of Hester Soame, 1753-1762, for example, pp. 268, 284, 315; Caroline Davidson, *A Woman's Work is Never Done: A History of Housework in the British Isles 1650-1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986), pp. 141-44.

[77] Houghton, *A Collection*, I, pp. 348-54; Godfrey Smith, *The Laboratory, or School of Arts* (London, 1799) pp. 396-99.

[78] J. Dunbar, *Smegmatalogia: Or the Art of Making Potashes and Soap and Bleaching of Linen* (Edinburgh, 1736), pp. 22-33.

[79] Davidson, *A Woman's Work*, p. 144; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 78-79.

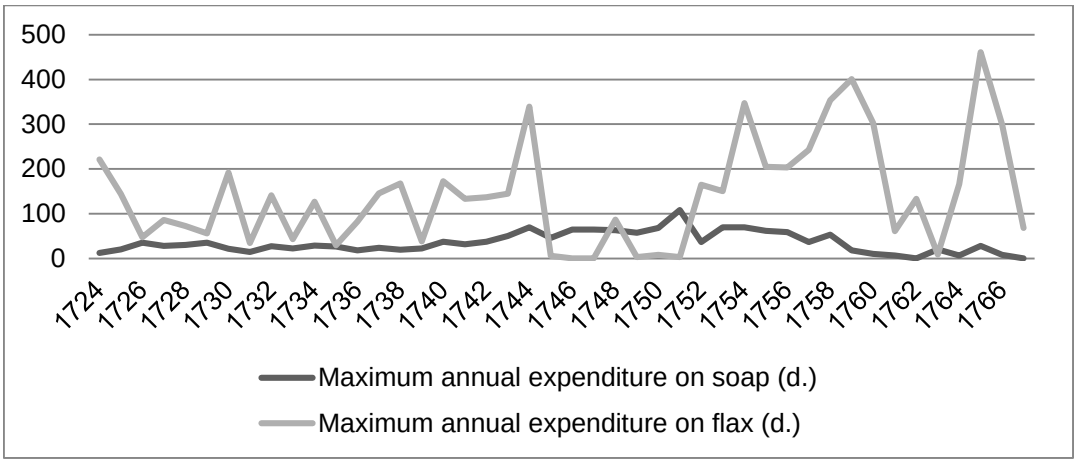


**Figure 3.10, Annual expenditure on flax and soap, 1724-1767 (pence)**

Laundry occupied a different cycle of time to bleaching and flax spinning, it was part of the regular cycle of domestic work.[80] Two factors influenced frequency of washing; the quantity of linen owned and the family's perceptions of cleanliness. A daily change of underwear was not the universal norm for respectability in this period and levels of cleanliness varied.[81] The Lathams spent an average of 1 per cent of their annual income on soap compared to an average of 10 to 13 per cent on clothing rather than use free lye, which indicates that they placed a higher level of importance on the cleanliness of their linen than some of their peers or that they were doing paid laundry work.

It is impossible to determine whether the Lathams had a weekly washing cycle because the same sums were paid for soap at different intervals and the quantity was rarely listed, a methodological problem. Figure 3.10 demonstrates that there was no direct relationship between the amount spent on flax and soap in a year. The frequency of soap purchases varied annually, ranging from no purchases in 1762 and 1767 to thirty-five in 1744. There is no relationship between irregular soap purchases and the amount spent on soap; higher expenditure on soap did not mean a longer interval until the next purchase. One explanation for erratic soap purchasing could be that the Lathams had a regular cyclical pattern of washing with lye rather than soap. A relationship between life cycle and soap purchasing is however apparent. Figure 3.10 shows a slight decline in expenditure on soap after 1730,

[80] Susanna Whatman, *Susanna Whatman. Her Housekeeping Book.* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 24.
[81] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 78-82, 230.

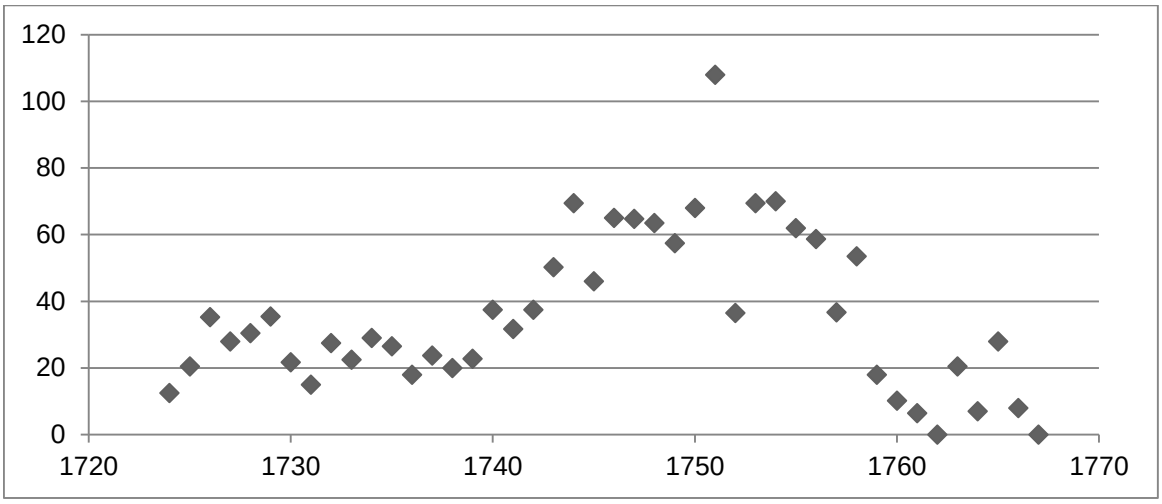


**Figure 3.11, Maximum annual expenditure on soap, 1724-1767 (pence)**

This graph includes joint valuations of soap and another purchase minus 0.25d., apart from those totalling at 1s. or more which are potentially too distorting. The graph is missing a single higher sum from 1742, 1753, 1754, 1755 and 1758.

when the Lathams had three children, rising again from 1740. The decline could relate to the expense of providing for more children.

The Lathams spent dramatically more on soap from 1740 to 1758, showing a long term change in their domestic practice which ran throughout the second life cycle phase and also included the end of the first and beginning of the third life cycle phases. This change coincides with the purchase of the six gallon three quart iron pot installed over a furnace in 1741 which enabled washing and bleaching in larger quantities. The increased demand for soap in 1740 probably influenced the purchase of the pot. The new pot and higher expenditure on soap could relate to the presence of nine people in the house. However from 1749 to 1755 when potentially only five Lathams were living in the house the amount spent on soap remained high ranging from 3s. 0.5d. to 9s. Furthermore five out of the six quantities listed in 1741, 1742, 1750 and 1751 show that soap cost 5 to 7d. per pound.[82] It seems highly likely that a change in domestic practice was associated with the purchase of more soap, that from around 1740 to 1759 (figure 3.11), Nany and her daughters took on laundry work because of the clear and dramatic increase in expenditure. Three of the cows owned or traded by Richard died in 1751, probably lost to the cattle plague outbreak, which surely explains the peak in soap purchasing that year, with laundry taken on to

[82] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 46-49, 79, 83. This only refers to entries which list quantity and specify soap price.

supplement lost income.[83] Two daughters started new jobs in 1749 therefore the extra laundry work in 1751 would have been more challenging. They also could have rented the pot out for other women to use for washing.[84]

The purchase of soap was more unusual and erratic after 1759 and there was a general decline in purchasing during the third life cycle phase from 1754 to 1767 when the household was small but stable which could have been for a number of reasons. Soap purchases by Martha and Alice who remained at home might not have been recorded in the account book. They might have bleached less linen. Perhaps dressed home-grown flax or flaxen yarn was sold to support the family through a less physically demanding activity than laundry, a viable option because wages for laundry and spinning were similar. For example the widow Hester Soame, living with her sister in Pytchley, Northamptonshire, paid three rates to her washerwomen in 1754 and 1755; 3d., 4d. and 6d. a day.[85] Women could earn from 2d. to 6d. a day from spinning flax in Ireland, most commonly at 2d. to 4d. indicating that they could choose to spin or wash in relation to their skills.[86] Richard and Nany Latham's life cycles affected soap purchasing, with a decline in the amount spent on soap when the family increased from three to six children due to the expense of extra children; with high levels of soap expenditure when the household was at its largest, used to wash family linen and for laundry work to support the family. Lower expenditure on soap from 1759 relates to decisions about the domestic economy rather than life cycle.

Two other potential influences on washing can be explored through the account book; sociability and illness. Fairs are the only regular social occasions recorded and could have motivated purchases of soap, related to perceptions of the respectability of clean linen. Twenty-six fairs were attended by members of the Latham family. In half of the sixteen fairs where the date was clearly given, no soap purchases were made within the previous four weeks. There was no strong relationship between

[83] John Broad, 'Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England', *Agricultural History Review*, 31:2 (1983), 104-115 (p. 105; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 81.
[84] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 82; Weatherill, *The Account Book*, p. 124.
[85] WSA, 1720/744, Account Book of Hester Soame, pp. 273-74, 300.
[86] Bindon, *A Letter from a Merchant*, p. 77; Young, *Tour in Ireland*, I, pp. 66, 176, 194, 253, 293, 342.

soap purchasing and fair attendance.[87] Linen's association with cleanliness could have led to purchases of soap at times of family illness. Hannah Woolley advised regular changes of linen for patients.[88] Six out of fourteen references to the doctor or doctoring 'stuff' were closely preceded or followed by soap purchases. Three of these purchases were recorded after medical assistance and in two instances doctoring stuff and soap were the only goods recorded on the line.[89] This might indicate that linen was washed in soap at some times of illness.

Seasonal analysis of the Lathams' soap purchasing and thus their bleaching and washing activities is similarly challenging. Comparison of total expenditure for each season from 1724 to 1767 suggests that less soap was bought in the autumn than other seasons. A more specific conclusion is not possible because the season is unclear for 126 purchases. Analysis of the periods 1724 to 1733 and 1744 to 1753 has proved equally inconclusive. The influence of temperature on bleaching and washing in the Latham home is similarly ambiguous. No soap was purchased in the summer of 1725 which was the only year before 1759 when soap consumption plummeted. 1725 was 'a year without a summer', the coldest summer between 1659 and 2012 due to an 'inferred volcanic dust veil effect'.[90] However soap purchasing was still buoyant during winter months when it was similarly difficult to dry linen therefore the role of the weather is unclear. There are similarly inconclusive results for 1740 in which four months had some of the coldest average temperatures on record: October was ranked second coldest, May the third coldest and January and February the fourth coldest months. Analysis of 1748 which had the eighth coldest spring, as well as 1729 to 1731 and 1734 which had some of the hottest seasons on record showed little correlation between the seasonal temperatures and soap purchasing, although in 1731 unusually a third of soap purchasing was in the autumn, the third warmest autumn on record.[91] Bad harvests in 1740 and 1741 appear to have led to increased soap purchasing. Expenditure jumped from 22.75 to

[87] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, for 0 to 4 weeks see fairs listed on pp. 4, 7, 18, 23, 27, 41, 54. For more than one month see fairs listed on pp. 7, 10, 18, 58, 100, 105, 116. This is based on the maximum time length between soap purchase and fair.
[88] Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewoman's Companion* (London, 1673) pp. 165-66.
[89] Weatherill, *The Account Book*, pp. 24, 53, 62, 70, 91, 101.
[90] John A. Kington, *Climate and Weather* (London: Collins, 2010), p. 295; D.E. Parker, T.P. Legg and C.K. Folland, 'A New Daily Central England Temperature Series, 1772-1991', *International Journal of Climatology,* 12 (2013 [1992]), pp. 317-42 through <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/hadobs/hadcet/> [accessed 23/01/2013].
[91] Parker et al., 'A New Daily Central England Temperature Series'.

37.5d. from 1749 to 1740. Expenditure remained above 30d. in 1741 and the family continued its higher spending on soap for the next few decades.[92] Future research using other sources may reveal whether the seasons influenced soap purchasing but the Latham account book cannot.

## Conclusion

The juxtaposition of human and object life cycles has highlighted the interrelationship of linen life cycles, the Lathams' life cycles and seasonality and thus enables a more cohesive understanding of linen production and care. This micro study has revealed three key points that influence interpretations of English linen manufacture in the eighteenth century. Firstly, spinning activity was not static. The quantity spun varied annually in relation to women's reproductive responsibilities and other paid work. Secondly, the Lathams were financially savvy. They saved significant money by domestic production for domestic use, estimated at a third of the cost. They responded directly to the market and grew their own flax when prices rose.

Thirdly flax fibres whether bought or home-grown were spun to clothe the family and maintain their respectability. Alongside this, surplus yarn could be sold for income. The life cycle approach in this paper has shown that the benefits of flax spinning varied across the poverty cycle for the Lathams. The seasonal influences on spinning have also been revealed. During the first period, domestic production of linen for domestic use maximised limited resources and prevented the material destitution of the family. They were all able to have changes of underwear, although Nany received no new gowns for 18 years. In the second period, a large workforce of daughters meant that flax spinning was intensified. Fibre was also grown and they also did waged cotton spinning work and laundry. The family's greater material prosperity allowed the purchase of more clothing of a higher quality and even fashionable clothing for the daughters. Finally in the last life cycle period as the labour force reduced and Richard and Nany were increasingly infirm, clothing expenditure reduced again. However Nany had a last hurrah and received her first fashionable clothing during her married life.

[92] E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (London: Edward Arnold for the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, 1981), p. 669.

The Lathams invested significant time in making and caring for linen to provision themselves, their home and the farm with linen and to maintain respectable, clean underwear. As de Vries and Gray suggested, they were industrious to increase their ownership of consumer goods. Life cycle also influenced the time that Nany and her daughters spent washing. The analysis of soap purchasing showed a relationship with life cycle and that the female Lathams undertook paid laundry work; while the influence of seasonality is ambiguous. There are limitations to the approach. Aspects of domestic practice remain hidden including who was spinning or washing, what priority these tasks took, where and what time of day they took place; how much time was spent spinning cotton compared to flax; whether they spun wool for a wage; what the Lathams' attitudes were to cleanliness and whether these changed during their life cycles; how frequently the Lathams washed their clothes and whether their washing cycle had seasonal influences.

Linen also had a significant influence on domestic practice in the Latham home. Understanding the cycles that altered the timing of growing and preparing flax, spinning, bleaching and washing, allows reflection on change over time in the domestic environment. Linen affected domestic space, requiring items such as spinning wheels and washing vessels which filled space in the home, as did wet sheets hung inside to dry on a winter's day. Basic sensory experiences related to linen would have been the same for the Lathams throughout the account book but the prevalence of the experience would have changed related to the quantity of flax grown and spun and the amount of fabric bleached and washed. Dust flying off the flax fibres during spinning created extra housework. The whirring of the spinning wheel altered the soundscape of the house. The sweet smell of the flax filled rooms and lingered on the fingers of spinners. There was also a physical impact on bodies; hands that chapped from washing, arm muscles strengthened by beating and carrying washing and the physical exhaustion of washing day. Linen production and care shaped the bodies and the daily life of the Latham family and others like them involved in the textile industries. Yet why was linen so necessary? The following chapter explores linen as a signifier of decency and respectability.

## Chapter 4. Adult Daily Life: Respectability and Decency.

Linen shirts and shifts, visible at the edge of clothing were signifiers of respectability through their quality and cleanliness. Body linen therefore played a key role of differentiation, between rich and poor, clean and unclean. Daily interactions could be impeded by unclean linen or a linen quality far below one's status.[1] This culturally-constructed association between linen and personal decency made linen a necessity. Linen's durability meant that it offered a cheaper means to indicate respectability through underwear than cotton. Cotton underwear had to be replaced more frequently and thus necessitated a reduction in the quantity and/or quality of underwear owned for the lower sorts. The continued use of linen underwear by members of the population for whom this price differential was significant, echoes the Latham's decision to spin flaxen yarn for their underwear to enable them to own greater quantities of clothes (see Chapter 3).

Several historians argue that linen was believed to be the repository of human dirt and excess humours and was washed rather than the body. Georges Vigarello first proposed this idea in *Concepts of Cleanliness*, proposing that plague in sixteenth-century France led to the development of the idea that pores were opened to infectious disease from contact with water. From the sixteenth to the late eighteenth century it was believed that linen washed the skin, absorbing surplus humours and sweat, a safer process than washing with water. Linens were cared for in place of the body and they refreshed the body, creating comfort. The linen shirt became visible at the edges of outer clothing as fashions changed. White linen was prized revealing the cleanliness of its wearer. It enforced status, white could not be maintained by the poor. Change in these beliefs were slow, linens were still seen to regulate the humours in late eighteenth-century France.[2] Daniel Roche mainly agrees with Vigarello but the main point of differentiation is that Roche suggests that use of linen became widespread during the eighteenth century, in contrast to

[1] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 78.
[2] Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness*, pp. 7-37, 45-84.

Vigarello who was unclear how far down the social hierarchy changes in attitudes to linen had spread by 1800.[3]

Virginia Smith summarises Vigarello's arguments in *Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity* suggesting implicit acceptance of his work and restates the role of linen in washing the body without comment. However her very limited inclusion of linen implies that she places limited significance on the value of linen in promoting cleanliness. Smith puts little emphasis on the role of linen in hygiene during the eighteenth century, mainly identifying it along with clean hands, grooming and good manners as important characteristics for gentlemen.[4] North's finding that it was only in the 1760s that English naval and popular health texts advocated changing linen to prevent disease partially justifies Smith's minimal discussion of the topic.[5]

Vigarello argued that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was increased focus on cleanliness for hygiene rather than purely for decency, but this was restricted to the elite.[6] Smith agreed with Vigarello that there were still social limits on cleanliness, but believed that in eighteenth-century England there was a wider expansion of hygiene into the lives of the middling sorts as well. Again, North identified this change in the 1760s.[7] In contrast, Styles argues that clean clothes were necessary for 'decency' throughout English society during the eighteenth century. Ownership of more than one set of underwear enabled washing. Even people entering a London workhouse might have a change of linen. Styles suggested that there was a high dirt threshold for plebeian clothing with it 'considered exceptional to wear the same clothes for more than three weeks without changing or cleaning them'.[8] He emphasised the necessity of washing clothes in towns. Jones agrees with Styles that cleanliness was essential to many plebeian people in their daily lives, with dirty clothing impeding activities such as seeking work and lodgings or shopping. However, plebeian linens were more likely to be brown than bright white but were still kept clean. People's ability to wash their linen varied, with the military requiring a change of shirt twice a week while others washed

[3] Daniel Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 155-56, 162, 169-71, 178-80; Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness*, pp. 93-163.
[4] Smith, *Clean*, pp. 186-187, 193-194, 226-228, 232.
[5] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 79-118.
[6] Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness*, pp. 93-163.
[7] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 97-118; Smith, *Clean*, p. 263.
[8] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 73.

fortnightly or every three weeks. Soap was used relatively widely despite its expense, but it was not affordable for all. Some people used blue to brighten the shirts.[9] Vickery agrees that decent white linen was important for even the 'working poor' and emphasises the role of women in maintaining this whiteness.[10] Daniel Roche argued that ownership of increasing quantities of linen gave 'greater comfort [and] a certain hygiene' across French society although the rate of change varied by region. His focus on the 'comfort' provided by changes of linens is undermined by his emphasis on the significance of the rejection of clean linen by French revolutionaries, symbolising the overthrow of the regime. If the main appeal of linen was its provision of personal comfort and this had spread to the lower sorts, why then did the sans-culottes reject linen?[11]

Social historians focus on the physical exertion of wash day. Earle considered laundry 'arduous'. The frequency of wash day varied by the quantity of linens owned and therefore conclusive timing cannot be given, however in large households it might be monthly.[12] Styles also considered washing a 'physically demanding' process for servants, washerwomen and wives with some plebeian women paying others to do their laundry to avoid the task.[13] Vickery also notes the hard labour and the amount of space needed for laundry, locating the household as the primary site of washing.[14] A lack of cleanliness could also damage the colour of linens. The owner of controversial pigsty near Tottenham Court Road which 300 to 500 pigs was taken to court for a 'nusance' in 1731. One witness statement was summarised as follows, it 'Chang'd ye colour of new wash'd linen. Tarnished plate. Servants sick with it'.[15]

Quantity is also a major issue in historiography because linen quantities were more frequently listed than other types of data, therefore it is the easiest information to access on linens. Roche argues for a 'controlled plenty, a decency without

[9] Jones, 'Clothing the Poor', p. 23; Jones, '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent"', pp. 39-41; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 71-73, 77-80.
[10] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 13-14, 122.
[11] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 176-79, 181.
[12] Peter Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 220-22.
[13] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 80-82.
[14] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 13-14.
[15] George Harris, *The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke*, 3 vols (London, 1847) I, pp. 268-69; Tom Almeroth-Williams 'City of Beasts: Horses & Livestock in Hanoverian London' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2013), p. 61.

superfluity' amongst French shopkeepers, artisans and professionals.[16] Overton et al. have examined the issue the most comprehensively through analysis of more than 8000 inventories and found that the quantity of linens owned in Kent increased over the period 1600 to 1749, from a median of fourteen sheets in 1600 to 1659 to twenty sheets in 1690 to 1749. They emphasise that household sizes only increased slightly from 1600 to 1749 in Kent therefore these figures represent a higher accumulation of goods. There was a strong correlation between the quantity of linen owned in Kent and wealth but it was less strong in Cornwall from 1700 to 1749, although there was still a stronger connection than between wealth and saucepans or hot drinks equipment. In Cornwall, the median number of sheets remained two or three from 1600 to 1749. Cornish beds commonly had only one sheet with no pillowcase. Sheets were the most commonly listed linen items in inventories. Median napkin numbers were ten in Cornwall and eighteen in Kent from 1690 to 1749, towels were zero and twelve respectively and median table cloth numbers grew slightly in Cornwall and Kent: from one in 1690 to 1719 to two in 1720 to 1749 in Cornwall and from 6 to 8 in Kent for the same periods. Linen quality also improved in Kent from 1600 to 1749 – damasks were mentioned more frequently.[17]

Quantities of linens owned must have varied significantly by status although this was not pursued by Overton et al. There is consensus amongst historians that two shirts or shifts were considered the minimum basic decencies for the poor in eighteenth-century England. It should be noted that while this chapter focuses on underwear and sheets, linen accessories were also essential for decency: headwear, bands, aprons and handkerchiefs.[18] Inventories rarely listed clothing, therefore it is difficult to quantify linen garments owned throughout the ranks. Qualitative examples are therefore necessary. Extremely high numbers of shirts or shifts were owned by the elite. Captain John Stevens who died in 1777 left a significant quantity of clothing to his servant John Bennett. Of a total of 211 items listed, there were 40 shirts of unknown textile, and 37 linen handkerchiefs or old linen 'handwrist' bands, compared to nineteen items that made up his suits. The quantity of linen and shirts are

[16] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 174-75.
[17] Overton et al. *Production and Consumption*, pp. 109-11, 142-43. Overton et al. used 30 year periods. The median numbers were identical for the two periods collapsed together.
[18] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 65, 69, 74-76, 79; Smith, *Clean*, pp. 191, 194; Margaret Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England and the Accuracy of Gregory King', *EHR*, 53:4 (2000), 677-705 (p. 678); Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 79.

statistically significant as a proportion of the whole. However, there was more cotton specified than linen, 45 pieces to 37 pieces. Similarly we see the use of linen and cotton for necessary underwear and accessories: linen handkerchiefs and wristbands, cotton neckcloths, stockings and gloves.[19] However, not all elites were spendthrifts. Frederick the Great only owned thirteen shirts on his death in 1786.[20]

Furthermore because linen was visible at the neck and cuffs, the quality of linen could also be assessed. A higher quality linen made from finer yarns indicated higher expenditure and thus had positive implications for personal decency. Roche considered linen quality a marker of status. He indicated regional differences in quality with Parisians wearing finer linens than people in other regions. Less convincingly Roche stated that the quality of linen used for most women's underwear 'improved' as 'the fine linen of Holland and France' replaced homespun linens, an unconvincing supposition due to a lack of evidence that homespun textiles were in decline or that the lower ranks could afford fine linens.[21] Glennie agrees that there were regional differences in the types of linens worn.[22]

In contrast, Margaret Spufford's research on seventeenth-century probate accounts raises interesting questions about the social significance of linen quality. She argues that 'categories of display in clothing were not strictly determined, but blurred', including for linen underwear. While the popularity of canvas, dowlas and holland followed expected social hierarchies, hemp and lockeram bucked the trend. Hemp underwear was disproportionately represented amongst the children of deceased people who left inventory values of £50 to £150. A higher number of children from the £150 and above category received lockeram underwear than in the under £50 group. However, Spufford's analysis is missing a crucial element – geography. This chapter goes on to show that the use of coarser linen textiles varied significantly by region, therefore wealth was not the sole determinant of the quality of linen. However, Spufford's key assertion, that the most expensive fabrics were not

[19] BRO, D/ESv(M)F31/19, Inventory of clothes left to John Bennett by John Stevens, 1777. The linen items were 31 'Red and White Linning' handkerchiefs and 6 'Old Holland bands that was worn round ye handwrist'. The cotton items were 34 marked muslin neckcloths (16 'Good', 15 'Common' and 3 'Old fringed'); 6 pairs of 'white Cotton stockings' (3 'Good', 3 'Old'); 5 nightcaps (3 'double cotton', 2 'Single') and one pair of Nankeen gloves.
[20] Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 77-78.
[21] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 168-69, 172, 179.
[22] Glennie, 'The Social Shape of the Market', pp. 23-25.

automatically worn by richer children and that the poor were not limited to the cheapest fabrics remains true because regional differences in the uses of different types of linen meant that social stratification through linen must have varied regionally with greater acceptance of lower quality fabrics in some counties than in others.[23]

Linen's crucial role in daily life meant that it was used by novelists as shorthand for a change in a character's status. Literature therefore offers a way into contemporary attitudes towards linens. Expressions of respectability and cleanliness will be first examined in novels and then explored in practice through studies of gender and regional differences in linens through crime records, a pawn broker's book and inventories.

## Novels

The significance of linen as a material marker of status, respectability and decency led to its use in novels as a signifier of a character's change in fortunes, as important as fine gowns and embroidered suits. Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson and Tobias Smollett used quantity and quality of linen to signify a character's status. The type of narrative may have influenced this usage. Their novels feature regular changes of location and fortune in their hero/ines struggle to achieve their rightful destiny. In contrast linen appears infrequently in novels written by women: it is of little concern to Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) how many shifts Lydia Bennett possessed before and after her scandalous flight with Mr Wickham. Female authors, even those publishing under male pseudonyms, might have consciously avoided discussion of linens which were associated with women's work and responsibility. Alternatively it is possible that they just were not of interest. It is only in *Northanger Abbey* (1817) that Austen discusses linens in any detail, when Catherine Morland was finally able to read the 'ancient' manuscript that captured her gothic-fevered imagination, she discovered it to be simply 'An inventory of linen, in coarse

[23] Spufford, 'Fabric for Seventeenth-Century Children', pp. 47, 59.

and modern characters'.[24] Margot Finn found that Jane Austen's novels featured fewer references to material culture than her contemporaries.[25]

Samuel Richardson used qualities and quantities of linen to raise issues of decorous dress in *Pamela* (1740). Respectable dress had moral implications for Richardson. He expressed concerns about servants dressing above their status. It was appropriate for Pamela's mistress to give Pamela 'clothes and linen', but Pamela's mother worried that being given garments that 'a gentlewoman need not be ashamed to appear in' might lead Pamela into 'any thing dishonest or wicked [by threatening her virtue], *by being so set above yourself*'.[26] When Pamela planned to leave the house before the machinations of her master detained her, she would not take the clothes given to her by her mistress, 'for she gave them to me, supposing I was to wear them in her service' which appears to be didacticism from Richardson reminding servants to stick to their rank sartorially.[27]

Pamela was obliged to Mr B her new master (who later imprisoned and attempted to rape her, before virtuously marrying her), for the gift some of her late mistress's clothing: a silk outfit, six shifts, six 'fine' handkerchiefs, three cambric and four holland aprons. Yet the decorous Pamela was unwilling to sell the silk suit of clothes 'I wish it was no affront to him to make money of them and send it to you [her parents]'. Richardson presents this gift as potentially suspect, because Pamela has to reassure her parents 'You will be full of fears, [...] of some design upon me, till I tell you' that Mr B gave her the clothes when Mrs Jervis the housekeeper was there who also received clothes. Gifts soon after pushed the boundaries of propriety; Flanders lace head-clothes, silk shoes, ribbons, topknots, 'four pair of fine white cotton stockings', three pairs of 'fine silk' stockings and two pairs of 'rich' stays. Pamela's reaction was as follows: 'I was inwardly ashamed to take the stockings; for Mrs Jervis was not there: if she had, it would have been nothing'. Mr B noticed and commented '"Don't blush, Pamela: dost think I don't know pretty maids wear shoes and stockings?"'. Notably, the stockings rather than the stays were considered inappropriate garments to receive from a man, although both were hidden under

[24] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey and Other Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 136-37.
[25] Margot Finn, 'The Homes of England' in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. by James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 293-313 (pp. 304-11).
[26] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 45.
[27] Ibid., p. 111.

clothing. Linen underwear is not included in the section, emphasising that it was just one aspect of decorous dress.[28] In contrast, just before Pamela's marriage to Mr B, she happily accepted and wore the clothing gifted by her ex-mistress and Mr B: she 'put on fine linen, silk shoes', 'fine' cotton stockings, a quilted petticoat, a silk mantua gown and coat, a French necklace, a cambric and lace handkerchief, 'clean gloves' and a fan.[29] Richardson starts with the linen. Pamela had to put a shift on first when dressing but this also signalled her total transformation into a lady through her virtuous marriage. Quality of linen was used for an alternative interpretation of respectability in Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748). The effeminate, over-perfumed, over-dressed Captain Whiffle ordered that lieutenants had to wear 'a wig, sword and ruffles' when on deck and petty officers should not be seen with 'a check shirt or dirty linen'. His affectations represented his inability to command a ship.[30]

In *Roderick Random*, Smollett uses quantities and types of linen to represent the fortunes of the eponymous hero. After Random was pressganged, he was given shirts by the sea surgeons on board, 'two good ruffled shirts, which with two of check [...] enabled me to appear with decency'. They gave him no other clothing.[31] Later, after being given

> half a dozen fine shirts and as many linnen waistcoats and caps, with twelve pair of new thread-stockings. – Being thus provided with money and all necessaries for the comfort of life, I began to look upon myself as a gentleman of some consequence and felt my pride dilate apace.[32]

Random's fortunes changed again and he ended up as a French foot soldier paid only 5 sols a day, 'my linen reduced from three tolerable shirts, to two pair of sleeves and necks, the bodies having been long ago converted into spatterdashes; and after all, I was better provided than any private man in the regiment'. Only linen is discussed in the section on Random's poverty as a soldier, because the pay was 'scarce sufficient to procure a wretched subsistence', he was unable to afford the

[28] Ibid., pp. 49-51.
[29] Ibid., p. 337.
[30] Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 199.
[31] Ibid., p. 148.
[32] Ibid., p. 206.

basic necessaries of life and these were both represented through and were linen shirts.[33]

The lack of shirts took a physical toll on Random's body: 'although my back had been many weeks a stranger to any comfort of this kind [a shirt], my skin was not yet quite familiarized to the want of it'. A return to spirits and better fortunes was represented by Strap, Random's loyal companion lending Random a 'very fine ruffled holland shirt and cambrick neckcloth' and mention of thirty-six others that Strap would lend to Random who was 'ravished at this piece of good news'.[34] However at the end of the book when Random rebuilt his fortunes working on his uncle's slave ship and finally through the discovery of his father in Buenos Ayres who had amassed a large fortune, there is no reference to linen. Random's clothing featured little other than the 'magnificence of my apparel' in contrast to large sums of money and valuable jewellery gifted, indicating that for Smollett linen best illustrated indigence and middling status but was unnecessary to represent the wealth of a man with £18,000.[35] Status is again denoted in the quantity of linen used in Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749). The eponymous character took nine shirts when travelling compared to the five shirts of his companion Partridge who was a teacher and thus of lower status than Jones who was brought up as a gentleman.[36]

The importance of dressing appropriately for one's status, a form of decency, was also used by Richardson as a means of emphasising Pamela's virtue through her reluctance to return to her plebeian parents in the gifted garments, burdened with clothes that were inappropriate for her station: linen, cambric headclothes, 'fine Holland linen', a silk night gown (day wear), silk petticoats and shoes decorated with lace. Pamela considered the following more appropriate: two shifts made from Scots cloth (with enough for two shifts and shirts for each of her parents) with black ribbon for the sleeves, four other shifts, a camblet quilted coat (already owned), two flannel undercoats instead of 'swan-skin and fine linen', two caps, a straw hat, muslin tucker, two pairs of pockets, two cotton handkerchiefs, knitted mittens 'turned up with white callico', two pairs of gloves, two pairs of blue worsted hose (instead of cotton)

[33] Ibid., p. 250.
[34] Ibid., pp. 252-53.
[35] Ibid., pp. 412, 416-18, 425-27.
[36] Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (London: Vintage, 2007), p. 348. These numbers include the shirts that Jones and Partridge were wearing at the time of packing.

with white clocks (decorative panels), a homespun gown, a calico night gown, leather shoes and a pair with the metal lace removed. These garments are listed in three different places and there is no complete list in one place, which makes it possible that Richardson accidentally listed too many garments. However, the six shifts are listed together, a substantial number, perhaps designed to intimate to the reader the higher levels of cleanliness upheld by Pamela from her time living in an aristocratic household and differentiate her noble spirit from other plebeians.[37]

Pamela's father aimed for decency in a meeting with Mr B that promised no positive outcomes with him 'dreading for [Pamela's virtue] and in much fear of being himself brow-beaten'. Prior to the meeting Andrews 'put on fresh linen' and shaved at an alehouse.[38] Later in the novel Mr B gave Andrews new clothes. The latter chose 'a fine drab [used by Mr B for coach travel], which he thought looked the plainest': Richardson thus emphasised the virtue of Andrews' humility. Andrews was also provided with linen, a hat, shoes and stockings and a pair of silver buckles.[39] These other garments including the linen emphasise the importance of the perceived appropriateness of an outfit – the quality of underwear and accessories should match the suit and an outfit should be appropriate for social station. The importance of matching the quality of underwear and other dress is similarly present in John Cleland's erotic novel *Fanny Hill*.[40]

In Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742), a satire on *Pamela* based on her virtuous brother, Fielding similarly uses the quality of linen to represent the status of characters. When discussing a local squire guilty of making promises that he would not keep, the innkeeper told Andrews and his companions of a local family who on the promise that their son should be an excisemen, gave him an education that they could not afford and he 'went constantly drest as fine as could be, with two clean holland shirts a week and this for several years', with the quantity, quality and cleanliness of the shirts representing that he was above his station.[41] When Joseph was reunited with Pamela and dressed by Mr Booby, again the outer garments and

[37] Richardson, *Pamela*, pp. 76-77, 87-88, 110-11.
[38] Ibid., p. 325.
[39] Ibid., p. 345.
[40] Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, p. 21.
[41] Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 178.

linen were noted: a ‘suit of his own clothes, with linnen and other necessaries’. Again like Richardson, Fielding emphasised that linen was part of the transformation.[42]

The term ‘naked’ was commonly used in novels to describe someone dressed only in a shirt or shift therefore indicating the indecency of appearing in public in these garments alone. In *Joseph Andrews* when Joseph was cast out of the lust-tortured Lady Booby’s service and his livery was taken Andrews ‘had not wherewithal to buy a coat and must have gone naked’. At this point he was ‘naked’ when ‘standing in his shirt’.[43] Similarly in Smollett’s *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771), after a night-time fire, guests at an inn were ‘naked to the smock’.[44] However, this was not the exclusive use for the term ‘naked’. It was also used to discuss bare flesh, for example in the same novel, another fire alarm in the night led the Quixotic Lieutenant Lismahago to climb out the window on a ladder ‘in a shurt so scanty, that it could not kiver his nakedness!’[45] Again in *Fanny Hill*, ‘naked’ was used in both contexts, ‘naked to my shift’ and nakedness in terms of bare flesh.[46] In pauper letters from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century ‘nakedness’ was used as a trope to indicate destitution and a high level of need. However nakedness did not simply refer to only wearing a shirt or shift as it did in many novels, but inadequate clothing, whether having no change of suit or no shoes.[47]

Linen garments absorbed bodily fluids due to their intimacy with the body, thus their cleanliness was a crucial indicator of cleanliness of body and clothing. Two poems detailing the foul habits of men and women include linen in their tirades. In Jonathan Swift’s satirical poem *The Lady’s Dressing-Room*, the heroine disgusts the hero with the filth of her clothes and dressing room. Her catalogue of faults included ‘a dirty Smock [...] Beneath the armpits well besmeared’ and implicitly had other stains, perhaps menstrual blood: ‘On such a Point, few Words are best and *Strephon* bids us guess the rest’. Towels were ‘Begumm’d, bematter’d and beslim’d, With Dirt and Sweat and Ear-wax grimed’, while Cælia’s coifs, possibly linen were worn in bed

[42] Ibid., pp. 273-74.
[43] Ibid., p. 263. Again nakedness in a shirt is implicit in pp. 311-12.
[44] Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 176, see also p. 314.
[45] Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*, pp. 299-300, 306, see also pp. 81-82, 316.
[46] Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, pp. 17-8, 20, 49, 51. See also Fielding, *Tom Jones*, pp. 405-06 for exposed breasts as ‘half naked’.
[47] Jones, ‘“I cannot keep my place without being deascent”’, pp. 33-35.

without changing for a week, creating a 'reek' and implied that when worn her clouts (sanitary towels) smelt too.[48] In *The Gentleman's Study, In Answer to The Lady's Dressing-Room*, by Miss W, the shirt that Strephon the 'hero' wore had red gussets (armpits) while 'modesty forbids the rest: It shan't be spoke but may be guessed', implying excrement or semen on the shirt. His towels were 'stiff with Soap and Hair'. These were not the worst of his offences, which included drawing animals on the wall in excrement, but these garments contributed to the squalor and particularly the dirty towels which were designed to be aids to cleanliness.[49]

In *Roderick Random* Smollett discussed the cleanliness of linen more frequently than other novelists. Random suffered the consequences of travelling with a French monk: 'his order did not permit him to wear linnen, so that having little occasion to undress himself, he was none of the cleanliest animals in the world' and Random walked 'windward of him' to avoid the smell.[50] Dirty, smelly linen was elsewhere used by Smollett to represent a fall in fortunes. Random met a former friend in Marshalsea prison wearing 'very shabby cloaths and marvellous foul linnen'.[51] Furthermore when Random was stuck in debtor's prison, he became depressed and 'degenerated into such a sloven, that during the space of two months, I was neither washed, shifted nor shaved; so that [...] my whole appearance [was] squalid and even frightful' and his uncle did not immediately recognise him.[52] 'Shifted' refers a change of underwear. Toby Shandy, Tristram's uncle in Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759 to 1767) used a failure to change his underwear to advance his interest. Toby became sick of years of rest necessitated by an open wound and in protest, in a fit of peevishness, stopped his daily changes of shirts, went unshaven and insisted that the surgeon close the wound.[53]

Clean linen was also used to mark status and respectability in *Tristram Shandy.* Tristram when struggling with his writing style, shaved, 'change[d] my shirt – put on a better coat', wig and topaz ring, dressing 'after my best fashion', stating that if a man 'dresses like a gentlemen, every one of them [his ideas] stands presented to his imagination, genteelized along with him', thus a clean shirt was considered part of

[48] Jonathan Swift, 'The Lady's Dressing Room. A Poem' (London, 1732), pp. 3-5, 8.
[49] Miss W, *The Gentleman's Study, In Answer to The Lady's Dressing Room* (London, 1732), pp. 4-5.
[50] Smollett, *Roderick Random*, p. 240.
[51] Ibid., p. 373.
[52] Ibid., pp. 397-98.
[53] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinion of Tristram Shandy* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 86.

gentlemanly dress by Sterne.[54] Uncle Toby put on a 'clean shirt' for wooing while his servant the Corporal puffed out his shirt sleeves when undertaking the same task.[55] A magical ritual is also suggested to Toby by Tristram's father, 'Stick a pin in the bosom of thy shirt, before thou enterest her parlour', the purpose of which was not stated.[56] Similarly in *Fanny Hill* after the eponymous character seduced a servant of her current keeper, when the servant next appeared he was 'as much spruced out as could be expected from one in his condition [...] His hair trimly dressed, clean linen'. None of his other clothes were mentioned.[57]

The poor and eccentric Lieutenant Lismahago in *Humphrey Clinker* defended his respectable relative poverty: 'I owe to no man a farthing; I can always command a clean shirt, mutton-chop and a truss of straw' and had enough money to pay for his burial.[58] The chief cawdie or errand boy and toastmaster, at a Scottish ball that Jeremy Melford attended, made sure that the other cawdies 'appear in decent apparel and clean linen'.[59] These examples are in contrast to the description of Lismahago's Native American wife who 'had neither shoes, stockings, shift, nor any kind of linen' absences which marked the differences between the two cultures and implied the lack of 'civilisation' when juxtaposed with ornaments such as bobbins of human bone in her hair and the scalp hanging from her neck.[60]

This literature analysis has clearly established that quantity, quality and cleanliness of linens were key signifiers of respectability and decency. Now the chapter will move on to consider how far these attitudes are represented within other documents and the issues ignored by novelists, in particular gender differences in the ownership of body linen and use of lower quality hemp and tow fibres for body and household linens.

[54] Ibid., pp. 600-01.
[55] Ibid., pp. 568, 586.
[56] Ibid., p. 577.
[57] Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, pp. 17, 21, 87.
[58] Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*, p. 190.
[59] Ibid., pp. 226-27.
[60] Ibid., p. 195.

## Quantity

**Table 4.1, Number of shirts and shifts in the Northern and Midlands crime record samples and Fettes pawnbrokers book**

| | Northern indictments | | Midlands indictments | | Fettes book | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Quantity | Percentage of whole (n=2819) | Quantity | Percentage of whole (n=3867) | Quantity | Percentage of whole (n=10906) |
| Shirts | 296 | 11 | 409 | 11 | 496 | 5 |
| Shifts | 162 | 6 | 163 | 4 | 217 | 2 |

Sources: Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC), Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions, 1678-1810 and Assize Records, 1714-1807; North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYRCO), Quarter Sessions and Assize Records 1730s, 1750s, 1770s; West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield (WYASW), Quarter Sessions and Assize Records 1730s, 1750s, 1770s; Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology (WAA), Worcestershire Quarter Sessions, 1678-1810 and Assize Records, 1714-1807; York City Archives (YCA), Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, pawnbroker, York, 1777-1778.

**Table 4.2, Numbers of shirts and shifts in Northern sample indictments**

| | 1690s (n=210) | 1730s (n=553) | 1750s (n=878) | 1780s (n= 1178) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shirts | 20 | 79 | 60 | 137 |
| Shifts | 23 | 39 | 53 | 47 |

Sources: NYRCO, Quarter Sessions and Assize records 1730s, 1750s, 1770s; West WYASW, Quarter Sessions and Assize records 1730s, 1750s, 1770s.

**Table 4.3, Numbers of shirts and shifts in Midlands sample indictments**

| | 1740s (n=212) | 1750s (n=293) | 1760s (n=599) | 1770s (n=557) | 1780s (n=730) | 1800s (n= 223) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shirts | 26 | 32 | 68 | 53 | 77 | 17 |
| Shifts | 12 | 9 | 37 | 23 | 22 | 9 |

Source: OHC, Quarter Sessions, 1678-1810 and Assize Records, 1714-1807; WAA, Quarter Sessions, 1678-1810 and Assize Records, 1714-1807.

Gender differences in ownership of linens do not appear within novels or directly in most sources. Roche argued that French men were more likely to own basic and lower quantities of linen than women. He particularly singled female servants out for

copying their employers and buying large quantities of body linens.[61] However the opposite situation was true amongst English plebeians. Quantitative analysis of indictments for criminal records and a pawnbroker's pledge book reveals statistically significant differences in the numbers of shirts and shifts owned by men and women as tables 4.1 to 4.3 show. Shirts appear twice as frequently as shifts, a significant finding which adjusts the current consensus that plebeians required at least two shirts or shifts to be decent. The majority of poorer plebeian households would have had a 'respectable' working husband, with a change of linen and a materially destitute wife with one shift. While on wash day the wife would be required to stay indoors for decency, she would have undertaken activities outside the house, church, buying food and having a local social life.[62] Her equals could not have considered her dress inappropriate because they experienced the same material poverty, therefore the decency concern must have rested amongst the middling and upper sorts.

Tables 4.1 to 4.3 are based on analysis of samples of indictments for the Midlands containing 3867 garment mentions and similarly 2819 garment mentions from the North (see Introduction) and the ledger of George Fettes a York pawnbroker.[63] Fettes' pledge book is a rare survival despite the fact that all pawnbrokers were obliged to keep pledge books under a 1757 Act concerned with pawning. The database used was compiled by Alison Backhouse and is held at the City of York archives.[64] Fettes' book lists the 10,906 occasions that someone pawned goods with him from May 1777 to December 1778. The majority of his customers were women and came from York and 'surrounding neighbourhoods'.[65]

Comparison of the 1030 stolen shirts and shifts listed in the indictments of the Northern and Midland samples and 713 listings of pawned shirts and shifts in Fettes'

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[61] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 172-75.
[62] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 78.
[63] My thanks to John Styles for sharing the crime databases and York City Archives. York City Archives, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, pawnbroker, York, 1777-1778.
[64] Alison Backhouse, *The Worm-Eaten Waistcoat* (York: Alison Backhouse, 2003), pp. 23-24, 53.
[65] Beverly Lemire, 'Petty Pawns and Informal Lending: Gender and the Transformation of Small-Scale Credit in England, *circa* 1600-1800' in *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism: Essays in Business and Industrial History in Honour of Peter Mathias*, ed. by Kristine Bruland and Patrick O'Brien (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 112-38 (p. 131); Alannah Tomkins, 'Pawnbroking and the Survival Strategies of the Poor in 1770s York', in *The Poor in England 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*, ed. by Tomkins and Steven King (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 166-198 (p. 182).

pledge book both reveal that significantly more shirts were stolen or pawned than shifts shown in tables 4.1 to 4.3 This bias is also clear in the Old Bailey. Around 3200 cases mentioned shirts and 1499 mentioned shifts. These figures are estimated from the overall number multiplied by 0.65 because analysis of the indictments from the 1740s and 1770s revealed that 65 per cent of cases with shirts or shifts contained the garment in the indictment, thus excluding descriptions of men in their shirts and the use of 'shift' as a verb.[66] When examined cumulatively, these major bodies of sources reveal that shirts appear more frequently than shifts. There are four potential explanations, human error in transcriptions, contemporary confusion of shirts and shifts, that shirts were worth more, so people fraudulently claimed for them, or that plebeian men owned more underwear than women.

Human error is always a problem when using transcriptions. Comparison of the full transcription of Fettes database from York with the separate partial transcription by John Styles reveals that there are no differences between their transcriptions of 'shirt' and 'shift' in forty-seven entries. One database is missing a single entry for a shirt therefore errors in Backhouse's transcription of the Fettes book are very low. Examination of the Old Bailey Proceedings presents a higher level of transcription errors in indictments. In 1740 and 1770 'shift' was correctly transcribed in all thirty-six which referred to the theft of a shift, but the fifty-six 'shirt' cases included five cases when the term should have read 'shift' instead. Based on the fifty-six shirt cases there was a 9 per cent inaccuracy and shifts were accordingly underrepresented, therefore when adjusted for these errors, we can estimate that there were 2912 cases with shirts and 1634 cases with shifts.[67] It remains that there must have been nearly twice as many references to shirts in indictments as shifts. Therefore it is highly unlikely that human error is responsible for the disparity in numbers of shirts and shifts. Secondly, it is less likely that people who listed garments confused shirts

[66] *OBP,* Searched for all offences where the transcription matches '"shirt*"' and separately '"shift shifts"' (using 'or' function), between 1678 and 1810.
[67] *OBP*, January 1740, trial of Mary Giddings (t17400116-41) (henceforth *OBP*, January 1740, Mary Giddings (17400116-41)); April 1770, Mary Cole (t17700425-17); September 1770, Sarah Green (t17700912-31); September 1770, John Simpson (t17700912-35); October 1770, Sarah Pretty (t17701024-32).

**Table 4.4, David Davies' estimate of annual clothing costs for labourers, Barkham, Berkshire, 1787**

| Husband | £ | s. | d. | Wife | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Suit | | 5 | 0 | Gown and petticoats | | 4 | 0 |
| Working jacket and breeches | | 4 | 0 | | | | |
| 2 shirts | | 8 | 0 | 1 shift | | 3 | 6 |
| 1 pair of stout, nailed shoes | | 7 | 0 | 1 pair of strong shoes | | 4 | 0 |
| 2 pairs of stockings | | 4 | 0 | 1 pair of stockings | | 1 | 6 |
| | | | | 2 aprons | | 3 | 0 |
| Hat, handkerchief, etc. | | 2 | 0 | Handkerchiefs, caps, etc. | | 4 | 0 |
| Total | **1** | **10** | **0** | | **1** | **0** | **0** |

Source: Davies, 'Case of Labourers', p. 15.

and shifts in court because they named their own possessions.[68] Additionally, the business of a pawnbroker depended on accurate record keeping.

Thirdly, did people claim for shirts rather than shifts because they were more expensive? In the Midlands indictments from the Assizes the mean value of shirts stolen was 40d. (n=271) and 29.5d. for shifts (n=123), so value could have been a factor. However, in the Northern indictments also from the Assizes, the mean value of shirts stolen was 32.5d. (n=78) while it was 31.5d. for shifts (n=40), near identical therefore it was not automatic that shirts were more valuable than shifts. The average shirt and shift were therefore worth more than the 12d. requirement for the case to be considered grand rather than petty larceny. Grand larceny could result in transportation or the death penalty. At Quarter Sessions in many counties, including Yorkshire, valuations were adjusted to make every case a petty larceny so cannot be trusted. It is for this reason that Assize valuations are used here, because there was no adjustment for petty larceny and incentives to adjust valuations for other reasons were less at the Assizes.[69]

Finally, the evidence collected by both Sir Frederick Eden and David Davis towards the end of the eighteenth century suggests that less was spent on the clothing of plebeian women than their husbands. Eden gave the example of an Epsom gardener with a 'sickly' but highly fertile wife; they had eight children and she was pregnant

[68] Susan North found that 'shift' was used for a man's shirt in a few documents for the 1680s, but they disappeared from probate documents by 1690. North, 'Dress and Hygiene', p. 28.
[69] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 330.

**Table 4.5, Division of shirts and shifts by status from Northern indictments, 1690-1789**

| | Shirt | Shift |
|---|---|---|
| Elite | 19 | 21 |
| Middling | 53 | 30 |
| Plebeian | 103 | 43 |
| Shopkeeper | 12 | 1 |
| Unknown | 109 | 67 |

Sources: NYRCO, Quarter Sessions and Assize records 1730s, 1750s, 1770s; WYASW, Quarter Sessions and Assize records 1730s, 1750s, 1770s;

again. In their family budget 'both he and his children receive sundry little presents of old cloaths; and his wife, seldom going out, wears few', therefore the family only had to buy linen and stockings.[70] David Davies also estimated the costs of labourers' clothing based on six families in Barkham, Berkshire in 1787, outlined in table 4.4. The children received clothing adapted from their parent's clothes and second hand purchases which Davies suggested would have cost 7s. per child. Their garments were not listed individually therefore they are not included in the table. Notably the wife's clothing was a third cheaper than her husband's. These savings were chiefly achieved through having only one set of outer clothing, one shift and one pair of stockings, exactly half the provision for her husband.[71] Shifts were expensive items, costing nearly as much as a pair of shoes, a gown and petticoats therefore real savings were made by families on the edge of poverty if the mother forewent a change of linen. Similarly, in the Latham family less money was spent on Nany's clothing than Richard's during their first life cycle phase 1724 to 1741, while clothing for the girls and Nany outdid Richard's new clothing in the following life cycle period from 1742 to 1754 (see Chapter 3).[72]

The analysis of the Northern indictments by social status in table 4.5 further supports the argument that this was a plebeian phenomenon (there is not sufficient evidence to analyse the Midlands indictments by status). There is negligible gender difference in elite underwear, a gap in middling underwear the cause of which is uncertain but could relate to the large number of unknown garments. However, amongst plebeians, men owned two and half times more underwear than women. This

[70] Sir Frederick Eden, *The State of the Poor: Or, an History of the Labouring Classes in England*, 3 vols (London, 1797), III, pp. 709-10; Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 72.
[71] David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry Stated and Considered* (Bath, 1795), pp. 6, 15; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 220-22.
[72] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 232, 236-40.

difference must have only applied to working plebeians not in receipt of parish relief, because two shirts or shifts were widely considered the minimum decency for paupers.[73]

There are significant implications for decency in terms of the gender differentiation in the ownership of underwear in the North, Midlands and London. Plebeian women's underwear must have been less respectable than men's because it could not be washed as frequently. However, unless they were in service, most women's commercial (spinning, sewing and laundry) and reproductive work could have been undertaken within the home, therefore a clean shift was not as essential to their daily activities as men's shirts were in expressing their respectability to employers outside the home. Importantly, this finding must alter current perceptions that two shirts or shifts were the most basic requirement for decent underwear. Two shirts might have been essential for plebeian men but for their wives only one shift was a necessity. This must have primarily applied to married women because women in service would have needed more than one shift to maintain the level of respectability expected by their employers and so that they could work on wash day. The quantity of linen owned was, however, not the only signifier of respectability, different types and qualities of linen had their own associations.

## Quality and Textile Type

Different types of linens were used as signifiers of quality and accordingly expressed a character's status in eighteenth-century novels. Pamela was given cambrics and hollands when she received her mistresses' clothing, but considered Scots cloth appropriate for her shifts on her return to her plebeian parents. Holland was again used in *Joseph Andrews* to indicate a plebeian dressed above their station. Holland, cambric and ruffles indicated fine shirts in *Roderick Random*, while at his most destitute, Random's shirts were simply 'sleeves and necks'.[74] Cambrics, hollands and Scots cloth were not the only textiles used for underwear and household textiles in the eighteenth century (see Chapter 1). However, it is extremely difficult to locate information on underwear that can be assessed qualitatively because probate

[73] North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 65, 69, 74-76; Smith, *Clean*, pp. 191, 194; Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel', p. 678; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 79-80.
[74] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, p. 178; Richardson, *Pamela*, pp. 49-50, 76; Smollett, *Roderick Random*, pp. 250, 252-53.

inventories, which are the key sources for quantifying ownership of goods, rarely list clothing.

As Evans has indicated, hempen textiles were also used for clothing and in the house in parts of England.[75] Edmund Quincy in a pamphlet designed to promote hemp cultivation in the American colonies stated that in France sheeting and even the 'very finest' shirtings were 'constantly made' of hemp because 'it proves remarkably strong, though not so easily brought to a good colour as those made of flax'. Thus he summarises the key material differences between the two textiles.[76] Hempen textiles are however difficult to locate in surviving sources. Hemp bed linen was only specified in nine Old Bailey cases between 1678 and 1810.[77] The majority of this linen was sheets, with one hempen pillow bear (pillow case). Hemp shirts were only mentioned in one Old Bailey case in the same period when four hempen shirts were stolen from Robert Carter a servant in the stables of Sir George Rivers and hempen shifts were not mentioned at all.[78] Bed and table linen appear more frequently in inventories therefore they are the subject of this section. However, the frequency is still low; only 41 out of 289 Yorkshire inventories from c.1710 and c.1780 listed sheets but all testators must have slept on them (see Chapter 6).

Sheets, tablecloths, napkins and towels are the household linens specified most frequently in inventories therefore they are analysed. Overton et al. argue that the flawed nature of inventories means that it is risky to 'put too much weight on any single document' and that large scale analysis will reduce some inaccuracies but Spufford and Lena Cowen Orlin both critique quantitative studies of inventories.[79] Both methods are used in this section due to the relatively low numbers of household

[75] Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry*, pp. 9, 120.
[76] Edmund Quincy, 'A Treatise of Hemp-Husbandry' (Boston, 1765), p. 7.
[77] *OBP*, September 1684, Jane Dickenson (t16840903-37); December 1692, Phillip Street, Sarah Daering (t16921207-49); February 1694, Ann James (t16940221-50); December 1697, Elizabeth Murray (t16971208-20); December 1699, Thomas Field (t16991213-28); December 1709, Aaron Jones, Joseph Wells, Sarah Pennyfeather (t17091207-3); September 1784, Elizabeth May (t17840915-57); September 1784, Mary Matthison (t17840915-101); October 1790, Thomas Robins, John Harding (t17901027-44).
[78] *OBP*, February 1694, Thomas Breed (t16940221-44).
[79] Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Fictions of the Early Modern English Probate Inventory' in *The Culture of Capital*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (London: Routledge, 2002), 51-83 (pp. 52-53, 75); Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 31-32; Margaret Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory' in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800*, ed. by John Chartres and David Hey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 139-174 (p. 174).

linens specified in inventories. A total of 8781 inventories are analysed.[80] The limitations of inventories as sources are well documented.[81] Typically men are over-represented and the lower sorts are under-represented because if someone owned goods of no or little value, an inventory was unlikely to be taken. Overton et al. posit tentatively that around half of the population of Kent was not represented by inventories, about forty per cent at the lowest part of society (based on comparison with hearth tax records) and the wealthiest ten per cent were not represented.[82] Inventories can represent a lifetime of goods, items listed could be decades old. Many people had two occupations but only one occupation is listed on an inventory and it might not fit an individual's opinion of their status. Bequests, paraphernalia and a widow's original dowry could be excluded as well as low value items and clothing.[83] Orlin's comprehensive catalogue of the misleading characteristics of inventories particularly emphasises potential absences including the exclusion of legacies and goods with shared ownership, as well as the warning that they are not 'unimpeachably objective' due to contemporary frauds such as undervaluation.[84] However, Overton and Darron Dean found that 'wealth patterns revealed by inventories reflect the age structure of the population as a whole and therefore the wealth of the population as a whole', in Milton, Kent rather than disproportionately representing older people.[85]

From 1678 to 1747 there are 2058 inventories for Cornwall, 1410 for Kent, 748 for Durham, 808 for the Archdeaconry of St Albans, 1656 for Lincolnshire and 2101 for Worcestershire. This sample size means that this is the largest study of household linens undertaken. The 8781 inventories contain 7341 references to sheets,

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[80] This was made possible by the generosity of Mark Overton who shared inventories transcribed for previous research projects. Overton, Linda Crust, Darron Dean andrew Hann, Joanna Laidlaw, Bridget Taylor, Brenda Webster and Meemee Wong all undertook the transcriptions. Stephen Broadberry, Bruce M.S. Campbell, Alexander Klein et al., *British Economic Growth 1270-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. xxvii.

[81] Orlin, 'Fictions', pp. 51-83; Ursula Priestly and Penelope Corfield, 'Rooms and Room Use in Norwich Housing, 1580-1730', *Post-Medieval Archaeology,* 16 (1982), 93-123 (pp. 94-99); Spufford, 'Limitations', pp. 139-74; Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 9-11, 13-18, 22-29, 31-32, see pp. 29-30 for an overview of the sampling and limitations of the Kent and Cornwall inventories; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 2-4, 106, 201-07.

[82] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 22-26.

[83] Spufford, 'Limitations', pp. 139-74.

[84] Orlin, 'Fictions', pp. 51-83.

[85] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, p. 208 (n. 51); Mark Overton, 'Household Wealth, Indebtedness and Economic Growth in Early Modern England', Fourteenth International Economic History Congress, Helsinki, Finland, (2006), 1-49 (pp. 16-17) <http://www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers3/Overton122.pdf>, [accessed 31 March 2011].

## Table 4.6, Table showing linen and hempen references for six counties, 1678-1747

| | | | **Cornwall** (n=2058) | **Kent** (n=1410) | **Durham** (n=748) | **Archdeac-onry of St Albans** (n=808) | **Lincoln-shire** (n=1656) | **Worcest-ershire** (n=2101) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time period | | | 1678-1747 | 1678-1747 | 1678-1720 | 1678-1745 | 1678-1747 | 1678-1731 |
| References to linens | | | 444 | 3825 | 792 | 270 | 414 | 1596 |
| Bast | Canvas | Sheets | 27 | 4 | | | | |
| | | Tablecloths | | | | | | |
| | | Towels | | | | | | |
| | Dowlas | Sheets | 16 | | | | | |
| | | Napkins | 6 | | | | | |
| | | Towels | 2 | | | | | |
| | Flax/en | Sheets | | 75 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 146 |
| | | Napkins | | 27 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 54 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | 1 | 1 | 7 | 29 |
| | | Towels | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 4 |
| | Harden, hurd/en, towen, tow | Sheets | | 80 | 13 | 7 | 9 | 100 |
| | | Napkins | | 15 | | | | 17 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| | | Towels | | 10 | | | | 6 |
| | Hemp/en | Sheets | | 11 | | 5 | 34 | 103 |
| | | Napkins | | 3 | | 1 | 9 | 13 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | | | 3 | 6 |
| | | Towels | | | | | | 3 |
| | Holland | Sheets | 9 | 56 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 19 |
| | | Napkins | 1 | 2 | | | | 2 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| | | Towels | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | Linen/lint | Sheets | 3 | 2 | 66 | | 38 | |
| | | Napkins | 2 | | 13 | | 9 | |
| | | Tablecloths | | | 6 | | 7 | |
| | | Towels | | | | | 4 | |
| | Rushey | Towels | 2 | | | | | |
| Weave | Damask | Sheets | | 12 | 1 | | | |
| | | Napkins | 1 | 39 | 22 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | 11 | | 6 | 1 |
| | | Towels | | 4 | | | 1 | |
| | Diaper | Sheets | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| | | Napkins | 3 | 88 | 38 | 4 | 14 | 19 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | 26 | 2 | 17 | 16 |
| | | Towels | 2 | 14 | 7 | 1 | | 5 |
| | Huckaba-ck | Napkins | | 7 | 43 | 2 | 14 | 18 |
| | | Tablecloths | | | 24 | | 9 | 5 |
| | | Towels | | 2 | 5 | | 2 | 2 |
| Cotton | Cotton | Sheets | 5 | | | | | |
| | | Napkins | 1 | | | | | |
| | Calico | Sheets | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | |
| | | Napkins | | 1 | | | | |
| | Muslin | Tablecloths | | | 1 | | | |
| Wool | Flannel | Sheets | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| | Wool/len | Sheets | 1 | | 1 | | | |

Sources: See text.

tablecloths, napkins and towels. Analysis of Kent and Cornwall excludes tablecloths because these categories were not programmed into the software created by Overton. The number of references to household linens varied significantly by county. There were 440 in Cornwall compared to 3825 in Kent, despite the larger number of inventories for Cornwall. Overton et al. identified the difference in linen ownership as a key indication of Cornwall's material poverty in comparison to wealthy Kent.[86] There were 792 references for Durham, 270 for the Archdeaconry of St Albans, 414 for Lincolnshire and 1596 for Worcestershire. This quantity of material is essential because descriptions of the linens were relatively rare. Only 661 out of the 1727 references to sheets in Kent had any form of description, whether textile type or descriptor such as 'old'. The result is that when whittled down by textile type and specific good, quantities are low (table 4.6). This is problematic because it limits the extent of the conclusions that can be drawn. Furthermore, there are significant under-representations. According to the results there were no linen sheets in Worcestershire during the period which is untrue. Descriptions in inventories were designed to aid identification or justify valuations. Sheets were typically linen, therefore adding 'linen' as a description for a sheet had little purpose. Although linen is underrepresented, the inventory analysis provides valuable information about other types of linens, particularly regional differences in the use of coarser flaxen and hempen textiles. This information cannot be gathered systematically through other sources. Crime records provide an incomplete picture of possessions and surviving linen objects are too elite and survive in insufficient quantities to gain a broad picture.

Table 4.6 reveals significant regional differences in linen ownership. The number of linens described by textile type varied between different counties. Styles found similar variations in poor law provisions.[87] Kent had the largest range of popular textile types: flax, tow, hemp, holland, damask and diaper and had the second most frequent number of mentions of cottons. The most popular fabric types in County Durham were mainly higher quality: linen, damask, diaper and huckaback. In Lincolnshire, flax, linen, hemp, diaper and huckaback were most commonly mentioned. The number of references in the Archdeaconry of St Albans is too small make a summary viable. In contrast there appears to have been greater poverty

[86] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, p. 119.
[87] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 261-62.

amongst the Cornish and Worcestershire testators. Worcestershire was the only county where both hemp and harden were among the most popular categories, although flax also featured. This is in contrast to Glennie's finding that for 1600 to 1709, that flaxen textiles were less popular for sheets than other fibres.[88] The poverty of Cornwall is apparent – the most common sheet descriptors were canvas and dowlas, both coarse textiles, but Cornwall did have the largest mention of cottons, with five cotton sheets. These differences in textile quality had a real impact on daily life, with residents of Worcestershire and the Archdeaconry of St Albans apparently most reliant on harden, a very different material experience to that of sleeping on 'flaxen' linen which was soft compared to the rougher tow textile. Notably damask, diaper and huckaback were frequently used for tablecloths, napkins and towels. These weaves were not only decorative but also more absorbent due to the floating threads.

It has not been possible to locate any hempen cloth of a quality that would have been used for household linens. Commercial hempen cloth is discussed in Chapter 5. It is unclear what domestic hempen textiles looked and felt like. Extant commercial bast cloth is often stiff and prickly, undesirable properties for bed sheets. However, comparing prepared flax and hemp fibres undermines preconceptions that hempen cloth was only coarse sacking. In fact, in comparing the microscope images of the flax and hemp fibres in figures 4.2 and 4.3 prepared at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, using eighteenth century methods, we see that in these two samples the hemp fibres are actually finer than the flax fibres. Quality of fibre depends on how the fibre is prepared, how much of the outside stalk or sheath is removed and how many times the fibre is heckled. The more heckling that is done, the more coarse fibres are removed leaving the finer quality fibres. When interpreting hempen clothing and household linens there are therefore unknown material properties.

Table 4.6 reveals the wide range of textiles used for the four items under study: sheets, tablecloths, napkins and towels. All textile types mentioned in the inventories are recorded in the table. They are divided into groups. 'Bast' describes flaxen and hempen textiles. This group is particularly important because the textile names provide some indication of quality of the cloth. Harden or hurden textiles were made

[88] Glennie, 'The Social Shape of the Market', p. 24.

**Figure 4.1, Flax fibre (left), hemp fibre (right), prepared at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia.**

**Figure 4.2, Williamsburg flax fibre, microscope image, 60x magnification**

**Figure 4.3, Williamsburg hemp fibre, microscope image, 60x magnification**

**Figure 4.4, Tow fibre processed by the author. It has not been heckled further therefore the fibres are not aligned for spinning.**

**Table 4.7, Ownership of hemp sheets by status (number of individuals), 1678-1747**

| | Kent | Archdeaconry of St Albans | Lincolnshire | Worcestershire |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gentleman | 1 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Shopkeeper | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Trades | 4 | 1 | 2 | 18 |
| Farmer | 1 | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| Husbandman | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Labourer | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 2 mariners | 1 clerk<br>1 whirler |
| Widow | 0 | 1 | 5 | 12 |
| Spinster | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unknown | 3 | 1 | 15 | 32 |

Source: see text.

from hards or tow, shorter, coarser, cheaper flax fibres (figure 4.4 and see Introduction). It is assumed that 'towen' was cloth made from tow. Harden, tow, canvas and hempen cloth were poorer quality and often used for commercial textiles. Soft hempen cloth could be made from hemp tear fibres but hemp was used in much greater quantities for sacks than sheets (see Chapter 5). Canvas could be either coarse hempen cloth or needlework canvas or flaxen. It is therefore reasonable to consider these four types of textiles as the lowest quality domestic fabrics mentioned in the inventories.[89] Finally weave structure, cotton and wool and are self-explanatory.

Hemp or hempen items appeared in Kent, Lincolnshire, Worcestershire and the Archdeaconry of St Albans and were most significant in the Lincolnshire and Worcestershire samples, making up 10 and 8 per cent of references to the items analysed. Only napkins, sheets and tablecloths were listed as hempen. Towels were not, although hempen textiles were used for towels in St Thomas' Hospital later in the century.[90] The majority of hemp items listed were sheets: 19 per cent of sheets in Lincolnshire and 12 per cent of sheets in Worcestershire were made from hemp. Table 4.7 shows the division of hemp sheets by occupational group or status.[91] A case study of the fifty-two individuals of known occupation from Worcestershire who

[89] Postlethwayt, *The Universal Dictionary of Trade*, I, 'canvas'; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 191.
[90] LMA, H01/ST/A/126/002/A/001, Linen Books, p. 22.
[91] Categories are as follows. Farmer: yeoman; Shopkeeper: bookseller, woollen draper, innholder, mercer; Gentleman: esquire; Trades: tailor, weaver, brick layer, carpenter, clothier, clothier and maltster, cordwainer, baker, brewer, brick layer, butcher, glover, joiner, maltster, mason, nailer, shoemaker.

**Table 4.8, Mean price of single sheet by occupation for Worcestershire, 1678-1731 (pence)**

| | Holland | Flax | Hemp | Hurden |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gentlemen (n=6) | 99.5 | 59 | 43 | 25 |
| Yeomen (n=10) | 306 | 56 | 37 | 28 |
| Labourers (n=2) | | 48 | 13.5 | 6 |

Source: see text.

owned hemp sheets provide insights into the context of use, to understand why they were owned.

There were 103 references to hemp sheets in the Worcestershire sample. Descriptors were unusual. Three were coarse, one fine, four new, two old and one unmade. The use of 'coarse' and 'fine' shows that hemp sheets came in different qualities and therefore they should not be envisaged as scratchy sackcloth simply used by the poor. Examining the other household linens owned by the fifty-two people with known occupation or status contextualises the use of hemp sheets. It is clear from the inventories that the vast majority of hemp and tow sheets were used for bed linen rather than being used for farming because they were listed with bedding rather than farm equipment. In both Kent and Worcester for example, hemp and hurden sheets were also typically listed with the bedding or amongst the household linens, not with farm equipment.

Gentlemen owned sheets made from a wide variety of textiles. Six owned hemp sheets. Three of these owned hemp, flax and holland sheets, while the other three owned hemp, flax and hurden sheets. These different textiles suggest a hierarchy of materials with the holland sheets, probably the highest quality used by the gentry residents with lower quality hurden and hempen sheets most likely used by servants. For example Thomas Harris who died in 1684 owned ten hemp, thirty flax and ten holland sheets as well as damask, diaper and flaxen table linen. Given the price differences shown in table 4.8, the flax and holland sheets must have been for the family and hemp and hurden sheets for servants.[92] Ten yeomen had hemp sheets. Seven also owned flaxen sheets and six also owned hurden sheets. Only one had holland sheets. This again supports the idea of a hierarchy of fibres with 'flax' the most common alternative to hemp sheets. Hurden sheets made from poor quality

[92] Glennie, 'The Social Shape of the Market', p. 18.

**Table 4.9, Sheet prices in Lincolnshire, 1678-1747 (pence)**

| | Holland | Linen | Flax | Hemp | Harden |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of references | 7 | 38 | 15 | 34 | 9 |
| Number of sheets | 12 | 453 | 243 | 387 | 48 |
| Price range for single sheet | 120-240 * | 17-120 | 25.5-96 | 6-60 | 12-21 |
| Median price for single sheet | 198 | 43.5 | 36 | 24 | 15 |
| Mode prices for single sheet | 240 | 40, 60 | 30 | 18, 24 | 12 |

Source: see text. * one 'old' holland sheet is excluded.

flax tow fibres were not a replacement for tear flax fibre sheets and clearly tear flax fibre sheets were the main preference. There were five labourers in the sample who owned any sheets. Only two had hempen sheets listed, another only had hurden sheets and the other two owned sheets of unknown material. Lewis Jones who died in 1685 had two pairs of coarse hemp sheets, while Humphrey Oldnall possessed two pairs of hemp, seven pairs of hurden and a flax sheet. Again this implies a material hierarchy, Oldnall chose to invest in a greater number of cheap hurden sheets than fewer hempen or flaxen sheets of higher quality.

Lincolnshire sheet prices (table 4.9) further support the idea of a hierarchy of materials. Median and mode prices ascended from harden at the lowest to hemp, then flax, linen then holland. Holland prices were substantially higher than the others. Hemp sheets were appropriate for lodgings due to their superior durability. However linen sheet prices were closer to hemp in the Old Bailey than those in Lincolnshire. Many linen sheets stolen in the same year, 1784 were also worth 24d. with some only worth 12d.[93] The fact that harden sheets were given the lowest values shows that hemp sheets were considered to have materially superior properties to harden. The farmer William Ellis warned against 'hempen coarse Cloth' made from

[93] *OBP*, for example, February 1784, Sarah Peake (t17840225-41); April 1784, Joseph Bradford (t17840421-96); April 1784, Daniel Smith (t17840421-100); May 1784, Rachel Craven (t17840526-52); July 1784, William Prudence (t17840707-25)

'*Snarlings*' with the shortest, knotty and worst of hemp [...] these wear with very uneven Threads and soon out'.[94] Harden, made from tow was made from the first heckling, therefore there was more stem and matted sections left, so it would have suffered similar problems to rough hemp cloth.[95] The hemp sheets must have been made from hemp tear given the price difference, therefore their fine fibres would have been softer than harden, while more durable than tear or harden cloth. The low price of harden therefore is most likely to relate to its coarseness, scratchy feel and lower durability than tear textiles.

Hempen sheets were not the prerogative of the poorest members of society, they were also provided for servants by their masters and mistresses. Whether hemp sheets were used by anyone other than servants, plebeians and the poor has not been proved. Evans suggests this implicitly through the sale of hempen cloth locally in East Anglia but the division of clientele by status is unknown. The farmer William Ellis referred to the use of hempen cloth for sheeting and shirting by 'Housewives', which implies that the cloth could have been used by women of the middling sort as well as plebeians.[96]

Many individuals were too poor to be picky about their household textiles. While it can be difficult to determine the truth of cases in the Old Bailey, they are at least indicative of the kinds of reuse that poorer parts of society relied on. In several cases, lengths of cloth were allegedly stolen and turned into household linens. The bleakest of these was the theft of 8lb. of flour and 5 hempen sacks by John Griffin a poor tenant of the prosecutor Isaac Butterfield. Butterfield focused on the sacks in his testimony 'I observed there was nothing but rags, besides these sacks, for these two poor creatures to lye upon, some over and some under-them; I fancy they took them only with an intent to keep them warm on nights'. This level of destitution combined with the father's mental health problems, Butterfield considered him 'not to be in his right mind', distressed Butterfield or at least he pretended so and the

[94] William Ellis, *The Modern Husbandman* [...] *Containing the Months of July, August and September*, 4 vols (London, 1744) III, p. 88.
[95] Houghton, *Collection*, II, pp. 391-96.
[96] Ibid., pp. 86-87.

Griffins must have been pitied by the jury, for despite John's confession he was acquitted of theft and his father was acquitted of receiving stolen goods.[97]

In a small proportion of the Old Bailey cases where lengths of linen textiles were stolen, we can observe the repurposing of these textiles. Twenty-eight yards and a 'piece' of Russia sheeting, thirty yards of Russia Duck and 5lb. of packthread were stolen by John Tatnell of mixed occupation, who undertook agricultural work and possibly carted goods. Duck was a strong glazed and thus waterproof linen. Tatnell's wife had cut up the duck to make a sheet, a bed tick and had already made a smock frock and trousers for John.[98] In 1799, four yards of 'uncommon' Russia ticking used to wrap an upholsterer's goods were allegedly stolen by the shop assistant Ann Moore and then made up into a mattress or bed ticking, identified by the upholsterer's apprentice 'I have opened the ticking and in the inside of it there are some marks of dirt, which I remember very well'. Moore was found innocent, so this case should be considered indicative.[99]

## Conclusion

The cleanliness and quality of linens were widely recognised signifiers of status, respectability and personal decency because they were visible around the neck and hands. The universal understanding of these signs meant that they were used in novels as shorthand for the change in a character's fortunes. However, novels omit two key characteristics of ideas of decency and respectability: gender differences and fibre types. Plebeian men owned twice as much underwear as plebeian women. Men were reliant on work outside the home, unlike plebeian women's work such as spinning or laundry which could be undertaken in the home alongside their reproductive and household work (unless they were in service). More frequent changes of linen were therefore less necessary for women. Finally, although textile quality is extremely difficult to read from texts, one way of accessing it is through fibre types used. There were regional differences in how frequently holland, flax, hemp, harden and cotton were mentioned in inventories which indicates that expectations of respectable or comfortable bed linen varied by county. The material hierarchies running from holland via flax and linen to hemp and finally harden can be

[97] *OBP*, April 1759, John Griffin, James Griffin (t17590425-6).
[98] *OBP*, April 1808, John Tatnell (t18080406-69); Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 228.
[99] *OBP*, January 1799, Ann Moore (t17990109-1).

mapped onto social hierarchies, with servants provided with lower quality fibre choices. However, regional differences suggest that perhaps this provisioning varied by region, with different perceptions of how appropriate harden sheets were for servants in different counties. Moreover, re-purposing of coarse flaxen and hempen cloth for body and household linens, reminds us that it was also used for commercial purposes, transporting goods across the globe.

## Chapter 5. Adult Daily Life: Logistical Linens

This chapter brings together commercial life and materiality to consider how the material properties of coarse flaxen and hempen cloth enabled important economic functions in adult daily life. Clothing and domestic textiles are the subject of the vast majority of research by historians and curators due to widespread interest in fashion, identity, changes in consumption and comfort. However textiles also had important commercial functions in Britain and its colonies. As the Introduction showed, British exports grew significantly during the eighteenth century. The American colonies and West Indies imported growing quantities of British goods until trade was interrupted by the War of Independence. A large increase in overseas trade in the seventeenth century and late eighteenth century meant that larger quantities of goods needed to be protected in transit.[1] This chapter focuses on logistical linens which protected goods while in transport. Only Manuel Llorca-Jaña has previously researched logistical textiles. Llorca-Jaña argued that the adoption of tarpaulin and tin boxes to reduce water damage to goods in transit from England to Chile, boosted trade from the 1830s. Canvas and oilskins which had previously been used were less reliable. Damaged goods sold cheaply at auction and dampened prices for undamaged goods, thus negatively affecting trade. Therefore the right sort of wrapper could transform trade.[2] This chapter further develops the connection between materiality and commercial activity through considering fibre properties and extant objects with a systematic examination of three types of coarse bast cloth: barras, 'hempen' and canvas. It should also be noted that the naming of different fabrics within the Old Bailey is not necessarily accurate. Expertise should not be automatically assumed. In one Old Bailey case a witness could not identify whether a bag was leather or

[1] Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: David and Charles Limited, 1972), pp. 1-43.
[2] Manuel Llorca-Jaña, 'To be Waterproofed or to be Soaked: Importance of Packing in British Textile Exports to Distant Markets: The Cases of Chile and the River Plate, c.1810-1859', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History*, 29:1 (2011) pp. 11-37. See also Margaret Robinson, 'The Linen Industry in North Lancashire and Cumbria' in *A History of Linen in the North West*, ed. by Elizabeth Roberts (Lancaster: Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 1998), 44-65 (p. 63).

canvas.[3] However logistical textiles were an area where men had some expertise developed through purchase and use.[4]

Wrappers, sacks and canvas money bags protected goods in transit. Packing and packaging mattered. The East India Company insisted that raw silk was to be packed in wax cloth and a wrapper during transportation from Bengal in 1791:

> We observe that Raw Silk is not packed in the usual manner, but that Tarpaulins, Muggadoolig and Paper are substituted in lieu of wax Cloth Wrapper. As the old mode is much the more preferable for preserving so valuable an article, We wish it to be again resorted to even tho it may be attended with an increase of expence as that will be amply repaid by the additional security furnished against damage.

Clearly, other methods of wrapping had been trialled, but were found to be inferior protectors of the fibre and lost the Company money.[5] Waxed wrappers were similar to the packaging used by the Company over one hundred years earlier in 1661. Wax cloth was used to wrap calicoes exported from India. The bales had an additional layer of protection, they were to be covered in skins to protect them.[6] Wrapping was essential to protect goods in transport but it concealed frauds. Markings were crucial to the EEIC raw silk trade. When there were frauds, for example there was less silk in a bale than stated, the EEIC servants who packed the bale then had to sign the ticket inside the bale so that London could locate the perpetrator of the fraud. Bales were sold in England based on their markings therefore the EEIC expressed concern when the quality was lower than marked on the bales: 'the good faith of the Company will be totally lost should such a shameful practice be continued'.[7]

Proper packaging mattered for other EEIC goods. Peppercorns were often ground on the voyage due to the friction of other bales. Tea had to be packaged carefully in

[3] *OBP*, May 1779, Elizabeth Edmunds (t17990508-32).
[4] Bridget Long, 'Anonymous Needlework: Uncovering British Patchwork 1680-1820' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Hertfordshire, 2014), pp. 94, 98, 100, 103.
[5] British Library (BL), IOR/E/4/637, East India Company Correspondence, 1791 pp. 430-31. My thanks to Karolina Hutková for sharing her transcriptions.
[6] Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 106-07.
[7] BL, IOR/E/4/621, East India Company Correspondence, 1772, p. 211; IOR/E/4/623, East India Company Correspondence, 1783, pp. 59-60; IOR/E/4/645A, East India Company Correspondence, 1795, p. 335.

chests to maintain the quality, otherwise profits were reduced.[8] Flaxen and hempen textiles were ideal for packaging because their long fibres produced durable cloth. One of the causes of scholarly neglect of 'logistical textiles' is the poor survival of coarse textiles within museums: brown, coarse, utilitarian cloth used to destruction was rarely treasured through generations. However a few examples survive in Britain, Denmark and the USA. This wide geography is necessary to enable a material interrogation of logistical textiles. Digitization has also opened up the topic allowing disparate references to be drawn together. The Old Bailey Proceedings reveal something of the appearance, construction, use and mending of a wide range of logistical textiles which are specified by textile type and fibre. Working textiles feature in the Old Bailey as stolen goods or incidental details. The metropolitan nature of Old Bailey cases means that the chapter throws light on logistical textiles in London, which was England's biggest port and centre of industry. Coarse linens were also used for other purposes according to Old Bailey evidence including clothing and household textiles (see Chapter 4) as well as bags, barn cloth, cord, horse halters, hammocks, horsecloths, net, rope, sacks, a tarpaulin, washing lines and wrappers.

Hempen and flaxen textiles were both used for logistical purposes. Hemp is stronger than flax due to its longer fibres. There was a contemporary linguistic overlap: hemp cloth was referred to as linen.[9] Early-modern overlaps between the two fibres continue. Even the most experienced curators and conservators cannot identify when a fabric is hemp rather than linen by eye or touch.[10] This is generally not a problem because surviving extant textiles are typically extremely high quality therefore they are almost certainly linen. However for working linens this is more problematic. Differences in colour are inconclusive. Bast fibre identification requires microscopic analysis at a level that cannot be achieved by portable microscopic

[8] K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 329, 396, 406.
[9] Nathan Bailey, *Dictionarium Domesticum, Being a New and Compleat Houshold Dictionary*, (London, 1736), OC: 'A Method of Brewing ALE or OCTOBER Beer, from NOTTINGHAM' which calls for canvas 'or other coarse linen bags'; Clarkson, 'The Linen Industry', pp. 476, 481; Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry*, pp. 9-10, 12, 27, 141; Houghton, *A Collection*, II, p. 378; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 278; North, 'Dress and Hygiene', pp. 25-26, 175.
[10] Personal communications with Mark Anderson, Head Furniture Conservator at Winterthur Museum, 24 October 2013; Linda Baumgarten, Textile and Costume Curator at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, 23 October 2013; Linda Eaton, Head of Collections at Winterthur Museum, 25 October 2013. Eaton was previously a textile conservator.

cameras. Moreover, microscopic differences between flax and hemp are minimal, further problematized by having little choice of fibre sample because only a small quantity can be pulled from a damaged area for testing.[11] Differentiating between the two under the microscope requires expertise only achieved by regular analysis. The direction of twist of a single fibre wetted under the microscope is used by some conservators to differentiate but this process is subject to human error given the micro-movement of the fibres. The best means of identification is disputed, with disagreement between authors on the value of particular cell types for differentiation.[12] However, this creates a quandary. Hundreds of hempen items were identified at the Old Bailey. Was it that these witnesses or the clerks were able to identify the fibre, or that hemp was always used for particular purposes? Alternatively do identification difficulties explain the broad use of the term 'linens'?

Canvas could be hempen or flaxen, so it is impossible to tell which fibre the term refers to when used in Old Bailey proceedings. Samuel Johnson's dictionary described canvas as 'a kind of linen cloth' used for sails, painting and tents. He translated it to 'cannabis' in French and 'hemp' in Latin.[13] In contrast, Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl describe canvas as 'the principal LINEN textile used for TABLE LINEN, BED LINEN and CLOTHING' in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, but this was no longer the case by the eighteenth century.[14] Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* listed four types of canvas. Firstly canvas for tapestry (needlework) which was 'a very clear unbleached cloth of hemp or flax' and came in 'coarse, middling and fine'. This French tapestry canvas came in pieces 45 ells long, ranging from 0.25 of an ell to 'one quarter and half of an ell' wide (French ells). Merchants might also specially order tapestry canvas that was 35 to 40 ells long by 2 ells wide. His second type of canvas was coarse hempen cloth used to cover stays, 'stiffen men's clothes' and make other clothing, at 50 to 60 ells long.

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[11] Dorothy Catling and John Grayson, *Identification of Vegetable Fibres* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1982), plates 3, 4, 11, 12, 19, 20, 27, 28.
[12] Catling and Grayson, *Identification of Vegetable Fibres*, pp. 2-23; U. Körber-Grohne, 'The Determination of Fibre Plants in Textiles, Cordage and Wickerwork', in *New Light on Early Farming: Recent Developments in Palaeoethnobotany*, ed. by Jane M. Renfrew (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 93-104 (p. 94). Personal communication with Linda Eaton, 25 October 2013.
[13] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English language*, 6th edition, 2 vols (London, 1785), I, 'canvas'
[14] Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, 'Canada Stove – Canvas', *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820* (2007), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=58715&strquery=canvas#s25> [accessed 16 August 2013].

[image removed for copyright reasons]

Tabby weave,
selvage width: 101.5cm,
40 inches.
Average thread widths:
warp 0.4mm
weft 0.4mm
Thread count per cm:
21 x 21
Thread count per inch:
50 x 54

**Figure 5.1, Winterthur Museum, 1970.0346.001, sheet, linen, America, marked in 1818 'MW / 1818'. Made from tear fibres.** 56 x magnification.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

Twill weave,
selvage width: 51cm,
20.13 inches
Average thread widths:
warp 0.8-1.5mm
weft 0.7-1.2mm
Thread count per cm:
9 x 8
Thread count per inch:
26 x 20

**Figure 5.2, Winterthur Museum, 1965.1827, bag, bast fibre, probably unbleached, decorated in 1820, verso, from the Pennsylvania German community. Marked '1820 / 3 / Johannes Bierh VII'.** Probably made from tow. 56x magnification.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 © Winterthur Museum, Delaware

The third type of canvas was 'very coarse' hempen cloth used for towels which was 60 ells long and 7/12 ell wide. The fourth canvas definition was Dutch 'very coarse' hempen cloth woven 'very close' and used for sails, sold to the French 'in pieces about 28 ells long'. Postlethwayt attested in 1774 that British canvas had been

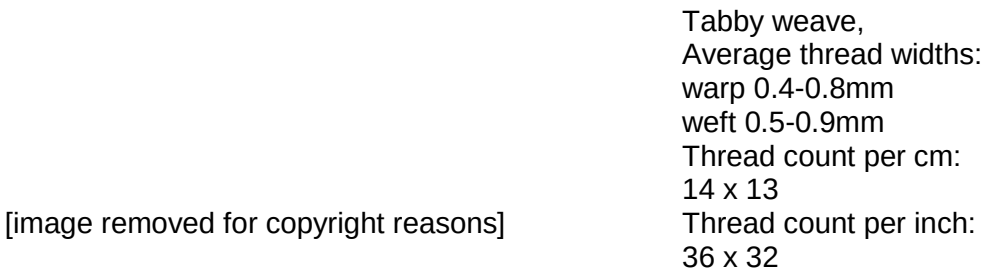
[image removed for copyright reasons] 


**Figure 5.3, Winterthur Museum, 1969.0933, fire bag, bast fibre, America, 1820-1850, marked 'TIMOTHY TILESTON / 2'.** 56x magnification. Probably made from tow. © Winterthur Museum, Delaware

lacking in 'strength and goodness' but it 'is lately very much improved' which reduced the importation of Dutch canvas.[15] While the majority of canvas described by Postlethwayt was hemp, there is sufficient uncertainty that some of the Old Bailey canvas may have been flaxen. The uses of canvas were wide and varied. The following appear in the Old Bailey Proceedings, as packaging: bags, money bags, purses, sandbags, a tarpaulin, wrappers, clothing: aprons, breeches, frocks, a hoop petticoat, jackets, a smock, trousers, umbrella and household and other textiles: blinds and curtains, a cushion, floor cloth, a hammock, sheets, a towel, paintings and sails. Other uses for canvas included making medicines, cleaning casks, brewing beer, maps, theatre scenery and making fire balls for battle.[16]

Flax and hemp dressing created large quantities of tow. Manuscripts do not always identify whether tow was flaxen or hempen. Hempen tow would have been coarser than flaxen fibre. Arthur Young stated that nearly a third of flax fibre produced by heckling was tow, with 8lb. of tear to 3.5lb. of tow per stone of scutched flax (see

[15] Postlethwayt, *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, I, 'Canvas'; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 191.
[16] Bailey, *Dictionarium Domesticum,* AL: 'to make a purging Ale', CA: 'How to clean and sweeten casks', OC: 'A Method of Brewing ALE', SC: 'Another for the SCURVY'; Booth and Son, *A Catalogue of Books, Containing More Than Twenty Thousand Volumes* (Norwich, 1789), p. 4; James Buchanan, *A New English Dictionary* (London, 1769), 'scene'; Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopædia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* 5 vols (London, 1778), I, 'balls, fire'; Hooper and Davis, *A Catalogue of Prints and Books of Prints, Both Ancient and Modern* (London, 1779?), p. 5.

Chapter 3).[17] Tow was therefore a substantial product of bast fibre. Heavy duty material was needed to protect goods in transit and storage. Flaxen tow and hempen cloth fulfilled these needs. However, it is not possible to identify whether surviving linen cloth was produced with tear or tow because we do not know what the finest quality tow cloth looked like. It is reasonable to suggest that a textile was lower quality, although not automatically tow, when the vast majority of fibre bundles are unbroken (the fibres were still stuck together). A fibre bundle looks straw-like, compare figures 5.1 which has no bundles with figure 5.2. Cloth can reasonably be described as tow when several pieces of stem were woven into the cloth as circled in figure 5.3. Hempen and harden cloth (Chapter 4) were substituted for each other when necessary. The Virginian merchant Alexander Henderson ordered linen from John Glassford of Glasgow in 1764. He requested 'two bales of the thickest and best hardens, as these hardens are intended to supply the place of hempen roles which I expect are dear it is very necessary that they be thick and strong'.[18] Rolls were coarse textiles that were stored rolled not folded.[19]

## Barras

There was significant variation amongst the coarsest textiles even those simply used for logistical purposes. The two magnified images of bags in figures 5.2 and 5.3 reveal range of qualities available. The four barrases in figures 5.4 to 5.8 illustrate the significant differences in design. These swatches were probably collected in 1783 or 1784 as examples of textiles circumventing import duties on striped linens. Barras was used for horse cloths and in coaches, often as blinds.[20] Most coaches did not have glass windows therefore barras had a logistical purpose, protecting people in transit from the vagaries of the weather. Barras also appears in the St Thomas' linen books, where its use was for 'fracture pillows'.[21] These four barrases were clearly designed – they all look different. The width of stripes, their colour and

[17] Young, *Tour in Ireland*, I, p. 166; The Commissioners et al., *Directions for Raising Flax*, p. 5; suggests that by harvesting fine flax on the yellowing of the stalk, when only the lower leaves had fallen 8 hanks per lb. could be achieved.
[18] Quoted in *Virginia Merchants: Alexander Henderson, Factor for John Glasford at his Colchester Store (Fairfax County, Virginia). His Letter Book of 1758-65*, ed. by Charles and Virginia Hamrick (Athens: Georgia, 1999), p. 244.
[19] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 333.
[20] Barras or barris is not mentioned in the Old Bailey. Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 158.
[21] LMA, H01/ST/A/126/002/A/001, Linen Books, St Thomas' Hospital, 1797-1805, pp. 19, 24.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.4, Science Museum, 1862.121, checked and striped Flemish and German linens (possibly also some English linen) collected c.1783-84. Detail of page 2, sample 6, barras, bast fibre, 17 x 5.4cm, 6.63 x 1.88 inches, Flemish or German, c.1783-1784. Described as 'Barras ffor horse Cloaths all Lining [linen] as before'.**

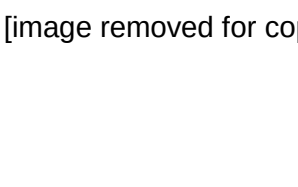
Twill weave, Average thread widths: vertical yarns 0.4-1.5mm, horizontal yarns 0.4-1.4mm.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.5, detail of figure 5.4.**

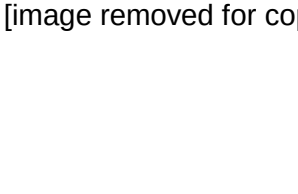
Figures 5.4 and 5.5 © Science Museum, London

the weave structure of the barras in figure 5.4 were all chosen for their aesthetic effect. The double warp in the broad white stripes creates a brighter, softer looking stripe (compare it with the narrow white stripes). It appears that the dark brown yarn in figure 5.4 was dyed, although it is possible that the stains on the right end of the swatch contribute to the darker shade. It is unclear whether the other coloured stripes were dyed although the back of the textile reveals that the first coloured stripe on the left was originally a reddish colour. It was one of the few of these textile swatches that could be examined from behind. It is probable that the reddish colour

[image removed for copyright reasons] 

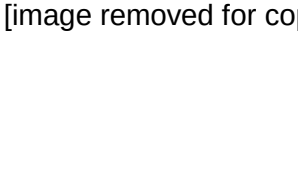
Herringbone weave
Average thread widths:
warps 0.3-1.2mm
weft 0.4-1.5mm
Thread count per cm: 13 x 8
Thread count per inch: 32 x 20

**Figure 5.6, Science Museum, 1862.121, page 4, sample 7, barras. Described as 'These Three are Barrises for shades Horse Cloths Coach Cases &c.'**

[image removed for copyright reasons] 

Twill weave
Average thread widths:
warps 0.4-0.8mm
weft 0.7-1.2mm
Thread count per cm: 10 x 8
Thread count per inch: 27 x 24

**Figure 5.7, Science Museum, 1862.121, page 4, sample 8, barras. Described as 'These Three are Barrises for shades Horse Cloths Coach Cases &c.'**

[image removed for copyright reasons] 

Herringbone weave
Average thread widths:
warps 0.5-2.0mm
weft 0.4-2.0mm
Thread count per cm: 11 x 5
Thread count per inch: 29 x 14

**Figure 5.8 Science Museum, 1862.121, page 4, sample 9, barras. Described as 'These Three are Barrises for shades Horse Cloths Coach Cases &c.'**

Figures 5.6 to 5.8 © Science Museum, London

was achieved through dyeing. The ‘natural’ coloured weft yarns are possibly the unbleached colour of the flax or hemp, with the bleached white yarn used for contrast. Different forms of fibre processing appear to have been used. The yarn in at least one stripe (the third brown stripe from the right) is made from strips of plant material rather than fibres as figure 5.5 shows. Perhaps these are rough hemp snarlings (see Chapter 4). This strip technique is rare in surviving early-modern textiles. It could be akin to a known prehistoric technique. Textiles produced in Stuttgart c.500BC were made with bast yarns spun from strips of the outer hemp stem.[22] The differences in the other three barras designs in figures 5.6 to 5.8 again indicate that yarn quality and price influenced the final design. The yarns used in the three barrases are probably all undyed, relying on different states of bleaching therefore they were likely to have been cheaper than the barras in figure 5.4. Stripes were an unnecessary expense but unbleached bast yarns of different colours would have been cheaper than bleached yarn of the same grade. Stripes were a cheap form of decoration, woven in the loom with striped warp yarns. The arrows of the herringbone weave literally point in the direction of the warp. In these examples a single colour of yarn was used for the weft, requiring no changes of shuttle thus saving time and money.

Weave structure was used as a design element. Figures 5.6 and 5.8 have a herringbone twill pattern while 5.4 and 5.7 are plain twills. Twills were stronger and more durable than tabby textiles. According to John Duncan more warps could be used for a twill because there was less friction between warp and weft than in a tabby weave and thus the textile was stronger and more durable. Twills were also more flexible than tabbies which made them particularly attractive for ‘stout linens’.[23] The barrases in figures 5.4, 5.6 and 5.8 are warp-faced textiles which means that the warp is more prominent than the weft which creates a different textural effect. The thought put into the appearance of these textiles suggests that there was a commercial benefit to decorative barrases otherwise they would simply have been made from the cheapest yarn. These four barrases also emphasise the challenges of applying early-modern textile terms to extant textiles. Without the names one might infer that the barrases in figures 5.6 and 5.8 were different qualities of the same type

[22] Körber-Grohne, ‘The Determination of Fibre Plants’, p. 97.
[23] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, pp. 88-89.

of cloth but there is no clear visual connection with the other two barrases apart from the coarse slightly woody yarn and unbleached stripes. These four barrases do not match the 1696 definition that barras 'well whited is good for ordinary Sheets for Poor People and Servants, it is of good breadth and although very thin, is very strong'. It is more conceivable that barrases were used for packaging as the author of *The Merchant's Warehouse* also suggests.[24] In summary, although barrases were coarse textiles with woody yarns produced from leftovers in the preparation of tear fibre they were not of a universal quality or design. These swatches act as reminders that there was significant variation in even the coarsest textiles. They were not uniform in terms of quality, weave structure, colour, design, or price therefore the same types of choices had to be made in their production and consumption as of higher quality textiles.

## Wrappers

Wrappers were textiles-of-all-work. Anything could be wrapped. Samuel Johnson's dictionary defined a wrapper as '1. One that wraps. 2. That in which any thing is wrapped'.[25] A piece of cloth was wrapped around goods and boxes of goods to protect them in transit. The ideal properties of wrappers were durability and water resistance which helped to prevent damage to goods in transit. The use of bast fibres made wrappers durable, saving money. The Old Bailey shows that many types of goods were wrapped including bacon, barrels, boxes, clothes, coffee, a copper pot, counterfeited money, haberdashery, a harness, kitchen and dining equipment, indigo, laundry, loaf sugar, ostrich feathers, nails, newspapers, paper, part of an iron grate, playing cards, spices and tea. A high proportion of wrappers contained textiles, with many examples of textiles stored in wrappers before their sale in shops.[26]

An eighteenth-century parcel wrapper shown in figures 5.9 to 5.11 is held in the collection of St Fagans, National History Museum, Wales. It is addressed 'For Humprs: Ram Esq.r to the care of Mr John Harrison Charter House Square London [& f]avor of Mr Wm Barrington'. This wrapper emphasises an advantage of textile wrappers, they could be shaped around goods of any size. Barrington's parcel was

[24] J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House*, pp. 3-4.
[25] Johnson, *A Dictionary*, II, 'wrapper'.
[26] *OBP,* Searched for all offences where the transcription matches 'wrapper', between 1678 and 1810.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.9, St Fagans, f80-120-21, parcel wrapper, bast fibre, 84.7cm x 94.8cm; 33.25 x 37.5 inches, London, c.1761-1793.** This object is on long term loan.

Tabby weave, selvage width: 94.8cm, 37.5 inches
Average thread widths: warps 0.2-0.5mm, weft 0.2-0.7mm
Thread count per cm: 21.5 x 18.5
Thread count per inch: 55 x 48

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.10, detail of underside of f80-120-21, from a corner of the hexagon.**

**Figure 5.11, detail of f80-120-21, damaged seal from the parcel wrapper.** The seal has an anchor and rope on the left and unknown image on the right, possibly a figure or a wall.

originally a hexagon - follow the lines from the seals. Two lines of stitch marks run from each seal towards the edge of the textile. The unknown contents appear to have been very narrow because there is a double row of stitching holes and some surviving stitching along each of the lines of the hexagon which would fold the rest of the cloth flat underneath. Folds in the cloth are consistent with the construction of a narrow parcel. Other material clues are harder to read: there are pin or stitch holes on the edge of the cloth on the right hand side with an unknown purpose. The cloth was treated on one or both sides, presumably to make it waterproof. Perhaps this is the waxing specified by the EEIC. The cracks in the coating which evidence its existence are visible in figure 5.10. Textiles could be waterproofed which added to their attractions for transporting goods.

The parcel wrapper's exceptional survival was probably due to its elite associations. Humphrey Ram esquire appears to have lived in or near Petham, Kent.[27] John Harrison of 18 Charter House Square was a director of the EEIC and director and chairman of the Sun Fire Office intermittently in the 1770s and 1780s.[28] He was a director of the Bank of England in 1790 and was possibly secretary to the Million Bank in 1793 before his death the same year.[29] Harrison lived at Charterhouse Square from at least 1770 until his death, therefore this parcel was sent before 1793.[30] William Barrington was possibly the nephew of the second Viscount Barrington given the elite addressees. If so, he was born c.1761 and only became the third viscount in 1793.[31] Therefore, the parcel was sent between 1770 and 1790.

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[27] Philip Parsons, *The Monuments and Painted Glass of Upwards of One Hundred Churches, Chiefly in the Eastern Part of Kent* (Canterbury, 1794), p. 103.

[28] Anon., *The London Directory for the Year 1778* (London, 1778), pp. 6, 8; Anon., *The London Directory for the Year 1779* (London, 1779), pp. 6, 8; Anon., *The London Directory for the Year 1780* (London, 1780), pp. 6, 8; Anon., *The London Directory for the Year 1783* (London, 1783), p. 8; Richard Baldwin, *Baldwin's New Complete Guide to All Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London* (London, 1770), p. 126; T. and W. Lowndes, *Lowndes's London Directory for the Year 1784* (London, 1784), p. 10; T. and W. Lowndes, *Lowndes's London Directory for the Year 1786* (London, 1786), pp. 7, 11. In 1770, 1779 and 1780 Harrison was a director of both and he was chairman of the Sun Fire Office in 1778, 1783, 1784 and 1786.

[29] Roger Wakefield, *Wakefield's Merchant and Tradesman's General Directory for London* (London, 1790), p. 366; Roger Wakefield, *Wakefield's Merchant and Tradesman's General Directory for London* (London, 1794), Appendix, p. 3.

[30] *The Lady's Magazine*, January 1794 (London, 1794), p. 448.

[31] Anon., 'Barrington Viscount (I, 1720-1990)', Cracroft's Peerage <http://www.cracroftspeerage.co.uk/online/content/barrington1720.htm> [accessed 23/06/2014]; Dylan E. Jones, 'Barrington, William Wildman, second Viscount Barrington (1717–1793)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1535> [accessed 23 June 2014].

The Old Bailey contains 255 references to different wrappers for the period 1678 to 1810.[32] Wrapper garments are excluded. The term first appeared in 1717. The majority of the cases were after 1750 which relates to the higher survival rates of transcripts from 1740 rather than the increasing popularity of the term which had been in use since c.1460.[33] It is not possible to calculate average prices per yard of wrapper because the length is rarely given. Single wrapper prices ranged from 1d. for a canvas wrapper used to cover 264 yards of cloth to 360d. for 30 yards of woollen cloth used as a wrapper.[34] Wrapper descriptions were unusual, although there were two black, four brown, one dirty and three green wrappers.

Wrapper fibres were mentioned in eighty-eight instances. The majority were made from bast fibres. Wrappers were described as linen thirty-four times; hemp eight times, canvas nine times and oil skin once. It not clear whether 'linen' described only flaxen cloth or included hemp. The majority of bast wrappers were used to wrap goods or possessions in bales, trusses and parcels. A bale was a 'bundle or parcel of goods packed up for carriage' and seems to have had a primarily commercial context. A truss was 'Bundle; any thing thrust close together' and seemed to have wider uses. Johnson gave examples of a pedlar's packaging and trusses of straw or hay being carried. A parcel was a 'small bundle'.[35]

Linen and hemp were not the only materials listed as wrappers in the Old Bailey. Cotton, typically calico, was used for wrappers in seventeen instances from 1731 to 1802. The first of these was a theft from the EEIC in 1731. Presumably the EEIC's use of calico wrappers related to the necessities of trade or preferential prices they could achieve. Before October 1731 it had been customary for EEIC labourers in the London warehouses to take a couple of yards of a wrapper 'as a Perquisite' to make 'an Apron, or Night-Cap or so'.[36] Again commercial calico wrappers were put to a

[32] *OBP,* Searched for all offences where the transcription matches 'wrapper', between 1678 and 1810. Every reference to a different type of wrapper in a single case is counted once.
[33] *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), I, p. 755, 01.05.07.05.03.05.01|04; Styles, 'What Were Cottons For?', p. 310.
[34] *OBP*, October 1781, Jacob Daniel (t17810110-14); February 1789, George Murphy (t17890225-12).
[35] Johnson, *A Dictionary*, I and II.
[36] *OBP*, October 1731, Isaac Row (t17311013-44); September 1752, Daniel Lovyer, Sarah Holmes, John Cornhill et al. (t17520914-25); Margaret Makepeace, *The East India Company's London Workers: Management of the Warehouse Labourers, 1800-1858* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), p. 99.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.12, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen (*Nationalmuseet*), 1947:167 and 169, woollen wrapper, seventeenth century.** It was found in an excavation at 39 Amaliegade, Copenhagen.

**Figure 5.13, Detail of 1947:167 and 169.**

Figures 5.12 and 5.13 © National Museum of Denmark

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.14, V&A, 414:179-1885, William Duesbury & Co., Mercury, soft-paste porcelain, Derby, 1775.** © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

domestic use in 1752 as bed sheets by Mary Lovyer of unknown status.[37] Nine of the seventeen references to calico wrappers were to a type of fabric called 'wrapper', for example, a customer bought a quarter of a yard of 'callico wrapper' from the shopkeeper Jonathan Tapwell in 1782.[38] The London branch of the Foundling

[37] *OBP*, September 1752, Daniel Lovyer, Sarah Holmes, John Cornhill et al. (t17520914-25).
[38] *OBP*, September 1756, John Kelsey, George Wright (t17560915-21); October 1767, James Chilcot, John Beale, Margaret Anne Worral (t17671021-37); February 1771, Luke Cannon, John Siday, Elizabath [sic] Siday (t17710220-13); January 1782, Ann Higgins (t17820109-46); September 1782,

Hospital considered the use of 'Wrapper Dowlas' for 'round towels' in 1779, therefore the textile was not limited to wrapping goods.[39] In ten instances wrappers were made from wool, including one shalloon, a cheap worsted cloth, one bays and blankets.[40] It is not known how coarse woollen wrappers were. An exceedingly coarse seventeenth-century striped woollen wrapper, illustrated in figures 5.12 and 5.13 was found in Copenhagen. Seven paper wrappers were used to cover playing cards, reams of paper and textiles, calamanco and muslin. Two leather wrappers were used to store sewing silk.

Wrappers were used to protect goods being transported across the globe.[41] Examples in the Old Bailey were 'tied', presumably with rope or twine, rather than knotted, for example figure 5.14 shows a wrapped parcel at Mercury's feet. Goods might be tied up by a porter or manufacturer. A wrapper was only as secure as its ties and the witness William Holloway deposed 'I saw the bale [wrapped in buckram] was cut open and I thought that by moving it, it might have bursted'.[42] Buckram was flaxen or hempen cloth coated in a gummy substance which stiffened it.[43] Conversely bales made it more of a hassle to check whether cloth purchased commercially was the correct length.[44] Wrappers were relatively cheap. Analysis of thirty-seven charges for woollen cloth and carriage by land from the Ackworth branch to the London Foundling Hospital from 1762 to 1769 reveals that the packaging, wrapper (of unknown fibre) or sheet and cords made up 0.7 to 1.9 per cent of the total bill. The median was 1.1 per cent. Furthermore 1.4 per cent of the value of a bill from an external supplier was also spent on a wrapper.[45] These rates were slightly lower than the percentage of the invoice spent on packaging textiles for shipping

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Catherine Burke (t17820911-90); December 1787, William Martin, Benjamine Williams (t17871212-21); May 1788, Thomas Cox (t17880507-38); July 1797 William Humphreys (t17970712-45).

[39] LMA, A/FH/A/03/005/014, Sub-Committee Minutes, 1778-1779, p. 129.

[40] *OBP*, December 1786, George Wallace (t17861213-11); April 1797, William Wood (t17970426-59).

[41] For example, *OBP*, February 1789, George Murphy (t17890225-12); December 1789, George Woodward (t17891209-50); September 1793, John Ellison (t17930911-41).

[42] *OBP*, April 1758, William Stevens (t17580405-29).

[43] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 181.

[44] Riello, *Cotton*, p. 87.

[45] LMA, A/FH/Q/01/010, Letter Book, 1762-1766, Mr Hargreaves to Mr Collingwood, 13 March, 6 April 1762, 2 May 1763, 2 February, 9 July 1764, 6 May, 6 June, 8 July, 15 August, 7 October, 12 and 21 December 1765; A/FH/Q/01/011, Letter Book, 1766-1770, pp. 4, 6, 7, 15, 20, 29, 30, 36, 39, 47, 49, 52, 55, 56, 69, 74, 76-77, 86, 92, 97, 99, 103, 115; Richard Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood 28 April, 13 May, 26 May, 30 August, 29 November 1766, 27 April, 30 May, 31 July, 13 September, 15 and 25 December 1767, 20 February, 14 March, 9 April, 7 May, 11 July, 27 July, 27 November 1768, 11 February, 18 March, 15 May, 13 July 1769; John Hargreaves to Thomas Collingwood, 17 September 1768.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.15, V&A, FA.249[O], Samuel Scott, 'A Thames Wharf', oil on canvas, 160 x 137.1cm, 1757.** The painting depicts the EEIC Wharf.

**Figure 5.16, detail of V&A, FA.249[O],** showing (from left) package marked RN with unknown symbol, package marked with the EEIC mark above '316', package marked VRO.

Figures 5.15 and 5.16 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

from Liverpool to Buenos Aires in 1817 to 1845. The average costs were 0.5 to 2.9 per cent with a median of 1.6 per cent. The proportional costs of transporting goods from Yorkshire to London and Liverpool to Buenos Aires were therefore relatively similar, suggesting perhaps that suppliers expected that more than 1 per cent of the final bill would be charges for transportation, whether just packaging or including insurance for transport by sea. Llorca-Jaña emphasised that the range of percentages was due to the level of protection. Cheaper packaging offered less protection against sea-water but greater profits if the goods arrived unharmed.[46] These relatively low costs therefore represented a good investment because they protected goods and profits.

Trusses were tied or stitched closed. Smaller parcels might be pinned. Wrappers were addressed when in transit although there was limited detail. Directions mentioned in court cases include, 'James Tucker, of Honiton', 'J. Wearing, Preston, wrote with ink' and 'A. Branthwaite, Cartmel'.[47] In contrast the EEIC marked packages more elaborately, 'each piece was wrapped in a sort of dark coloured canvas and at one end of the canvas was painted flowers, with the Company's

[46] Llorca-Jaña, 'To be Waterproofed', pp. 16, 18-21, 34.
[47] *OBP*, January 1744, William Eales (t17440113-4); September 1752, Daniel Lovyer, Sarah Holmes, John Cornhill et al. (t17520914-25); October 1786, William Sherberd, Lucy Sherberd, Thomas Ransom et al. (t17861025-21); December 1789, George Woodward (t17891209-50).

arms'.[48] Figure 5.16 shows a bale with the EEIC mark but no flowers. Several cases mentioned how smuggled tea was wrapped:

> There is a canvas within side of the oil-skin and the tea is within that and generally put up in quarter of hundred bags; sometimes there will be two bags tied together, then they tie knots and throw them across the horse; they did it the same as I always saw it.[49]

Canvas bags were also used for smuggling; 'tea legally brought, is never brought in these sort of bags'.[50] In summary, while flax and hemp had superior properties for wrapping goods, wrappers were made from other fibres too.

## Sacks

Durable coarse linens and hempen cloth were used for sacks which faced rough treatment in commercial activity. They represent practices of organisation and security as well as good commercial practice because they limited wastage. The overwhelming majority of objects described as 'hemp' or 'hempen' in the Old Bailey theft cases were sacks.[51] The sacks in the indictments were used to house a wide variety of goods including flour, nails, oranges, indigo, coffee and jewellery. Hemp or hempen sacks appear in 210 Old Bailey cases in the period 1678 to 1810, representing a minimum of 797 individual sacks. The sample of sacks is limited to hemp to provide a manageable sample size: 914 cases contained sacks.[52] Hemp was also the most frequent descriptor for sacks. Hempen sacks were probably made from hempen tow or snarlings which would have been cheaper than flaxen tow due to inferior quality. Additionally hemp was the most durable, a crucial property for sacks. Hempen tow therefore may have offered better value for money than flaxen tow.

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[48] *OBP*, February 1793, Edd Adams (t17930220-70)
[49] *OBP*, December 1747, Peter Tickner, James Hodges (t17471209-52). See also April 1749, Thomas Kingsmill, William Fairall, Richard Perin et al. (t17490405-36).
[50]*OBP*, April 1748, Arthur Grey (t17480420-23).
[51] *OBP,* Searched for all offences where the transcription matches '"hemp*"' using the advanced search function, between 1678 and 1810.
[52] *OBP,* Searched for all offences where the transcription matches '"sack*"' using the advanced search function, between 1678 and 1810.

Sacks appear in cases because they could hold a critical place in a successful prosecution through descriptions of markings, materials and usage. The only sack size specified in the indictment was 4 bushels. The range of volumes of contents in sacks of unknown sizes was 0.5 to 9 bushels. Forty out of eighty-three of these were 4 bushel sacks. Extant eighteenth and nineteenth-century sacks and bags are not four bushel sacks: comparison with the size of twentieth-century 1 bushel sacks suggests that extant sacks held more than a bushel but that they were not large enough to hold 4 bushels. A sample of five late eighteenth-century or early nineteenth-century American sacks or bags ranged in size from 43.5 x 19.5 inches to 59 x 22 inches.[53] The sizes of a sample of six 1 bushel sacks from the twentieth century ranged from 29 x 16 inches to 30 x 18 inches.[54] This perhaps indicates a bias of the Old Bailey, that smaller quantities of goods were not considered worth pursuing in a criminal trial.

Sacks were commonly marked with initials or a full name and could therefore be identified in contrast to their nondescript contents, providing a higher level of security or at least making it easier to prosecute thefts. Several deponents stated that it was impossible to identify contents such as oats or hair.[55] Initials and full names were

[53] Colonial Williamsburg, 1955-449, Grain sack, probably flaxen, Pennsylvania, 49 x 19 inches, 1820s; 1954-71, Grain sack, probably flaxen, probably America, 59 x 22 inches, possibly 1750-1830; 1955-452, Grain sack, probably flaxen, America, 55 x 19.5 inches, possibly 1750-1830; 1955-444, Grain sack, probably flaxen, America, 51 x 22 inches, possibly 1750-1830. Winterthur Museum, 1965.1827, bag, bast fibre, America, 43.5 x 19.5 inches, marked 1820.

[54] All accessed 18 May 2015: farmallh, '1 Bushel Gilbert Downing Hybrid Seed Corn Cloth Bag Sack New Madison Ohio Certfd', *Ebay* <http://www.ebay.com/itm/1-Bushel-Gilbert-Downing-Hybrid-Seed-Corn-Cloth-Bag-Sack-New-Madison-Ohio-Certfd-/231560011391?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item35ea0d5e7f>, 30 x 18 inches; farmallh, 'Vintage 1 Bushel PIONEER Cloth Hybrid Seed Bag Sack 340 MF', *Ebay* <http://www.ebay.com/itm/Vintage-1-Bushel-PIONEER-Cloth-Hybrid-Seed-Bag-Sack-340-MF-/331553028367?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item4d3219b90f>, 29 x 16 inches; boggle2, 'Old Vintage Domestic Farm Field Seed Corn 1 Bushel Heavy Cloth Sack Irene SD NR', *Ebay* <http://www.ebay.com/itm/Old-Vintage-Domestic-Farm-Field-Seed-Corn-1-Bushel-Heavy-Cloth-Sack-Irene-SD-NR-/201348939753?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item2ee154ffe9#viTabs_0>, 29 x 16 inches; boggle2, 'Old Vintage GTA COOP Field Seed Corn 1 Bushel Heavy Cloth Sack Sioux Falls SD NR', *Ebay* <http://www.ebay.com/itm/Old-Vintage-GTA-COOP-Field-Seed-Corn-1-Bushel-Heavy-Cloth-Sack-Sioux-Falls-SD-NR-/191578783150?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item2c9afc3dae>, 29 x 16 inches; farmallh, '1 Bushel Cloth Bag Sack D&H FARM SEEDS DeWine & Hamma Seeds Yellow Springs Ohio', *Ebay* <http://www.ebay.com/itm/1-Bushel-Cloth-Bag-Sack-D-H-FARM-SEEDS-DeWine-Hamma-Seeds-Yellow-Springs-Ohio-/231560011244?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item35ea0d5dec>, 30 x 16 inches; greenmountains42, 'Vintage Masco Seed Sack, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 14 1/2" x 31", One Bushel Cloth Bag', *Ebay* http://www.ebay.com/itm/Vintage-Masco-Seed-Sack-Mt-Pleasant-Iowa-14-1-2-x-31-One-Bushel-Cloth-Bag-/271871989139?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item3f4cd55593>, 31 x 14.5 inches.

[55] *OBP*, January 1754, George Holyday (t17540116-54); January 1795 andrew Sedgewicke (t17950114-25); October 1795, James Alice (t17951028-44).

used to mark sacks and a number when large deliveries were made. Full names provided greater security because they were more easily proved to be the owner's unlike initials.[56] Locations or addresses were marked on sacks but were relatively unusual.[57] In James Brown and John Bovill's business related to the grain trade, sacks were marked with the initial of the carman responsible for them which was an old policy to help reduce the loss of sacks, but this scheme had fallen out of favour.[58]

Markings were mentioned in 8 per cent of cases. The colour of the marking was rarely mentioned but black and red were used. One case mentions the use of pitch to mark sacks in black.[59] Pitch was not the only medium used. Sacks produced by the poor in Bray, Berkshire were marked in ink.[60] Linda Eaton suggests that oil paint was used to mark a Pennsylvanian grain sack (figures 5.17 and 5.18).[61] A sack might even be marked inside and outside. Shapes were also used; one sack was marked with a diamond, one with a fleur de lis, one with a red star and one with 'the letters T in the middle of a ring and a flower-de-luce on each side the T'.[62] Other marks included 'East-India marks', a seal put on by the elders of the Portuguese synagogue and 'Government marks'.[63] In a small number of cases sacks were marked after they had been taken from the alleged thief so that they could be proved

[56] *OBP*, January 1751, James Smith (t17510116-1); April 1759, John Griffin, James Griffin, (t17590425-6); January 1762, Robert Lankstone, James Smith (t17620114-14); April 1765, John Roffe (t17650417-47); February 1767, Robert Stokes (t17670218-28); July 1767, Edmund Millington, John Cross, John Barnard (t17670715-50); June 1769, Ruben Harris, John More (t17690628-57); January 1770, William Poney, Benjamin Church (t17700117-34); February 1770, Thomas Griffiths (t17700221-51); February 1784, Joseph Bambridge (t17840225-86); December 1788, George Buckland (t17881210-87); June 1789, Thomas Crawley (t17890603-79); May 1790, Samuel Palmer, John Marlborough (t17900526-78); November 1796, James Rotter (t17961130-59); April 1798, John Wilson, Abraham Wilmot, John Selby (t17980418-4); May 1798, John Howe (t17980523-13); December 1798, Thomas Green (t17981205-14).
[57] For example *OBP*, January 1783, Daniel Oakley, (t17830115-11).
[58] *OBP*, February 1785, Walter Groves, Robert Welch, William Paris et al. (t17850223-102).
[59] *OBP*, September 1750, William Escote (t17500912-74); January 1754, George Holyday (t17540116-54); April 1766, William White (t17660409-21); June 1769, Ruben Harris, John More (t17690628-57); February 1784, Joseph Bambridge, (t17840225-86); April 1794, Thomas Cale (t17940430-78); January 1798 andrew Arnold (t17980110-15).
[60] BRO, DP/23/18/7, H11, Sacking Manufacture Records, Bray, 1802-1813, 8 December 1812 and 5 January 1813; 'Mr Webbs Accounts' 29 September 1811, 6 December 1811.
[61] Linda Eaton, private correspondence, 26/06/2014; Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World: Selections from the Winterthur Collection* (New York: Abrams, 2007), pp. 98-109.
[62] *OBP*, April 1755, John Pearcy (t17550409-32); May 1780, John Laws (t17800510-54); February 1785, Water Groves, Robert Welch, William Paris et al. (t17850223-102); April 1794, Thomas Cale (t17940430-78).
[63] *OBP*, July 1798, John Innes, Richard Palmer, Joseph With (t17980704-34); July 1800, John Weight (t18000709-63); September 1800, John Price, John Robinson, Edward Rainbow et al. (t18000917-53).

to be the same item in court.[64] While these details did not ensure successful prosecution, they were part of the process of proving ownership and tracking the movement of stolen goods. Marking was fallible. Illiteracy reduced the efficacy of the system; 'Court. What do you know the sack by, is there any mark on that? - Yes there is mark enough on that. What is the mark?'. James Hammerton of unknown occupation replied 'I cannot read, but I know the sack, I have had it ever since last summer'.[65]

Methods of procurement varied. New sacks could be purchased in large numbers – the corn chandler John Morgan bought one hundred at Uxbridge.[66] Sack-making could be a profitable business, Thomas Whitehorn, the Berkshire sack maker insured his buildings and stock for £600 in 1792.[67] Sacks were lent widely in trades revolving around grain. Bakers might be in possession of a number of sacks with different marks. Arthur Findon had sacks with the marks of three different individuals, two of whom sold him flour and oatmeal respectively. It is unclear however, if Findon had bought these sacks with the goods or they were lent to him to be returned. George Berner the younger who traded in grains and flour deposed that his sacks were 'never all in my possession, they are in the hands of bakers and people that I deal with' revealing the vagrant nature of these items.[68] Charles Hamerton esquire's mill delivered barley in sacks marked 'S. S.' to Stratford distillery. Hamerton's mill often contained sacks with different marks because at least four other people used the mill.[69] The result of this lending and the resale of sacks was that they were not always marked with their owner's name. The lending and borrowing of sacks appears to have been relatively common practice. The prosecutor Henry Lott Mason, master of a mill was asked 'Is it not a common thing for persons to borrow sacks in the trade?' but the practice was not universal because he claimed 'I never borrowed any in my life'.[70] Similarly Brown and Bovill were adamant 'We never lend any sacks, we have no sacks but what we cannot do without'.[71]

[64] For example, *OBP*, April 1798, Sarah M'Daniel (t17980418-46).
[65] *OBP*, February 1783, Samuel Wallis (t17830226-1).
[66] *OBP*, February 1784, Joseph Bambridge (t17840225-86).
[67] LMA, MS119/36/375 p. 439, Sun insurance policy 580138, Lady Day 1792, Thomas Whitehorn.
[68] *OBP*, July 1740, James Watmore (t17400709-39); June 1783, William Tomkins (t17830604-7).
[69] *OBP*, July 1794, William Brightmore (t17940716-58); July 1798, John Innes, Richard Palmer, Joseph With (t17980704-34).
[70] *OBP*, December 1755, James Dawson (t17551204-47); January 1783, George Hayland, John Cotton (t17830115-40); July 1783, Richard Biggs (t17830723-119); February 1785, Walter Groves,

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.17, Winterthur Museum, 1965.1827, bag, bast fibre, probably unbleached, decorated in 1820, verso, from the Pennsylvania German community. Marked '1820 / 3 / Johannes Bierh VII'**

**Figure 5.18, 1965.1827, recto.**

Figures 5.17 and 5.18 © Winterthur Museum, Delaware

While it may appear that the strength of sacks was paramount to store and transport goods and that any damage might weaken their function, a number were described as mended which is further supported by an extant grain bag from Winterthur Museum, Delaware. The Pennsylvanian bag in figures 5.17 and 5.18 has fourteen holes that were patched. The majority of these are at the bottom of the sack visible in the images. Valuations of sacks in the Old Bailey indictments ranged from 2d. to 60d. with the majority valued at 12d. The Overseers of the Poor in Bray sold sacks made by paupers in 'loads' of sacks. A single 5 bushel sack cost 62d. in 1813.[72] Replacing torn sacks therefore impacted on profits. The majority of sacks in the Old Bailey were mentioned in commercial contexts. John Read, the Master of the St Mary docked from Jamaica, employed William Stent to mend sacks and bags containing ginger and pimento (all-spice) when the ship was docked in London in

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Robert Welch, William Paris et al. (t17850223-102); February 1793, William Turner, Thomas Brown (t17930220-36); December 1795, James Smith (t17951202-18); April 1796, Marshall Tom (t17960406-53); October 1798, Richard Watts, James Harrod (t17981024-35).

[71] *OBP*, February 1785, Walter Groves, Robert Welch, William Paris et al. (t17850223-102).

[72] BRO, DP23/18/7, H11, Sacking Manufacture, 4 April 1813.

1760. This prevented the loss of goods when unloading the ship. Stent had additional assistance on one day. He was able to testify 'I know this bag well, it having been cut at one corner and I mended it when the pimento was in it'. He had only mended one pimento sack. The scale of the potential damage to sacks was great, Stent deposed that he 'might mend a hundred' on a ship. The mended pimento bag in this case was valued at 6d., therefore clearly it made monetary sense to repair sacks and bags.[73] There was a potential saving of £2 10s. if one hundred sacks were mended with further savings because goods could be off-loaded in damaged sacks without further losses. Similarly, Joseph Turnley, a lighterman commented on the mending of bags on boats: 'I went with the craft to take in these sixty bags; but before I went I left word that the bag-menders might be sent to repair the bags, which is the usual course'. Turnley had to pay for losses, therefore paying for bags to be mended clearly saved more money than it cost.[74] Sacks were exceedingly durable and repairs meant that they could be used for years. John and William Edmead were still using a sack in 1799 that was marked 'R.E. 1781' by their dead brother eighteen years earlier.[75] Sacks enabled key commercial functions. Markings on sacks noted ownership and made it easier to prosecute thefts although they might have been marked with a previous owner's name or initials. Sacks and bags on ships were commonly repaired to prevent the loss of goods on unloading and save the cost of buying new containers. Finally their durability is testified to by the use of one sack for eighteen years.

## Money Bags and Purses

Canvas was used for large bags and for smaller scale packaging: money bags and purses.[76] Fifty-eight per cent of stolen canvas items in the Old Bailey from 1678 to 1810 were bags and 143 out of 226 of these canvas bags contained money.[77] Contents are inferred when the indictment mentions money with a canvas bag valued at 1d. but the depositions do not note bag contents based on the precedent of other cases. Thirty-seven canvas purses were also mentioned. Canvas purses and

[73] *OBP*, April 1760, John Mackensey, John Hawley (t17600416-12);
[74] *OBP*, September 1796, Thomas Cripps, William Allen (t17960914-16).
[75] *OBP*, October 1799, John Rixon (t17991030-16).
[76] Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, p. 191.
[77] *OBP*, Searched for all offences where the transcription matches '"*canvas*"' using advanced search, between 1678 and 1810. Cases that referred to canvas that was not stolen were not included in the database.

bags are discussed together because the terms appear to have been interchangeable. Typically the bag was listed in the indictment and the purse in the depositions.[78] Canvas purses were rarely mentioned before the 1770s. Descriptions were rare but there were a few: ten bags or purses were made from yellow canvas, four were brown, two were 'dirty', one was dark brown and dirty, one was 'white brown', one was striped, one was 'old canvas' and one was described by its 64 year old pedlar owner as 'nasty black canvas'. One was 'light coloured linen' but was described as canvas in the indictment, again emphasising the problems of nomenclature and contemporary textile identification.[79]

Money bags and purses fulfilled three major purposes. They were cheap containers for money, they were used to separate different denominations and they were part of a system of the protection of money. Witnesses were reticent about the construction of money bags and no extant money bags have been located. Many purses that survive have clasp tops which does not match the textual description of 'bag', or were made of needle lace or decorative net therefore they lack the cheap utility of a canvas version. Prints are the best source to understand money bags. Although some prints used are copies of European continental images they were published in Britain therefore it is reasonable to assume that these money bags were recognisable to English people. A number of examples of prints with money bags survive.[80] Figures 5.19 to 5.23 show that some purses looked very much like bags.

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[78] For example, *OBP*, October 1774, John Cooper (t17741019-56); May 1770, Mary Hanson (t17700530-14); February 1781, Ebenezer Harcup (t17810222-41); September 1781, Mary Halcrow (t17810912-13); April 1784, James Nowland (t17840421-46); June 1785, Rebecca Noah (t17850629-46); October 1792, Henry Wild (t17921031-31); December 1792, Sarah Loft, Ann Simmons, Elizabeth Rederick et al. (t17921215-15); February 1794, Ann Williams (t17940219-31); February 1795, Harriott Merchant, Sophia Bryant (t17950218-36); December 1801, Samuel Tallard (t18011202-69); July 1804, Ann Molineux (t18040704-27); May 1806, Margaret Obrien (t18060521-28).

[79] *OBP*, February 1751, Jane Barber (t17510227-15); December 1767, Charlotte Clark (t17671209-74); July 1768, Mary Gannon (t17680706-48); May 1769, Mary Harris, Louise Smith (t17690510-32); February 1774, Ann Barry (t17740216-43); October 1775, Ann Perry (t17751018-48); January 1770, William Moody (t17700117-31); October 1773, William Johnson (t17731020-50); April 1782, William Walsh (t17820410-43); June 1783, Elizabeth Cammell (t17830604-80); April 1784, James Nowland (t17840421-46); February 1786, Christiana Fitzpatrick (t17860222-58); February 1789, James Joiner (t17890225-7); September 1790, Elizabeth Green (t17900915-86); October 1792, Henry Wild (t17921031-31); February 1793, Edd Adams (t17930220-7); October 1793, Asher Jacobs (t17931030-63); January 1794, William Huby (t17940115-54); December 1798, Richard Coleman (t17981205-73); September 1799, John Taylor (t17990911-69); February 1802, William Richardson (t18020217-32); December 1804, Thomas Jackson, Sarah Rumbold (t18041205-69).

[80] For example, search '"money bag"', production date 1678-1810, object types: print, *British Museum Collection Online* <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx> [as of 11/05/2015] for other prints.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.19, V&A, T.847Q-1974, purse belonging to the Lord Clapham Doll, silk brocade, London, 1690s.** © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

**Figure 5.21, BM, 1868,0808.4511, attributed to John Collier, 'The Morning Visit', etching, 338 x 221, Britain, 1773.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.20, Detail of BM, 1868,0808.4511, Collier, 'The Morning Visit'.**

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**Figure 5.22, BM, 1872,1012.1556, Charles Spooner after George van der Mijn, 'The Spendthrift', mezzotint, 354 x 250mm, London, c.1740-1767.**

**Figure 5.23, Detail of 'The Spendthrift'.**

Figures 5.20 to 5.23 © Trustees of the British Museum

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.24, BM, 2010,7081.1709, Richard Brookshaw after Godfried Schalcken, 'Covetousness', mezzotint, 154 x 117mm, London, c.1751-1806.**

**Figure 5.25, Detail of 2010,7081.1709.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.26, BM, 1868,0808.6691, Robert Dighton, 'Pam and flush. We are all loo'd', etching, 224 x 162mm, London, 1798.**

Figures 5.24 to 5.26 © Trustees of the British Museum

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 5.27, BM, 2010,7081.3013, Richard Houston after Phillippe Mercier, 'The Miser', mezzotint, 355 x 253mm, London, c.1736-1775.**

**Figure 5.28, detail of BM, 2010,7081.3013.**

Figures 5.27 and 5.28 © Trustees of the British Museum

Rectangular and curved money bags were depicted. Bags were fastened with drawstrings (figures 5.19 to 5.23), the textile was knotted at the top (figures 5.24 and 5.25) or a string wound was around the top of the bag to tie it (figures 5.26 to 5.28). These forms of fastening kept the money contained in the bag preventing loss. Overlaps between bags and purses can be seen through prints and the Old Bailey. Similarly to sacks, some money bags were identified in court by their marks.[81]

The construction and maintenance of bags and purses was undertaken by men and women. There were a few descriptions of bags or purses made for men by their wives as well as an instance of male construction. Publican Thomas Crowther identified his bag in court, 'This is the same bag, I made it myself'.[82] Money bags, like sacks, were repaired if torn. Robert Weaver recognised his bag because 'there was a hole in it; and I got a needle and thread and mended it myself'.[83] These examples show that some men engaged in constructing and mending small, utilitarian, non-items. Furthermore money bags were repaired despite their low value. Another example is that of Mrs James a vintner's wife who had owned her bag for a long time and had altered it, 'I know the bag was my property before I was married. Q. How do you know it to be your bag? - A. Because I cut the bottom out, turned it

[81] *OBP*, February 1751, Jane Barber (t17510227-15); October 1769, Mary Davidson, Frances Smith (t17691018-47); June 1780, William Vanderbank, Thomas Prior, James Prior (t17800628-88).
[82] *OBP*, April 1789, John Ward, Edward Church, John Blinkworth (t17890422-71); February 1794, Ann Williams (t17940219-31); June 1796, John Griffiths (t17960622-80).
[83] *OBP*, April 1780, Alexander Macpherson (t17800405-22); see also January 1720, Penelope Dye (t17200115-9); April 1789, John Ward, Edward Church, John Blinkworth (t17890422-71).

up and darned it with red thread'.[84] The mode value of a sack was 12d., twelve times higher than a money bag, yet these bags were repaired and used continuously. The most extreme example is the fishmonger John Ruff whose purse was 'greasy by my selling pickled salmon and putting the money backward and forward in it' for more than seven years. Ruff's purse was valued at half the sum of normal canvas purses, 0.5d. presumably devalued by its greasy appearance and fishy smell.[85] These examples emphasise the contemporary mind-set, no wastage.

Canvas money bags were both used to organise and store money on the person and at home or work. The self-described 'labouring man' John Noble, who kept three carts had a bag with 'a parting' with silver on one side and 13 guineas stored on the other.[86] Similarly the sailor George Wright had a 'double purse' or 'bag', with 'two parts in it' which he bought in Coventry.[87] For those who wanted to organise their money, these two-part bags provided an alternative method to the division of silver and gold between pockets.[88] Money bags were also used to divide money for convenience when large amounts of coin were held.[89] The range of sizes cannot be accessed through the Old Bailey proceedings, but it can be inferred that they were not standardised. A bag used to store change or commercial takings would have been larger than the money bags that people carried when out and about.[90] The greatest quantity of coin mentioned in the Old Bailey stored in a single money bag was 952 guineas kept in a bag by the banking partners the Drummonds and Andrew Barclay. In contrast, a canvas bag with a single guinea such as that stolen from the porter Thomas Woodward would have presented a very different physical profile.[91]

Bags were part of the security system at banks, used to store coin and paper money. The circulation of paper money grew in the 1790s and early nineteenth century due

[84] *OBP*, February 1802, William Richardson (t18020217-32).
[85] *OBP*, September 1793, Mary Carty (t17930911-103).
[86] *OBP*, October 1783, Simon Frazier (t17831029-3).
[87] *OBP*, May 1770, Mary Hanson (t17700530-14).
[88] Alice Dolan, 'Prying in Pockets: Relationships between Men's Clothes and the Safety of Valuables 1735-1810', The Association of Dress Historians New Research Day, London, November 2011.
[89] For example *OBP*, September 1756, George Langley (t17560915-42); January 1770, William Moody, Charles Burkitt, John Jones (t17700117-31); April 1789, John Ward, Edward Church, John Blinkworth (t17890422-71).
[90] Two were described as 'little' *OBP*, February 1786, Christiana Fitzpatrick (t17860222-58) and 'small' January 1798, Margaret Murray (t17980110-2).
[91] *OBP*, October 1784, (t17841020-39); October 1787, Mary Ellis (t17871024-57).

to the weakness of country banks and lack of trust in the circulation of money which threatened the Bank of England's gold reserves. The 1797 Act of Restriction, precipitated by the French invasion of Wales, banned the Bank from paying out in gold. After 1797 Parliament allowed the issue of notes under £5 thus a higher proportion of society came into contact with notes. The Bank of England was restricted from paying out in gold until 1821, during and after the Napoleonic wars, due to concerns over depleting gold reserves.[92] At the Bank of England InTellers or cashiers received and paid out money. They were constantly responsible for their bags of paper money and cash and had to sign them over to another InTeller if leaving the Bank early. The InTellers had their own lockers to lock up the bags although the rules were flouted. The senior InTeller Mr Campe reported that he had 'upon occasion seen a bag of money on the Ground with the clerk holding his foot on it & has always taken notice of it as improper & order'd him to lock it up'. InTellers checked payments at the end of each day and then paper money and cash were tied 'in bags of even Thousands which are weigh'd in the Hall by the Porters, mark'd on the Ticket with the Porter's initials & weight' then locked in the warehouse overnight until needed in the morning. Surplus money was cashed up and weighed separately. Money collected by OutTellers from signees of Bills of Exchange also had to be weighed and ticketed.[93] Bags were also used to store paper money on one's person despite the growth in popularity of pocket books which were seemingly more practical. Five per cent of people with canvas bags or purses in the Old Bailey sample, chose to store paper money in them from 1770 to 1800, ranging in value from one bank note worth £1 to two promissory notes worth £140.[94] Overall the use of sacks and money bags was similar, both were repaired, marked and used to organise goods and prevent losses.

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[92] Sir John Clapham, *The Bank of England: A History*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), I, pp. 262-65, 272; II, pp. 3-4, 75.

[93] Bank of England, M5/212, Minutes of the Committee of Inspection, 1783, pp. 2, 4-5, 8, 29-31, 33-35; M5/213, Minutes of the Committee of Inspection, 1783, p. 167. My thanks to Anne Murphy for sharing her transcriptions.

[94] *OBP*, July 1775, Joseph Grindal (t17750712-1); September 1785, William Cook (t17850914-126); December 1794, James Mackay (t17941208-54); February 1795, Harriott Merchant, Sophia Bryant (t17950218-36); April 1796, Diana Jane Carns (t17960406-20); October 1797, Ann Sanmert (t17971025-8); October 1797, James Mackey, John Taylor, James Bond (t17971025-29); September 1799, John Mitchell (t17990911-94); February 1802, William Richardson (t18020217-32); July 1804, Ann Molineux (t18040704-27); July 1804, Mary Brown (t18040704-49); December 1804, Thomas Jackson, Sarah Rumbold (t18041205-69); May 1806, Margaret Obrien [sic] (t18060521-28); September 1806, William Hawkins (t18060917-121). NB: these exclude cases where it cannot be confirmed that the paper money was in the bag; Dolan, 'Prying in Pockets'.

## Conclusion

In conclusion the chapter has shown that coarse linens came in a range of qualities and designs just as higher quality textiles did. Linens were used for wrappers because they were durable, could be waterproofed and shaped around any goods. Wrappers were marked for direction and these markings provided greater security. They were perquisites in some jobs. Sacks were also marked for security. They were shared widely in grain-related trades. There were commercial benefits to repair and mending did not fundamentally undermine the structural integrity of the sack which remained durable. The terms ‘bag’ and ‘purse’ overlapped in court cases and there were visual similarities between some examples. They were repaired if damaged despite their exceedingly low value emphasising the early-modern mind-set which did not countenance wastage. Money bags were used to organise and store money, even paper money and were part of the security system of the Bank of England.

Coarse flaxen and hempen cloth were valued for logistical purposes due to their utility: they could be shaped around anything, marked, waterproofed, repaired and were highly durable. This utility brought economic benefits by reducing losses of goods falling out of containers and providing a rudimentary level of security, which if it did not reduce theft, at least made thefts easier to prosecute. Their superior durability meant that flaxen and hempen textiles were more widely used for wrappers than cottons unless trade practicalities or exceedingly cheap prices made the use of cotton advantageous. Many sacks and bags were anonymous. However Johannes Bierh’s bag decorated with birds, flowers and his name shows that they could be marked with emotion. Chapter 6 explores another aspect of emotional relationships with textiles, the question of whether bodily contact imbued them with special meaning.

## Chapter 6. Passing On: The (Un)emotional Status of Linen.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.1, Museum of London, 34.63, Sheet (folded), linen, 2.47 x 1.82m, England or Brussels, embroidered c.1716-1730.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.2, Detail of Museum of London, 34.63. The inscription is embroidered in hair.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.3, Detail of Museum of London, 34.63, whitework border.**

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.4, Detail of Museum of London, 34.63, whitework wreath.**

Figures 6.1 to 6.4 © Museum of London

The Derwentwater sheet (figures 6.1 to 6.4) embodies love and political martyrdom. The top and bottom of the sheet are embroidered across the 1.82m width in whitework. A heart-shaped wreath at the bottom of the sheet sits under the message 'The sheet OFF MY dear x dear Lord's Bed in the Wretched Tower OF London February 1716 x Ann C OF Darwent=Waters' inscribed in hair.[1] Closer inspection reveals that this poignant message was inscribed with dark and light hair, particularly clear in the words 'my dear' and 'in the' in figure 6.2, hair which could have come from two individuals, perhaps Ann and her husband. This linen sheet marks the death of Ann Derwentwater's husband, Sir James Radcliffe, third Earl of Derwentwater, executed for treason for leading a Jacobite rebellion.[2] Santina Levy suggests that it is probable that the whitework embroidery was undertaken after his death when Ann was in a convent in Brussels. The whitework design, details of which are shown in figures 6.3 and 6.4, is appropriate for the period 1716 to 1730 and Ann died in in 1723.[3] The Derwentwater sheet acts as a monument to a political martyr on a domestic scale.

The sheet is a testament to Ann's love, shown through the desperate repetition of 'dear dear' and the heart-shaped wreath (figure 6.1). A combination of love, political

[1] Santina Levy, Museum of London catalogue entry, accessed 21 June 2012.
[2] Leo Gooch, 'Radcliffe, James, styled third earl of Derwentwater (1689–1716)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22983> [accessed 12 June 2014].
[3] Ibid.; Levy, catalogue entry.

leanings and marital duty are likely to have combined in Ann's embellishment of the sheet. Decorating the top and bottom of the sheet with borders 11 x 182cm and 22 x 182 cm respectively would have taken months of dedicated application, time that represents Ann's love for James and continued devotion to him after his death. She filled her time with needlework rather than seeking a new husband, a representation of her continued marital duty which also allowed for her 'creative expression' and potentially combatted boredom.[4] The Derwentwater sheet is not the only sheet which marks family history. Antonia Brodie suggests that the embroidery of the initials of different generations of the Staffurth family on an early seventeenth-century sheet in the V&A's collection is the result of strong familial ties amongst farming families.[5]

Multiple layered materials and inferred meanings generate the emotional potency of the Derwentwater sheet which loudly proclaims its own history. The immediacy of the message prompts us to reflect on Ann's feelings. Hair provides a tangible connection, a link with a body from the past.[6] Through the sheet's declaration that it comes from a specific bed, we understand the context of its use, the emotional days for Ann and her husband waiting for his execution. Alongside, the idea of an indexical relationship with his body is evoked, a notional bodily imprint. It is possible that by touching this sheet which was next to James' body in his final days, Ann could continue to remember her husband through touch.

The Derwentwater sheet raises questions that will be explored in the chapter. Were all linens highly emotive? How often did emotion override the utility and monetary values of linens to imbue objects with an emotional meaning? Which sources reveal the emotional potency of objects? There are two key areas of enquiry; firstly the tensions between the monetary and emotive values of linens. These are explored through moments of transition in object life cycles. Such values were to the fore when disposing of an object, as people relinquished ownership temporarily or permanently and possessions underwent transitions in location and meaning. This chapter uses disparities between object and human life cycles to examine linen as both a commodity and as an emotional textile. It asks whether linen went on being

[4] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 118-22, 238-44, 248-49, 254.
[5] Forthcoming, Antonia Brodie, 'Material Memories: An Embroidered Sheet in the Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum', *Textile*, 14:2 (2016).
[6] Marius Kwint, 'Introduction: The Physical Past' in *Material Memories: Design and Evocation*, ed. by Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward, Jeremy Aynsley (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 1-16 (p. 9); Marcia Pointon, 'Materializing Mourning: Hair, Jewellery and the Body' in *Material Memories*, 39-57 (pp. 39-40, 45-46).

used during the long eighteenth century because it was an exceptionally emotional material.

The role of bodily intimacy in imbuing objects with emotional potency is shown to full effect by the Derwentwater sheet. However this link was not inevitable as is revealed by the Foundling textile case study later in the chapter. Concerted bodily intimacy was unique to textiles. Underwear and sheets had the most intimate bodily contact. It is therefore essential to understand whether the emotional potency of linen was the result of its close relationship with the body, whether linen was atypically emotional, or whether the sentimental status of linen resulted from the universal potential of objects to engender emotional attachments. The chapter argues that the Derwentwater sheet is unrepresentative of most everyday relationships with linen and that linen was not exceptionally emotionally potent - it gained meaning in the same ways as other textiles.

While bodily intimacy implies multiple sensory engagements, sight and touch are the main focus of the chapter. People rarely listen to textiles. While smell evokes emotional associations, they are extremely difficult to uncover due to the range of attitudes to the cleanliness of linen across society during the long eighteenth century (see Chapters 3 and 4).[7] To be intimate with the body an object needs to touch it or be worn close. Therefore the power of touch to create and retrieve emotional meaning is the chapter's central focus. While excellent work on touch exists, scholarly engagement with the emotional significance of touching objects is still in its infancy. Constance Classen did not bring the emotional implications of touch to the fore in her study of the history of touch, *The Deepest Sense*.[8] Instead she focused on other characteristics, such as religious power, women's position in society and touch as a means of collecting information about the world, although emotion is implicit in many of her sources.[9] Similarly, Mark Smith's chapter on touch in *Sensory History* encompassed diverse subjects from race to midwifery but not emotion.[10] So

[7] Styles, *Dress of the* People, pp. 73, 78-82.
[8] See also Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2003); Claire Richter Sherman, *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Trout Gallery, Dickenson College, with the participation of The Folger Shakespeare Library, 2000).
[9] Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012).
[10] Mark M. Smith, *Sensory History* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), pp. 93-116.

far histories of touch with a broad temporal scope have been self-affirming, regularly quoting one another and in some cases sharing the same examples. They treat controversial theories as established fact in order to evidence cultural changes in the history of touch: Norbert Elias' 'civilising process' and John Crowley's 'invention of comfort' in particular.[11] This kind of pervasive sharing risks the creation of an impression that only certain aspects of historical touch can be uncovered.

This chapter therefore pushes the boundaries of current sensory history, systematically assessing the importance of touch in embodying and extracting emotion for the first time, while recognising that emotional engagement is just one of the multiple roles of touch which does not necessarily inspire or imbue emotion. A few scholars have engaged with the topic, but typically only briefly. Elizabeth D. Harvey noted the use of touch as a 'metaphor for conveyance into the interior of the subject, particularly the capacity to arouse emotion' and links the two meanings of 'feeling' with the physicality of early-modern visual representations.[12] Similarly, Susan Stewart stated that 'of all the senses, touch is most linked to emotion and feeling'. 'Material memories' are created through bodily interactions with objects through touch's complex relationship between the body internally and the external world. Stewart also raised one of the challenges for historians of the senses, the difficulty of effectively expressing vivid internal sensory memories to others.[13] Some academics argue that bodily contact or lack of contact with specific objects imbues them with meaning. Paul Rodaway suggested that active touch makes spaces 'meaningful'.[14] In contrast Marcia Pointon argued that the 'containment' of hair in nineteenth-century mourning jewellery, alongside its use in a small-scale universalised scene 'is a visual enactment of mourning in which individual loss is

[11] For example, Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, pp. 81, 132-35, 154-55, 162; Elizabeth D. Harvey, 'Introduction: The "Sense of All Senses"' in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* ed. by Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) 1-21 (pp. 8-9); Smith, *Sensory History*, pp. 93-95, 97-98, 103-5, 109, 113-15.
[12] Harvey, 'Introduction', pp. 2, 9; Harvey, 'The Touching Organ: Allegory, Anatomy and the Renaissance Skin Envelope' in *Sensible Flesh*, 80-102 (p. 102).
[13] Susan Stewart, 'Prologue: From the Museum of Touch', in *Material Memories*, 17-36 (pp. 17-19, 27, 31-32).
[14] Paul Rodaway, *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 44-45.

experienced as a total world transformation'. The removal of hair from touch gives it a relic-like status.[15]

The extraction of meaning through touch has also been considered. Sally Holloway argued that objects in contact with the body had two roles for lovers during the long eighteenth century, with gifts for the body 'symbolising the impending physical union between two people' and in absentia providing tactile contact with the beloved.[16] Susan M. Stabile identifies touch as central to the process of reminiscence amongst an aging circle of gentlewomen in Philadelphia during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.[17] However, touching things can provoke emotion that does not involve memory. Misty G. Anderson argues that the playwright Margaret Cavendish created a utopian world for women in *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668) as an alternative to social norms which centred around the sensual pleasures of touching things, particularly textiles. This world was designed to challenge Cartesian rationalism which separated intelligence and the senses.[18] Giving and extracting meaning through touch are not mutually exclusive. Marius Kwint suggests that objects 'furnish recollection', 'stimulate remembering' and provide a historical 'record'.[19] Touch can create and elicit memory in these roles. Jenny Nyberg shows that sensory interactions with material culture both prompt emotion and memory and imbue objects with new meanings. She argued that touching and preparing bodies for burial in early-modern Sweden enabled 'tactile transference of emotions to the dead' and thus was part of grieving.[20] Analysis of linen which constantly touched the body offers a new angle on the relationship between touch and emotion.

Systematic analysis is essential because every object has the potential to become emotional. Pauline Eversmann et al.'s study of visitor engagement with the Winterthur museum collections revealed that a key way people interact with and

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[15] Pointon, 'Materializing Mourning', pp. 52-56.
[16] Sally Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects during Courtship and Adultery c.1730 to 1830' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2013), pp. 73-87.
[17] Susan M. Stabile, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 134.
[18] Misty G. Anderson, 'Living in a Material World: Margaret Cavendish's *The Convent of Pleasure*' in *Sensible Flesh*, pp. 187-204.
[19] Kwint, 'Introduction', p. 2.
[20] Jenny Nyberg, 'A Peaceful Sleep and Heavenly Celebration for the Pure and Innocent. The Sensory Experience of Death during the Long Eighteenth Century', in *Making Sense of Things: Archaeologies of Sensory Perception* ed. by Fredrik Fahlander & Anna Kjellström (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2010) 15-33 (pp. 16, 29-30).

learn about objects is through 'association', the memories, stories and previous life experience the objects provoke. To make meaning from objects, visitors needed to express their responses to them.[21] Similarly, historical and contemporary definitions of 'emotion' include a reaction to something. Kevin Mulligan and Klaus R. Scherer, a philosopher and psychologist respectively, argued that necessary constituents of emotion are 'episodes that involve seeing, hearing, feeling [emotions], remembering, expecting, judging and so forth' and can be 'real or fictitious'.[22] Several, if not all, of these criteria are engaged in human interaction with objects. So if people learn about and evaluate things using previous experience and memory, engaging tools that are the basis of emotion, although experience and memory can exist without emotion itself, how can scholars make meaning out of this potential profusion of evocative things?[23] Despite this conceptual potential, the chapter reveals that bodily contact alone was insufficient to imbue all objects with emotional potency.

Numerous criteria can be used to assess the emotional significance of an object. The layers of ownership by makers, contemporary users, people who chose to keep the object after the end of its functional or fashionable life and those that study the object in a museum or university setting all contribute different emotionally charged meanings and associations. For those contemporary to the object the potency could be related to the person who made it, memory of them making it and as Daniel Miller argued, the investment of time as an emotional, even devotional act, aspects that may be particularly appropriate for linen, a female domestic responsibility. Hilary Davidson has suggested that the emotional status of linen is comparable to food, 'which takes a long time to obtain and prepare; while essential and primarily functional is a vehicle for many emotions of communality, ritual, love, care, transition and all the rest; and yet is inherently transient and ends up transformed and

[21] Pauline K. Eversmann, Rosemary T. Krill, Edwina Michael, et al., 'Material Culture as Text: Review and Reform of the Literacy Model for Interpretation', *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*, ed. by J. Ritchie Garrison and Ann Smart Martin (Winterthur, DE: Winterthur Museum, 1997), 135-67 (pp. 145-151, 153-166). See also Kwint, 'Introduction'; Christopher Tilley, *Metaphor and Material Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 6-8, 264, 271.
[22] Thomas Dixon, '"Emotion": The History of a Keyword in Crisis', *Emotion Review*, 4 (2012) pp. 338-344; Kevin Mulligan and Klaus Scherer, 'Toward a Working Definition of Emotion', *Emotion Review*, 4:4 (October 2012), 345-57 (pp. 348-51).
[23] Mulligan and Scherer, 'Toward a Working Definition', p. 348.

repellent'.[24] These are the challenges of linen, which can repel, stained with bodily fluids through use as underwear, bed sheets, table cloths and nappies.

Historians and curators face significant difficulties in recapturing these emotional meanings as John Styles suggests:

> Objects can transmit emotional messages, carry emotional associations and evoke emotional responses, but frequently they do so in such a personal, intimate way as to defy broader appreciation. Even when objects are emotionally charged in ways that command wide recognition, that recognition is often restricted to very specific circumstances. Things that exhibit emotional power in one setting can lack it in another. Moreover, even when an object's emotional charge was widely recognized at some period in history, there is no guarantee it can be recaptured by the historian.[25]

A declaration of an object's emotional status whether written on paper, recorded on an object, or an oral testimony is the ideal, a direct expression of a sentimental attachment. Locating this evidence in the early-modern period relies on fortuity, the survival of the object and its meaning. Furthermore this evidence may only provide an insight into one layer of context. The personal and professional experiences of material culture professionals influence their interpretation of artefacts in ways similar to the visitors to Winterthur Museum, even if they simply contribute to the belief that the item in question is worthy of study.[26] Davidson challenges us: 'how do we tabulate and analyse the human response in the humanities?'[27] On one level, as scholars and museum professionals we apply the analytical skills, rigour and techniques of our craft to objects, on another level we experience the intrinsically human fascination with things and their stories.[28]

Sensory interaction is arguably the most frequent means of imbuing an object with emotional meaning. An object that brings to mind a family member or friend typically

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[24] Daniel Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), for example pp. 2-13; Hilary Davidson, email correspondence, 16 October 2013; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 128.
[25] John Styles, 'Objects and Emotions: The London Foundling Hospital Tokens, 1741-1760', in *Emotional Objects*, <http://emotionalobjects.wordpress.com/2013/11/11/181/> [accessed 13/01/2013].
[26] Eversmann, et. al, 'Material Culture as Text', pp. 153-61, 164; Sarah Tarlow, 'The Archaeology of Emotion and Affect', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 41 (2012), 169-85 (pp. 178-79).
[27] Hilary Davidson, 'Grave Emotions: Textiles and Clothing from Nineteenth-Century London Cemeteries', *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture*, 14:2 (2016), forthcoming.
[28] The duration of this fascination and the perceived power and agency of objects is testified by the prehistoric artefacts in the British Museum's *Ice Age Art* exhibition. Jill Cook, *Ice Age Art: The Arrival of the Modern Mind* (London: British Museum Press, 2013).

gains meaning through their having made, used or owned it. In each case, touching the object contributes to that meaning. The accrual of emotional meaning by things is often attributed to intimacy with the body. Indexical relationships are traced between locks of hair, hair jewellery and people. Elizabeth Gaskell's character Margaret Dawson in *My Lady Ludlow* (1858) reflected on why her benefactor Lady Ludlow found miniatures less emotive than locks of hair,

> I don't think that the looking at these made my lady seem so melancholy, as the seeing and touching of the hair did. But, to be sure, the hair was [...] a part of some beloved body which she might never touch and caress again, but which lay beneath the turf, all faded and disfigured, except perhaps the very hair from which the lock she held had been dissevered; whereas the pictures were but pictures after all – likenesses, but not the very things themselves.[29]

Although linen was not part of the body, it was seen, touched and smelled. These three primary sensory interactions with linen endowed it with the potential to embody emotions. Familiarity – seeing it regularly with a person, knowing that they had worn or slept on it, or that smells were caught by the fibres – might imbue linens with emotional potency, a potency that could be evoked through repeating these same acts; seeing, touching, smelling.[30] The feeling that by touching something you are connected to someone from the past, that you are touching their touch, is not modern. Mary Douglas, the Scottish heroine of Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818) experienced Mary Stuart's touch on a visit to Holyrood Palace, 'her hand has touched the same draperies I now hold in mine'.[31] Lady Matilda, one of the heroines of Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) was emotionally transported by the hat of her father, who had just left the house, 'in that trifling article of his dress, she thought she saw himself and held it in her hand with pious reverence'.[32] Historical emotional acts can only be revealed through words, whether in letters, diaries or novels. Harriet Smith in *Emma* (1815) admits that she had kept the leftover 'court-plaister' used to protect Mr Elton's cut finger:

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[29] Elizabeth Gaskell, *My Lady Ludlow* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1985), p. 41. Margaret Dawson narrates. This section of the novel is set after 1789, either in the late 1790s or early nineteenth century.
[30] Nyberg, 'A Peaceful Sleep', p. 16.
[31] Susan Ferrier, *Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 207.
[32] Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 246. See also Sophie von La Roche's comments from 1786 quoted in Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, pp. 141-42.

> I took mine out and cut him a piece; but it was a great deal too large and he cut it smaller and kept playing some time with what was left, before he gave it back to me. And so then, in my nonsense, I could not help making a treasure of it – so I put it by never to be used and looked at it now and then as a great treat.[33]

The ability of a thing to evoke a memory or inspire the imagination can be highly personal and therefore unpredictable, like Harriet's plaster, or can come from a category of common emotional things. Consequently no single source provides an answer to questions about linen's emotional status. The chapter aims to open up the issue of linen's emotional potency through multiple sources: novels, a plebeian autobiography, a pawnbroker's pledge book, wills and Foundling Hospital billet books (see Chapter 1). Sources are grouped into case studies in order to effectively negotiate commodity and emotional attitudes to flaxen underwear, sheets and table linens at times of transition.[34] The example set by the deeply poignant Derwentwater sheet is undercut by representations of the commodity status of linen in novels and a plebeian autobiography, while a pawnbroker's book and wills show more emotional ambiguities. Finally the chapter returns to extant textiles via the Foundling billet books which reveal that emotional associations with linen were not automatic.

## Literary Linens

Textual sources indicate a less sentimental and more blasé attitude towards linen than the Derwentwater sheet. Linen's intimate relationship with the body did not inevitably lead every sheet or shirt to be an item of emotional significance. Tobias Smollett used the quality and quantity of shirts owned by Roderick Random to reveal his fortunes in the eponymous novel. Random's dialogue does not indicate sentimental causes for his refusal to sell his shirts, which are instead presented as an unemotional commodity.[35] After an emotional reunion with his friend Thompson, whom Random believed dead, the latter gave Random

> half a dozen fine shirts and as many linnen waistcoats and caps, with twelve pair of new thread-stockings. – Being thus provided with money and all necessaries

[33] Jane Austen, *Emma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 366-67.
[34] Sara Pennell, 'Home-making in Premodern England', 'Studies of Home' seminar, 7 March 2012, <http://www.history.ac.uk/podcasts/studies-home/home-making-pre-modern-england> [accessed 16/06/2014].
[35] Smollett, *Roderick Random*, p. 83.

> for the comfort of life, I began to look upon myself as a gentleman of some consequence and felt my pride dilate apace [...] I went ashore and having purchased a laced waistcoat, with some other cloaths, at a vendue, made a swaggering figure.[36]

Linen is presented as a necessity and the basis of his fortune. Fine linen allows Random to enact the gentlemen, his birth status. When this same linen is stolen soon after the gift, a moment of passing on, the loss is presented as a set-back in Roderick's attempts to amend his ill-fortune. It necessitates a future outlay of money and an accompanying reduction in the quality of his linen due to cost, equating to a reduction in status. Random was robbed by fellow sailors and was left 'alone in a desolate place, stript of my cloaths, money, watch, buckles and every thing but my shoes, stockings, breeches and a shirt. – What a discovery must this be to me, who but an hour before, was worth sixty guineas in cash!'[37] There is no expression of regret or allusion to Thompson; Random focuses solely on the loss of his wealth.

Similar stories, vocabularies and a lack of emotional attachment to linen appear in the autobiography of the plebeian William Hutton. Styles suggests that clothing in autobiographies is used to denote 'maturity and achievement, or [...] struggle and failure'.[38] Pride and self-respect (or self-importance) associated with clothing were expressed both by Random and by William Hutton who was later involved in the book and paper trade in Birmingham. It marked their successful advance beyond decent necessities to attractive garments that proclaimed higher status. Once Hutton had purchased his first hard-won suit 'the girls eyed me with some attention; nay, I eyed myself as much as any of them'. When Hutton ran away from his stocking-knitting apprenticeship his two bundles of possessions were stolen including his best suit, wig and one shirt. Hutton's focus in his autobiography is on the loss of the suit; there is no emotional outpouring at the loss of his linen, surprising given that it left him with only one shirt, a sign of desperate poverty, although he probably received replacement underwear on his return to his uncle a few days later. Hutton and Random were the victims of clothing thefts which set back their fortunes, though the material impact of Hutton's loss of clothing lasted far longer. It took him five years to save enough money to 'reassume my former appearance', thus emphasising the

[36] Ibid., p. 206.
[37] Ibid., p. 210.
[38] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 57.

**Table 6.1, Types of goods pawned with George Fettes, York, 1777-1778**

| | Number of entries | Percentage of total (n=10,906) |
|---|---|---|
| Adult wear | 6787 | 62 |
| Child wear | 628 | 6 |
| Hats and shoes | 900 | 8 |
| Handkerchiefs | 1312 | 12 |
| Household | 2588 | 24 |
| Jewellery | 644 | 6 |
| Other | 34 | 3 |

Source: YCA, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, 1777-1778.
The household category includes lengths of cloth. Several items can appear in a single entry, therefore the total number of entries and percentage of entries is higher than 10,906 and 100 per cent.

importance of clothing to plebeians. It both signified their respectability and represented a significant outlay of money that could equate to several years' work.[39] Moreover it was an outlay that could be turned back into ready cash when necessary by pawning.

## Pawning Linen

The necessity status of linen meant that while it was used by all, linen was rarely passed-on through pawning apart from in absolute desperation, which is illustrated by George Fettes's pledge book (see Chapter 4). Table 6.1 shows a breakdown of major categories of pawned goods. The vast majority of items were dress, accessories and textiles. Household goods included textiles and other materials, for example, silver spoons and fire irons were common. Although the fibre used for the shirts, shifts and sheets is rarely listed, it is reasonable to infer that most of these items were linen because Styles has shown that, due to linen's greater durability, cotton only became dominant for shirts and shifts from the 1820s. Linen certainly remained the textile of choice for institutional provisioning throughout the eighteenth century (see Chapter 2).[40] Durability would have influenced the choice of textile for underwear in plebeian households in 1770s York.[41]

[39] William Hutton, *The Life of William Hutton* (London, 1816), pp. 31, 35, 38, 49-50; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 57-58.
[40] Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 127-132.
[41] Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', pp. 68, 72-73; Tomkins, 'Pawnbroking', pp. 182-83.

**Table 6.2, Frequency of appearance of selected items of adults' clothing in Fettes' pledge book, 1777-1778**

| Clothing | Number of entries in which item appears | Percentage of entries (n=10,906) |
|---|---|---|
| Gown | 1808 | 17 |
| Apron | 1370 | 13 |
| Handkerchiefs | 1312 | 12 |
| Waistcoat | 722 | 7 |
| Cloak | 613 | 6 |
| Petticoat | 505 | 5 |
| Breeches | 479 | 4 |
| Shirt | 436 | 4 |
| Coat | 323 | 3 |
| Shift | 200 | 2 |

Source: YCA, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, 1777-1778.

Pawning possessions meant balancing the monetary worth, necessity status, emotional and social roles of the goods. At a non-specialised, provincial pawnbroker, like Fettes, textiles were the objects most often pawned. Clothing was portable and everyone owned it. Clothing expenditure made up a major proportion of disposable income and garments had an inherent value from an unworn gown to a tattered shirt because nothing was wasted. Therefore garments were attractive items to convert into money. As table 6.2 indicates, it was easier to get by without an additional gown for a few days than a change of underwear, the marker of cleanliness. This explains why adult women's gowns accounted for 17 per cent of pawned items compared to shifts at only 4 per cent.[42] Furthermore as discussed in Chapter 4, plebeian men owned double the number of items of body linen owned by plebeian women. If a married woman only owned one shift, she could not pawn it; it was the most basic necessity of her wardrobe.

While the emotional potency of a specific shirt or shift was, therefore, not the primary reason for the relatively low rates of pawning body linen, there were emotional consequences to the act of pawning. The association of the cleanliness of linen with personal decency and respectability (see Chapter 4) had emotional consequences. Mulligan and Scherer state that 'the existence and reinforcement of [... social] norms depends on the emotional reactions of group members to behaviour that both

[42] The categories of clothing chosen are those spelt consistently; original spelling was used in the database and fuzzy searching was not possible. Search terms used after checking which terms would capture the most accurate numbers, for table 6.2 were gown, apron,
" coat ", shirt, shift, wais, cloak, pet, bre.

**Table 6.3, Average prices of garments for adults from Fettes' pledge book (pence)**

| | Median price | Mean price | Price range | Number of entries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Silk gown | 60 | 72 | 12-420 | 122 |
| Cotton gown | 48 | 55 | 4-186 | 362 |
| Linen gown | 39 | 54 | 12-1200 | 151 |
| Breeches | 24 | 39 | 4-378 | 275 |
| Shirt | 20 | 20 | 5-96 | 265 |
| Handkerchief | 12 | 13 | 2-72 | 579 |
| Shift | 12 | 13 | 3-72 | 101 |
| Apron | 12 | 12 | 3-84 | 792 |

Source: YCA, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, 1777-1778.

Only entries with single garment types are used. This may lead to a bias towards higher pawn values.

violates and conforms to norms'. This suggests that pride in appearance or shame in its decline and the corresponding potential for dirty linen to disgust others meant that the decision to pawn linen had emotional implications, making it especially challenging for women to pawn their only shift.[43] These were universal emotional meanings rather than specific personal ones. Implicitly, shame governed Amelia Booth's decision in Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (1751) to redeem pawned linen due to her 'Incapacity to undertake a Journey [...] without even a clean shift' and for it to be 'barely possible for them to go out of Town with any kind of Decency' without their pawned body linen.[44] Fielding and Smollett used the pawning of linen as a signifier of the desperate decline of a character's fortunes. The Booth family's complete destitution is signalled when Amelia pawns their linens. Her return to the pawnshop marks an early step in her financial redemption, as she soon regains the fortune fraudulently kept from her.[45] Similarly, when Roderick Random pawned all his outer clothing apart from one suit, he retained six shirts, which suggests they made a greater contribution to his emotional wellbeing than a change of coat or breeches.[46] The transformative effect of linen was recorded by Mary Wollstonecraft who noted that 'A dish of coffee and fresh linen, recruited my spirits' when travelling in Scandinavia in 1795.[47]

[43] Mulligan and Scherer, 'Toward a Working Definition of Emotion', p. 350.
[44] Henry Fielding, *Amelia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. xv, 505.
[45] Ibid., pp. 516-17, 523-25, 529.
[46] Smollett, *Roderick Random*, pp. 30, 83, 115, 130.
[47] Mary Wollstonecraft, 'Letter', 1795, in *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (Wilmington, DE: J. Wilson and Son, 1796) p. 55.

**Table 6.4, Time taken to redeem items from Fettes, York, 1777-1778**

| | Same day | 1-7 days | 8-28 days | 29+ days | Never | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gown | 32 | 382 | 385 | 646 | 321 | 41 |
| (n=1808) | 2% | 21% | 21% | 36% | 18% | 2% |
| Apron | 26 | 338 | 316 | 405 | 253 | 32 |
| (n=1370) | 2% | 25% | 23% | 30% | 18% | 2% |
| Breeches | 7 | 200 | 79 | 113 | 67 | 13 |
| (n=475) | 1% | 42% | 17% | 23% | 14% | 3% |
| Shirt | 13 | 179 | 91 | 82 | 54 | 17 |
| (n=436) | 3% | 41% | 21% | 19% | 12% | 4% |
| Shift | 5 | 45 | 44 | 57 | 42 | 7 |
| (n=200) | 2% | 23% | 22% | 28% | 21% | 4% |

Source: YCA, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, 1777-1778. Wherever the page was noted as torn the redemption time was unknown, was recorded as 'unknown'.

Value was not the sole determinant of goods pawned, as tables 6.2 and 6.3 show.[48] Gowns were pawned most frequently because they had the highest values, with median values of 39d. to 60d. depending on the fibre. Aprons and handkerchiefs were the next most frequently pawned items, appearing in 13 and 12 per cent of entries. However they were only worth 12d. on average which is the same as shifts and less than the average valuation of 24d. for breeches or 20d. for shirts. Although there was no simple hierarchy of valuations, price did have an influence. Shirts and breeches had similar median values and both appeared in 4 per cent of entries.

Three-quarters of the pledges made with Fettes were made by women, so it is not surprising that more women's goods were pawned than men's (table 6.2).[49] However, there were also gender differences in retrieval rates. Men's items were typically retrieved more quickly than women's. Table 6.4 shows that 44 per cent of shirts were retrieved within a week as were 43 per cent of breeches which sharply contrasts with 26 per cent of shifts, 23 per cent of gowns and 27 per cent of aprons. Alison Backhouse and Allanah Tomkins agree that a quarter of all pledges were redeemed within a week and Tomkins states that another quarter were collected

[48] The table includes incomplete or 'unmade' shirts and shifts and the bodies of these, but not the sleeves due to the higher value of the bodies. A reference to a pair of shirts is not included, because the quantity is unclear. It excludes any shirts made of other mentioned materials (one cotton, one silk). Mixed fibre gowns were excluded, as were part gowns.
[49] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 163.

**Table 6.5, Items pawned by Mrs Riley of North Street, York 1777-1778**

| | Number of items by material | Percentage of total items |
|---|---|---|
| Plain linen | 75 | 58 |
| Cotton | 11 | 8 |
| Wool | 5 | 4 |
| Silk | 1 | 1 |
| Leather | 1 | 1 |
| Uncertain | 33 | 25 |
| Non-textile | 4 | 3 |
| Total | **130** | **100** |

Source: YCA, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, 1777-1778.

Uncertain includes textiles that could have mixed content such as check. Shirts and sheets were assumed to be linen.

**Table 6.6 Plain linens pawned by Mrs Riley**

| Items made from plain linen | Number of times pawned |
|---|---|
| Shirt | 57 |
| Sheet | 8 |
| Napkin | 3 |
| Cloth | 1 |
| Towel | 1 |

Source: YCA, Accession 38, Pledge Book of George Fettes, 1777-1778.

within a month: shirts and breeches were retrieved disproportionately quickly in the first week whereas gowns, shifts and aprons were close to the average. After a month, aprons matched the average, shifts were close at 47 per cent, gowns were 6 per cent under while breeches were 10 per cent over and shirts were 15 per cent over. Similar levels of shirts and breeches were not redeemed and gowns and aprons were only 4 per cent higher, however there was a big gap between shirts and shifts never redeemed, with 9 per cent more shifts never collected.[50] These figures are more remarkable when it is considered that the majority of labouring men owned twice as much underwear as their wives as well as more changes of clothing in general yet their clothes were still retrieved more quickly than women's. This is most likely to reflect perceived differences in necessity. If as David Davies estimated for Berkshire in 1787, a woman typically had two aprons, or a second gown, these items nevertheless remained less essential than her shift to the daily functioning of

[50] Backhouse, *Worm-Eaten Waistcoat*, p. 49; Tomkins, 'Pawnbroking', pp. 177-78. Redemption information was recorded less frequently at the end of the volume.

commercial and reproductive work within the home.[51] The low rates of pawning for underwear probably arose from a combination of low pledge values, utility and the emotional consequences of lacking a change of underwear.

Mrs Riley of North Street presents an exception to the rule. She was one of Fettes' most frequent clients, pawning items on 116 occasions, amounting to one per cent of entries between 27 June 1777 and 16 December 1778. Textiles constituted 97 per cent of her pledges. Table 6.5 shows that she pawned plain linens most frequently. Single shirts were pawned 57 times (table 6.6), constituting 43 per cent of items pawned by Mrs Riley. The highest quantity of shirts she pawned on one day was four on 18 October 1777. However, Riley's pawning activities were not limited to shirts. She pawned at least four different gowns over the period, an 'old Stuffe Gown all Ript in pieces' and gowns made from linen, cotton and silk. Her decision to pawn shirts so much more frequently than gowns shows that it cannot be assumed that linens were always the last items to be pawned. While Riley pawned a large number of shirts, she only pawned only one other item of male clothing – a pair of dimity breeches. She pawned no women's shifts, yet she pledged gowns fifteen times, aprons on twenty-seven occasions, adult's petticoats five times, a child's petticoat once and a pair of stays twice. Riley's reason for pawning men's underwear rather than gowns might have been that she worked as a washerwoman, or the shirts belonged to an absent male family member.

Pawning reveals the tensions between the need for money and the potential emotional and practical consequences of the short or long term absence of a possession. Underwear was pawned at much lower rates than other types of clothing. This reflects the emotions of pride and shame implicated in the cleanliness of underwear and the fact that many of Fettes' female customers might only have owned one shift. However, insofar as Fettes' customers' choices were motivated by emotion, it was the emotional consequences of transgressing social norms, rather than the private emotional associations of specific objects. Bodies touched shirts and shifts, soiling them and creating the need for a change of linen. Yet it was not the touch of a specific body that endowed each pawned object with its emotional associations. It was the cultural and social implications of bodies touching underwear

[51] Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 222.

that triggered emotions of shame or pride around pawned underwear, not personal emotional meanings giving rise to private reflections.

## Wills: Passing On After Death

Wills have the potential to reveal the emotional potency of objects through personalised bequests unlike their companion documents, inventories and probate accounts which commoditised possessions. Whether bequests were motivated by love or practicality, the need to specify the object in the will indicates the emotional impact of the loss of the item, with potential distress or anger at the item being given to someone else or sold to cover the deceased's debts. Miller's argument that the investment of time is an emotional act informs an emotional interpretation of Amy Erickson's discovery that widows and single women left clothing more frequently in their wills than men.[52] The greater importance placed on textiles in women's wills is likely to relate to female domestic responsibilities, with the majority of women arranging the making, mending and washing of linens.[53] The use of wills by men and women to express love or friendship allows identification of objects of emotional value, tempered by awareness that perceptions of duty also motivated bequests, as illustrated by customary gifting of clothing in some circles to servants during the lifetime of the employer and after their death.[54]

A sample of 167 Yorkshire wills reveals predominantly unsentimental attitudes to linen. The sample is taken from the Deaneries of Ainsty, Cleveland and Pontefract for the years of probate 1709 to 1711 and 1780 to 1782.[55] Only a minority of the wills mentioned linen and most listed it in a summary sentence of goods and chattels. While linens nominated in this way may still have been emotionally potent they were not protected from sale to pay debts, indicating that pragmatism was the primary consideration in their disposal. Bequests of specific possessions were made in 53 out of 167 wills. Erickson has indicated a higher presence of linen and hemp in wills from Sussex than Yorkshire. No conclusions about gender differences can be drawn

[52] Miller, *A Theory of Shopping*, pp. 2-13.
[53] Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 216; Erickson, email correspondence, 16 August 2013.
[54] Anne Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1979), pp. 108, 110, 112-16; Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 222; Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 278-79, 288-89; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 143-45, 183-84, 194.
[55] My thanks to Amanda Vickery for sharing the wills and Hannah Greig for collecting them.

due to the low number of wills that name specific linen items in the Yorkshire sample. Erickson has, however, found that in the 1680s wills from her samples of the deaneries of Rydall and Harthill, Yorkshire, only one man out of fifty specified linen.[56] Specific linen items were only mentioned in 5 out of the 53 Yorkshire wills analysed in this chapter. Two show no emotional attachment to objects; the pair of sheets that the Pontefract innkeeper Robert Moore left to his wife in his 1709 will and the 'Wearing Apparil Shirts & Shoes &c.' unsentimentally left by the dry salter Thomas Rayner of Cleckheaton with the instruction for his legatee 'to be disposed of by him at his pleasure'.[57] The other three entries indicate a potential mixture of emotional attachment and financial awareness. Beatrice Prest, spinster from Yarm, left her nieces 'all my best Linnen to be equally divided betwixt them' in 1710.[58] Elizabeth Wright, widow, of Kirkby Overblow left 'my best linin table Cloth' to Elizabeth Easterby, a relation of her sister in her 1711 will.[59] Anne Parker a widow from Pontefract left her niece Anne Bee her linen and other necessities; 'the Bed wherein I Lye with all the bedding and furniture thereto belonging and also two pair of Sheets and all my plain napkins with a Huckaback napkin and a plain Tablecloth' along with money for Bee and her children, initialled pewter dishes and clothes in her 1709 will.[60] The naming of specific possessions and the best of the table linen by Prest and Wright imply a combination of setting up relatives with an adequate supply of linen and the best household linen as a family legacy.

There are indications that locality impacted on the language of wills, expression of attitudes to linen, or its emotional significance.[61] A sample of eighteen Folkestone fishermen's wills show a higher proportion of emotional expressions towards linen.[62]

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[56] Thanks also to Amy Erickson, who kindly shared her expertise and looked through will samples, identifying patterns in linen bequests for me. Erickson, email correspondence, 12 August 2013 and 16 August 2013; Borthwick Institute, uncatalogued, Richard Mudd, (Pocklington), December 1683, Richard Mudd.

[57] University of York, Borthwick Institute for Archives, uncatalogued, Pontefract, October 1710, Robert Moore; Pontefract, December 1780, Thomas Rayner.

[58] Borthwick Institute, uncatalogued, Cleveland, March 1710, Beatrice Prest.

[59] Borthwick Institute, uncatalogued, Ainsty, November 1711, Elizabeth Wright.

[60] Borthwick Institute, uncatalogued, Pontefract, March 1710, Anne Parker.

[61] Erickson, email correspondence, 16 August 2013.

[62] Wills were collected for Dolan, 'The Decline of the Multifunctional Hall?'. Canterbury Cathedral Archives (CCA), CCA-DCB-PRC/17/73/46, May 1670, Thomas Hall; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/77/40a, June 1687, William Marsh; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/77/40b, June 1687, Robert Marsh; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/79/89a, May 1696, Sarah Squire; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/80/400b, March 1706, Leonard Minter; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/81/132, April 1708, Roger Harvey; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/81/436, July 1711, Bartholemew Minter; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/82/274, March 1714, Thomas Gittens; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/83/29e, August 1715 Leonard Minter; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/84/50c, April 1725, John/Ann

The fisherman William Godden from Folkestone, Kent left his 'most dearly beloved son Stephen Godden two pair of my sheets to him to keep in Remembrance of his late mother' in 1720.[63] The sentimental value of the sheets is clearly expressed, the text enshrined the significance of the sheets, attempting to ensure longevity of memory.[64] The sheets embodied work as an emotional act. Another fisherman indicates an alternative emotional attitude to linen, its value as an investment of time. Thomas Gittens left 'Three pair of Good homemade sheets' to his daughter Elizabeth Gittens in his 1714 will.[65] His inventory included a spinning wheel as well as fourteen pairs of homemade sheets and one other pair of sheets. The remaining linen in the inventory, twelve or fifteen pairs of sheets depending on the exclusion or inclusion of Elizabeth's legacy, eight pillow bears, six coarse napkins and six small table cloths were left to her mother until the latter's remarriage or death.[66] It seems likely that Elizabeth, the only daughter, was being rewarded for her contribution in spinning linen yarn for the sheets.

Within the samples studied, pragmatic and financial concerns largely trumped any emotional attachments to linen although a few wills from Yorkshire and Folkestone prioritised emotional attachments. The higher frequency with which linen was mentioned in the Folkestone wills suggests that there may have been regional differences in attitudes or in expressions of the emotional value of linen. Major regional studies of gifting linen in wills are therefore needed to draw broader conclusions. Changes in the form of wills during the seventeenth century may also have affected results, with more specific bequests left in Yorkshire wills in the 1640s than the 1680s.[67] Comparison between villages in different counties would be a necessary component because significant differences in domestic material culture have been revealed between towns and villages within the same county.[68] The

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Squire; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/85/39g, October 1720, William Godden; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/86/33g, August 1726; Thomas Hall; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/88/20a, November 1729, John Wellard; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/90/30c, May 1736, Edward Pope; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/91/27b, September 1738, Elizabeth Kennett; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/91/49a, June 1740, George Stanner; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/92/71i, April 1745, John Middlemas; CCA-DCB-PRC/17/92/74a, November 1742, John Morfoot.

[63] CCA-DCb-PRC/17/85/39g, October 1720, William Godden.

[64] Donald A. Norman, *Emotional Design* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), p. 52.

[65] CCA/PRC/17/82/274, March 1714, Thomas Gittens.

[66] Kent History and Library Centre (KHLC), CKS/PRC11/72/49, April 1714, Thomas Gittens.

[67] Erickson, email correspondence, 16 August 2013.

[68] For example, Dolan, 'Decline of the Multifunctional Hall?'; Peter King, 'Pauper Inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in *Chronicling Poverty*, ed. by Tim Hitchcock, King and Pamela Sharpe (London: Macmillan, 1997), 155-191 (p. 179).

changing significance of linen needs to be explored from the mid seventeenth century when linen constituted a higher proportion of household wealth in order to reveal the effect of changing commodity values (see Introduction).

## Memorialisation through Objects

Texts can only reveal part of the emotional meanings of linens; the objects are crucial. As the Derwentwater sheet has already shown, some linens were imbued with deeply-held emotions and meanings that remain resonant today. Identifying extant emotional objects is the major challenge. The story or memory behind the emotion has to be known to understand an objects' emotional importance. Specific conditions are needed: they need to actively tell their own stories, survive with manuscripts, context or provenance. Our understanding of sentimental linens is reliant on the expression of these emotions by those who found them emotionally potent. The plain sheets that William Godden left his son 'to keep in Remembrance of his late mother' would be unidentifiable now.[69] Unless the object declares its story or its provenance is reliably recorded, we cannot understand the emotional value, if any, that it had for past owners.

The twenty-first century poignancy of the eighteenth-century textiles contained in the Foundling Hospital billet books relies on the story of their collection rather than their previous bodily intimacy. The tokens are material markers of an event, a parent giving their child away to the Hospital. The baby and its clothing were 'passed-on' to the Hospital. Figure 1.1 shows a single billet. Tokens were left to enable identification if the parent returned to retrieve the child. The Foundling tokens evoke stories but it is not possible to read the emotional dynamics of every story through the textiles. They are emotional objects to us, but were they emotional to the clerk who completed the billet with the baby in sight? Did every child's parents feel that the textile scrap was an object of emotional potency or was it emotionally neutral?

A systematic review of four volumes of the billet books containing the records of 397 children reveals the rarity of identifiable emotional tokens. A distinction needs to be made between textiles left as tokens and those cut off by clerks or nurses for administrative purposes, though both served the same purpose – identification of the

[69] CCA-DCB-PRC/17/85/39g, October 1720, William Godden will.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.5, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13348, silk ribbon, with a cotton and linen mix check. 'William Layde July 5th 1759' is written on the ribbon in ink.** The ribbon is emotionally charged because it records the child's name and date of birth, clearly signifying love for the child.

**Figure 6.6, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14450, named John by his parents. Wool cloth embroidered with an 'S' in running stitch.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.7, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14474, named John Yong by his parents. Paper card and printed linen.**

**Figure 6.8, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14442, named Sarah by her parents. Printed linen.**

Figures 6.5 to 6.8 © Coram

child. The clothing list was rarely completed when a letter or token was left with the baby, therefore this is a key way to identify whether a textile was intentionally left as a token. Two hundred and ninety billets contained textile swatches. There were 114 linen swatches, compared to 11 pure cottons and 154 cotton-linens, 49 silks (mainly ribbons), 7 with mixed silk content, 8 wool and 10 mixed with wool content textiles (sometimes more than one swatch was left with a child). Linen therefore made up a substantial proportion of the swatches left whether in pure or mixed textiles.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.9, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13313, name unknown. Printed linen.**

**Figure 6.10, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13373, name unknown. Printed cotton-linen. '1 Dimety Gown cuffed with Flowered Cotten'.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.11, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13367, name unknown. Printed cotton-linen. '1 Gown Flowered Cotten'.**

Figures 6.9 to 6.12 © Coram

**Figure 6.12, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13395, name unknown. Printed cotton-linen with red and white striped linsey-woolsey. '1 Striped Linsey Gown Cuffed with flowered Cotten'.**

However, emotional potency was most likely to be expressed through printed textiles which could represent symbolic meanings. Pure linens and cotton-linens could be printed. As a result it cannot be argued that linens had greater emotional potency in this context than cottons because linens and cotton-linens fulfilled the same functions.

Only ten children had items left with them that were recorded as tokens which included a ribbon (figure 6.5), coins or medals, a penknife handle and a letter.[70] Seven billets recorded that the child's clothing was marked, one example is shown in

[70] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundlings 12359, 12374, 12386; A/FH/A/09/001/148, (Admission numbers 13300-13397), July 1759, Foundlings 13335, 13348; A/FH/A/09/001/159, (Admission numbers 14400-14499), (Admission numbers 14400-14499), November 1759, Foundlings 14465, 14467, 14468; A/FH/A/09/001/171, (Admission numbers 15600-15699), Foundlings 15624 15690.

figure 6.6.[71] The four of hearts playing card in figure 6.7 was left as a symbolic token for John Yong. Six and ten of hearts cards were left with two other children.[72] Holloway and Styles have convincingly drawn out the potent meanings of printed textiles left with Foundlings.[73] Within the billet books examined, only two children were left with a potentially symbolic printed image, judged to be those pieces with a specific image clearly cut out. The best example is shown in figure 6.8 because Sarah's parent/s also tried to leave half a guinea as a 'present' for their daughter which was returned.[74] However, 133 textiles were printed with flowers or foliage designs (figures 6.9 to 6.12) and 15 textiles had shelled designs. Floral and shelled designs were popular with the Foundling mothers (Chapter 1). Overall, 20 children had identifiable tokens left with them; 186 of their peers did not.[75] Seventy-four children's billets contain textiles but no identifiable emotional token and had no description of clothing: as a result they could therefore be interpreted as emotional because they were the only means of identifying the child. However 160 billets contained scraps of textile which were hemmed, indicating that they were not treasured tokens left with the babies but were cut off the clothing like other swatches with corresponding descriptions by clerks.

A common form of identification left with the children was a letter or piece of paper which might list their name, date of birth, parents, parish, whether they were christened and sometimes a message. These paper tokens were left with 244 of the 397 children in the sample. Styles argues that the recording of a child's name is the best evidence of maternal attachment within the billets because many mothers must have known that the children would be given new names and as a result they were not attempting to meet perceived 'institutional expectations'.[76] There is evidence of intentionality from the mothers, one dictated or wrote 'tis humbly requested that this

[71] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundlings 12399, 12340.
A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundlings 13313, 13380; A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundlings 14402, 14450, 14495.
[72] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundling 12430; A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14474;
A/FH/A/09/001/171, Foundling 15683.
[73] Forthcoming, Sally Holloway, 'Materialising Maternal Emotions: Birth, Renunciation and the Foundling Hospital Textiles c. 1680-1830', in Stephanie Downes, Holloway & Sarah Randles (ed.) *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions Through History*; Styles, 'Objects and Emotions'.
[74] A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundling 12354; A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14442.
[75] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/138, Foundlings 12354, 12359, 12375, 12386, 12390, 12430;
A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundlings 13335, 13342, 13348, 13388; A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundlings 14442, 14447, 14465, 14467, 14468, 14474; A/FH/A/09/001/171, Foundlings 15624, 15630, 15683, 15690.
[76] Styles, 'Objects and Emotions'.

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.13, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13358, name unknown appears to be a cotton-linen check.**

**Figure 6.14, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14458, name obscured by textile, cotton-linen check.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.15, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13387, name unknown, linen check. '1 Gown Striped and Check'.**

**Figure 6.16, LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13379, name unknown, cotton-linen check. '1 Gown Check'.**

[images removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 6.17 LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14404, name unknown, cotton-linen check. '1 Gown Blew and white checkt'.**

**Figure 6.18, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14463, name unknown. Linen check. '1 Gown Blew checkt'.**

note be kept as a token if the unhappy Mother shou'd ever be enabled to call for her Child again'.[77] Another requested through an intermediary, 'Pray Remember the Name as it will be taken out again'.[78]

Checked textiles reveal the perceived necessity of a combination of textile and text for identification. Checks were left with sixty-six children. While there was some variety (figures 6.13 to 6.18), checks were not ideal textiles for identification due to their fundamentally similar design, colour palette and their widespread use by plebeian women. Therefore another textile, a paper token or a description of the child's clothing on the printed billet form was also necessary. Garments were not listed for the thirty-eight children left with checks and paper tokens. Conversely, clothing was listed for 26 out of 29 children left with a check but no paper token. Unsurprisingly a child's name was considered a superior form of identification.

The potential hidden emotional meanings of the textiles in the billet books are myriad. The only emotional act available to financially stretched parents may have been in their choice of clothing for their babies; whether second-hand or using a family member's clothing to maintain family connections. Alternatively, purchasing a printed cotton or linen with a slightly more expensive design, perhaps with two colours instead of one, could have been emotional acts for some parents. For some the very event of presenting their child to the Hospital in a decent outfit must have been an act of emotional importance. The existence and frequency of these acts are obscured by the billet books, thus individual emotional stories or absence of these stories is unknown for the majority of the Foundlings and their textiles. As Styles suggests, it is to ribbons that we must turn for the largest group of emotionally potent textiles. Forty per cent of the textiles in the billet books are ribbons. Not only did the wide variety of designs and colours make them appropriate for their role as identifiers and enable parents to express agency and identity through choice of design, but ribbons were also 'universally recognized symbols of love, especially in circumstances of separation and loss'.[79]

The Foundling billet books show that linen was not inherently more emotional than other materials. Bodily intimacy was not the primary creator of emotional significance

[77] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/159, Foundling 14468.
[78] LMA, A/FH/A/09/001/148, Foundling 13331.
[79] Holloway, 'Romantic Love', pp. 64-69; Styles, 'Objects and Emotions'.

for these textiles. Instead, it was the emotional expression that the textiles allowed, love and hope for the child's future. As a result the fibre type did not create the meaning. Instead it was the decoration, colouring or marking of the textile, ribbon, paper or other tokens, hence linen was not the most emotional textile or material in the billet books but simply a medium for carrying a message and linen was used comparatively rarely to carry this message.

## Conclusion

Overall, the case studies have emphasised that emotional associations were just one aspect of relationships between people and linens and were not always a primary concern. In moments of transition in linen life cycles, at times of theft, pawning and death, the economic value of linen tended to outweigh any emotional associations. Smollett's *Roderick Random* and William Hutton's autobiography refer to linen and its loss in purely economic terms. Pawning shirts and shifts was often the last resort, reflecting a calculus that included utility, commodity value and emotional implications, yet shirts and shifts were still pawned. The majority of wills examined, prioritised pragmatic and financial concerns in the disposal of linen over emotional potency.

Linen's constant bodily intimacy did not make it more emotionally potent than other textiles, as the Foundling billet books which mark the passing on of infants and things have shown. Within the billet books it was in another form that linen best expressed emotional potency, as rags used to make paper, paper which carried the prime identifier and fleeting expression of a parent's life with their baby, their child's name in words. However, bodily intimacy did contribute to emotional meanings in certain circumstances. There were potential public emotional consequences to underwear soiled by the body. Furthermore a small number of objects can be traced that were given meaning by the touch of their makers and users. The Derwentwater sheet and the sheets left to by the fisherman William Godden to his son Stephen, are an object and a bequest with continued emotional power hundreds of years later. In conclusion, emotion was not one of the main causes for the continuing use of linen during the long eighteenth century. It was not more emotionally potent than other textiles. Cotton could easily have replaced it in its emotional roles, public and private.

The material properties of linen combined with its price were far more influential in its continued use than its capacity to embody emotion.

## Chapter 7. 'At first nothing could be more shocking': The Impact of the 1678 Act for Burying in Woollen

In 1666 'An Act for Burying in Wool Onely' was passed to promote the English woollen trade and reduce English linen imports and coinage exports.[1] The Act's benefits were solely economic. Forced burial in woollen was a religious and cultural shock. Bernard Mandeville, author of the *Fable of the Bees*, wrote that those alive in 1678 'must remember the general Clamour that was made against it: At first nothing could be more shocking to Thousands of People than that they were to be Buried in Woollen'.[2] Jesus Christ was buried in linen, therefore it was a biblical tradition and a centuries old burial practice. This chapter examines why the shocking idea of burial in wool became widely accepted. Acceptance was not immediate, twelve years later the Act was reintroduced as 'An Act for Burying in Woollen' with stringent enforcement measures to ensure adherence which led to a swift change of practice.

Alan Hunt considers the Acts for Burying in Woollen to be direct descendants of sumptuary law, stating that practices such as import substitution emerged when economic and morality discourses separated and the moral regulation of luxury was abandoned as state building became the major national priority. His chronology is not convincing. There was substantial debate about whether luxurious consumption was morally degrading or economically beneficial in the first few decades of the eighteenth century, more than a century after the repeal of all English sumptuary legislation in 1604.[3] Import substitution which was introduced through the Acts also differed from earlier Italian sumptuary legislation which aimed to prevent luxury consumption in 'excess or for the wrong purposes', to keep capital in cities and to demarcate social status.[4] The Acts for Burying in Woollen only matched one of these criteria, economic protection, to keep capital in Britain. This was to be achieved through deploying import substitution to promote the consumption of English woollens. Little linen was produced commercially in England in the seventeenth

[1] 18&19.Car.II c.4, 'An Act for Burying in Woollen Onely'.
[2] Bernard Mandeville*, The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, 2nd edn (London, 1723), p. 378.
[3] Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 28-29, 33, 41, 295-324, 357-66.
[4] Catherine Koveski Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 161-63.

century and it was the second largest English import, after groceries.[5] Linen was therefore a key target to be replaced with English products. The reintroduction of the Act in 1678 with new detailed enforcement instructions matched other government measures against linen imports in the same year. Prohibition of trade with France was particularly directed at linens and luxury wines. A third of the linen used in England came from France, so these two actions together had a significant effect on the supply and use of flaxen cloth.[6]

The main practical implication of the Act was that domestic linens could no longer be used for winding sheets. People were required to buy new woollen goods to bury their dead but little is known about the mass-manufacturing of woollen burial textiles that the Act is supposed to have stimulated.[7] In the late seventeenth century, people were buried in a winding sheet tied at the top and bottom to hold the body in place. Julian Litten inadequately evidences the majority of burial textile trends that he identifies, however his short account is the most detailed work on the subject, therefore his overview is summarised here. Litten states that the winding sheet began a gradual decline and after 1700 an 'open-back long-sleeved shift with draw-strings at the wrist and neck, either with or without an integral hood' was widely used until 1775. These shifts were shaped with 'tacked ruching, or gathered pleats' along 'the length of the garment' which might have bows sewn on, but were still tied at the bottom. More convincingly, Litten revealed that examination of hundreds of coffins from Christchurch, Spitalfields from 1730 to 1860 (results published by R.C. Janaway), showed a change in how some undertakers dressed the dead, instead putting them in shirts or shifts and then using a sheet attached to the coffin to wrap the body as though they were in bed. These coffin sheets which often had punched or pinked decorative borders had mostly replaced winding sheets by 1780.[8]

After only twelve years, the 1666 Act was repealed and replaced with 'An Act for Burying in Woollen' enacted from 1 August 1678 which was necessary due to

[5] Harte, 'Rise of Protection', pp. 78-79.
[6] Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, pp. 142-43, 158.
[7] Phyllis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Costumes for Births, Marriages and Deaths* (London: A. and C. Black, 1972), pp. 161, 163; Julien Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1991), p. 74.
[8] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, pp. 71, 76-80; see R.C. Janaway, 'The Textiles' in *The Spitalfields Project, Volume 1: Across the Styx*, ed. by Jez Reeve and Max Adams (York: Council for British Archaeology, 1993) 93-119 (pp. 95, 105-119) for the archaeological report.

insufficient enforcement measures in the 1666 Act. The 1678 Act included a new justification, that it benefitted paper manufacture because burial in woollen meant that more linen rags were available for making paper. Both Acts prohibited burial in any fibre other than wool. The economic significance of the Acts was substantial. E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield estimated that there were 219,601 deaths in 1665, a major plague year and 124,979 in 1677; both were the years before the Acts were passed.[9] Working on the premise that winding sheets were typically household sheets and therefore needed two lengths of linen sewed together, at an average of 2.6 yards long, one sheet required 5.2 yards of linen.[10] People were also buried in a shirt or shift and a cap. Shirts and shifts required 3.5 yards of linen, totalling 8.7 yards per person. In total a maximum of 1,910,529 yards would have been saved from burial in 1665 if everyone obeyed the Act and 1,087,317 yards in 1677.[11] While it was unlikely that everyone would replace the buried sheet and shirt, the potential 'savings' were huge. If the 1,087,317 yards buried was replaced by new imports of Hamborough linen (chosen because it was cheap at 3s. an ell or 28.8d. a yard and thus more representative of the total population's textiles, see Appendix 1), the English would have 'profited' by 'saving' a maximum of £120,692 3s. 9d. in 1677 after the loss of the 7.5 per import duties.[12] These are maximum estimates because they assume that all buried linen was replaced by new Continental European imports rather than second-hand linen, linens made by families for domestic use, or no replacement at all. The 1666 and 1678 Acts instead channelled this money towards the English woollen trade. From the first full year of implementation in 1679 to 1695, the year before Ireland was allowed duty-free linen exports to England, the importation of up to 23,019,799.8 million yards was prevented, a national 'profit' of £2,555,197 15s. 7d. after subtracting income lost from import duties.

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[9] E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 548.

[10] This figure is based on averages of extant sheets from 1575 to c.1820 from the V&A T.16-2007 at 2.21m long and Metropolitan Museum 49.148.1 and 2 at 2.4m; 23.80.74b at 2.72m. Also from St Fagans, National Museum Wales, 51-410/42 at 2.38m; 36-191/25 at 2.68m; 50.4012 at 2.06m; 62-370 at 1.92m; 55.85/2 at 2.05m; F89.151 at 2.40m, which averages at 2.3m or 2.6 yards. This 5.2 yards is less than the 6 yards advocated in Adrienne D. Hood, 'The Material World of Cloth: Production and Use in Eighteenth-Century Rural Pennsylvania', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 53:1 (1996), 43-66 (p. 48).

[11] Hood, 'The Material World of Cloth', p. 48; Litten, *The English Way of Death*, pp. 71-72.

[12] *A Subsidy Granted to the King of Tonnage, & Poundage and other Sums of Money Payable upon Merchandize Exported and Imported. Together with a Book of RATES* (London, 1667), p. 82; Ormrod, *Rise of Commercial Empires*, p. 162.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

**Figure 7.1, Somerset Record Office, D/P/fitz/2/4/1, affidavit for Geoff Stephens, 1682**

Enforcement measures were wide ranging. Clergymen were to keep a register of the fibre in which people were buried based on a written affidavit from two witnesses sworn in front of a 'Magistrate or Officer' within eight days of burial. The witnesses swore

> That the said person was not putt in wrapt or wound up or buryed in any Shirt Shift Sheete or Shroud made or mingled with Flax Hempe Silke Haire Gold or Silver or other then what is made of Sheeps Wooll onely or in any Coffin lined or faced with any Cloath Stuffe or any other thing whatsoever made or mingled with Flax Hempe Silke Haire Gold or Silver or any other Materiall but Sheeps Wooll onely[13]

Affidavits (figure 7.1) were used to record witness statements and could be bought from stationers and bookshops.[14] Hand-written versions were also used. Sometimes

[13] 30.Car.II c.3, 'An Act for Burying in Woollen'.
[14] See examples in Bodleian Library, William Farlow, *William Farlow, Stationer, Next the Inner-Temple-Gate, in Mitre-Court, Fleet Street* (London, 1740); John Lenthall, *For the Improvement of the Agreeable Diversion of Card-Playing, There are Publish'd Twenty Six Entertaining Packs of Cards* (London, 1717); Somerset Record Office (SRO), D\P\fitz/2/4/1, Affidavits, 1710-1742 and D\P\fitz/2/4/2, Affidavit of Burial in Woollen, 1682; Euclid, *The Elements of Arthmetick in Three Books*

they were copied into burial registers, although in Henstridge, Somerset they quickly adopted a shorter version.[15] If an individual was buried in linen or the affidavit was not presented in time, a £5 fine was levied, raised through the distress and sale of goods owned by the deceased, 'or in default thereof' by the person in whose house they died, the person who dressed them in linen for burial, from the goods of their master or mistress, or, if they lived with their parents, from the latters' goods. This payment was to be made 'before any Statute Judgement Debt Legacy or any other Duty whatsover due oweing or payable from the said Deceased'. After sale of goods, the fine was divided between the informer and the poor of the parish.[16] The informer could be a family member, so the fine could be reduced to £2 10s. One undertaker's trade card even listed a charge of £2 10s. 'For Burying in Linnen' in 1770.[17] The ability of the family to redeem half of the fine was not guaranteed. William Marsh, rector of Lidford, Montacute, Somerset swore to the burial of Elizabeth Phillips and he received £2 10s.[18] In the Somerset parish of Cucklington, the informer was listed for ten out of eighteen linen burials. Only two of the deceased shared surnames with the informers, Mary Brickle and Dorothy Nichols who both died in 1685. No-one with the surname Watts was reported to have informed on any of the eleven Watts burials in linen (four had no informer listed at all). Ralph Newman informed on four linen burials between 1682 and 1716. The Newman family regularly took affidavits for burials, doing so on twenty occasions. Two other families, Cross and White also took the oath more than twenty times. The vast majority of oaths were made by women from the Cross and White families compared to a more equal gender spread in the Newman family. This implies that the families were involved in the burial process, with women of the White and Cross families possibly washing and dressing the dead body. On a few occasions these families signed oaths regarding the burial of their relatives in wool, but typically people with other surnames did so. In the neighbouring

(London, 1705), advertisement after p. 206; John Marshall, *Books Printed for John Marshall, at the Bible in Gracechurch Street* (London, 1717?, 1725, 1726); Sir William Scroggs, *The practice of Courts-Leet and Courts-Baron* (London, 1701), advertisement for John Deeve, not numbered; Litten, *The English Way of Death*, p. 74 lists some other examples of designs.

[15] SRO, D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials in Woollen, Henstridge, 1678-1758 see 1678-April 1679.

[16] 30.Car.II c.3, 'An Act for Burying in Woollen'.

[17] BM, Heal,124.74, Trade card for William Swanwick, undertaker, London, addressed to Mrs Harris, 14 November 1770; SRO, D\P\pit/2/4/2, Receipt for Burying Hannah Knight in Linen, 1681. Christina Hole, *The English Housewife in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953), p. 226.

[18] SRO, DD\PH/228/41, Order to Levy £5 Penalty on Edward Phelips for Burial in Linen of his Mother, 1751.

parish of Henstridge, only four of seven burials in linen had the informer's name listed. The surname of only one of these four matched the deceased's.[19]

The affidavit had to be made by or 'taken before' a Justice of the Peace or other local 'Cheife Officer' who could not charge for taking the oath.[20] In 1680 'An Additional Act for Burying in Woollen' extended this to parsons, vicars and curates from outside the parish of burial because of the 'great losse of time' in travelling to JPs.[21] If no affidavit was brought to the clergyman within eight days they were to inform the Churchwarden or Overseers of the Poor in writing, who were to apply to a JP for a warrant to levy the fine. Overseers had to present accounts of all burials and list those buried in linen to the JPs at the Quarter or Petty Sessions or monthly JP meetings. All of these actions were enforced by £5 fines, with one quarter to the King, half to support the poor of the parish and the final quarter to the informant. Judges and JPs had to 'give this Act in charge' at assizes and quarter sessions. Awareness of the Act was enforced for seven years; 'this Act shall be publiquely read upon the first Sunday after the Feast of Saint Bartholomew every year for seaven years next following presently after Divine Service', which was significant because the Church was the centre of the community. If prosecuted for activities towards enforcing the Act, defendants had legal protection; they could plead Not Guilty and obtain treble costs under certain circumstances.[22]

There were other legal attempts to regulate the use of wool in Britain and Ireland. In 1685, a bill was proposed as part of a series of creative attempts to promote woollen manufacture, including sumptuary laws for women's hats. Notably it required bodies 'to be wrapped in Wool, or Woollen Stuff weighing six pounds or above', but was

[19] SRO, D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials in Woollen, Cucklington, 1679-1760. This volume is not paginated. Elizabeth Watts, November 1682; Margaret Lanelaw, January 1685; Dorothy Nichols, June 1685; Mary Brickle, possibly November 1685; [unknown] Ryal, April 1688; Mary Ringle, June 1689; William Watts, January 1691; Elizabeth Watts, January 1691; Hugh Watts, October 1692; Robert Knight, April 1701; Hugh Watts, August 1710; Martha Watts, April 1713; Ruth Watts, July 1716; Hugh Watts, September 1728; Nicholas Watts, November 1729; Grace Watts, December 1730; Grace Watts, February 1733; Mary Dalton, May 1755; SRO, D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials, Samuel Chant, August 1678; Samuell Rock, October 1678; Jonathan Cooth, January 1684; Mary Cooth, November 1689; Abigail Cleaver, May 1692; Martha Cleaver, April 1695; Jonathan Cooth, December 1699; Robert Green, February 1706; Osmund Arney, March 1715; Thomas Morris, unknown 1741. Only Arney was listed with an informant of the same name.
[20] 30.Car.II c.3, 'An Act for Burying in Woollen'.
[21] 32.Car. II. c.1, 'An Additional Act for Burying in Woollen'.
[22] 30.Car.II c.3, 'An Act for Burying in Woollen'.

never made into law.[23] The Burying in Woollen Act was extended to Scotland in 1707, repealing a 1686 Act for Burying in Scots Linen which ordered the burial of Scottish people in 'plain Linen, or cloth of Hards' from Scotland, but banned the use of holland which was imported. The 1686 Burying in Scots Linen Act was based on the 1678 English Act and copied the method of enforcement. Fines were higher, 300 pound Scots for noblemen and 200 pound Scots for everyone else, the equivalent of around £25 and £16 13s. 3d. sterling. The Act for Burying in Woollen was extended to Ireland from 1 August 1734.[24]

There was a single exemption in the 1666 and 1678 Acts. Victims of the plague could be buried in linen.[25] This exception was likely to have been related to understandings of contagion. The physician Stephen Bradwell, wrote in 1625 that woollens 'will retain the [plague] three or four yeares, except they be well and thoroughly aired'.[26] This view held currency the following century. In 1767, Joannes Fridericus Faselius published a medical text which stated (confusingly given the plague exemption) that in cases of the plague 'a suspension should be made of the law against burying in anything but woollen: nay that should be forbidden, as it is a powerful retainer of infection. Linen here should be preferred'. He still considered linen to be a carrier of contagion advising that along with other clothing, textiles, skins and furniture it should be buried to contain the infection.[27]

Information about the demise of the Act which was repealed in 1814 is more difficult to locate.[28] It most likely related to the fact that the case for promoting domestic consumption of woollens lost its force as British manufacturing and trade diversified, while politicians became more sceptical about mercantilist forms of economic management. European demand for English woollens did not grow over the century

[23] House of Commons, *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1803), IX, p. 734.
[24] *Act for Burying in Scots Linen, June 14 1686* (Edinburgh?, 1687); Anon., 'Money and Banking', <http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/moneyandbanking_topic.htm>, faq 2 [accessed 22 June 2015], at an exchange rate of 12 Scots pounds to 1 pound sterling; *Acts and Statutes made in a Parliament Begun at Dublin the twenty eighth day of November, Anno Dom. 1727* (Dublin, 1734), two versions of different lengths were printed by George Grierson in 1734, see pp. 129-30 or pp. 465-66; *The Laws and Acts of Parliament* (Edinburgh, 1707), p. 65.
[25] 18&19 Car.II. c.4., 'An Act for Burying in Woollen Onely'.
[26] Stephen Bradwell, *A VVatch-Man for the Pest* (London, 1625), p. 8; see North, *Dress and Hygiene*, p. 139, for another Bradwell comment on woollens.
[27] Joannes Fridericus Faselius, *Elements of Medical Jurisprudence: or, A Succinct and Compendious Description of such Tokens in the Human Body* (London, 1788), p. 137.
[28] House of Commons, *Journals of the House of Commons*, LXIX, p. 496, 23 July 1814.

due to national pushes for self-sufficiency across Continental Europe. The American colonies and the West Indies provided an alternative and lucrative market, but diversification of English manufacturing including into linen and cotton, meant that a policy designed in a period when English textile production was dominated by woollens was less relevant by 1814.[29] Adherence to the Act seems to have been less common from the 1760s when many burial registers end. In 1792 William Nelson advised Overseers of the Poor (who were obliged to inform JPs of burials in linen and apply for warrants to levy fines) that the Act 'is grown into disuse; the cause of its being enacted having long since ceased'. Nelson stated that affidavits were still being taken in some parishes while 'in many, it is not regarded at all'.[30] However burial in wool continued in some areas. Infant Foundlings who died while at nurse in West Peckham were still buried in wool in the late 1770s. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, affidavits were still being taken in Thornfalcon parish, Somerset. There were some negotiations over the Act. For example Sir John Cullum wrote that after 1724 the date of receipt of affidavit was no longer recorded, 'this is generally now neglected as useless'.[31] The measures introduced for enforcement of the Act were thorough, with penalties for everyone in the enforcement process and burial registers testify to the success of the enforcement process. Nevertheless burial in woollen had not become entirely engrained in the English psyche by the nineteenth century. After the repeal of the Burying in Woollen Act there was a rapid switch to other fibres.[32]

## The Impact of the Burying in Woollen Acts

Despite the social and ritual implications of the introduction of burying in woollen, the impact of the 1678 Act has not been systematically examined, with scholars of death

[29] Davis, 'English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774', pp. 287-91, 294-95, 303.
[30] William Nelson, *The Duty of Overseers of the Poor* (London, 1792), p. 23.
[31] LMA, A/FH/B/01/018/090, Inspectors' Accounts 1778-1779. The following children under the inspection of Mr Lee were buried in woollen: Ann Morley (Foundling number) 17125, Mary Glyn 17162, Ann Strange 17198, Hugh Tenton 17221, Ann Todd 17253, Hannah Good 17260, Mary Lord 17294, John Cope 17307, John Bush 17347, Ann Overton 17367, John Maxwell 17427, Thomas Osborne 17445, Jane Hol[l] 17458, Ann Ockleford 660; SRO, D\P\th.f/2/4/1, Affidavit of Burial in Woollen, 1804; D\P\th.f/2/4/2, Affidavit of Burial in Woollen, 1808; John Cullum, *The History and Antiquities of Hawsted, in the County of Suffolk* (London, 1784), p. 70.
[32] KHLC, P/41/1/9, Register of Burials in Woollen, Brabourne, 1678-1800; P/181/1/4, Register of Burials, Headcorn, 1678-1811; SRO, D\P\ed/2/1/2, Register of Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, Edington, 1678-1812; D\P\e.pen/13/2/1, Overseers Accounts and Rates, East Pennard, 1681-1760; D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials; D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials; Janaway, 'The Textiles', p. 118.

often focusing on other issues.[33] Motivations for burial in linen are difficult to uncover and relatively little has been written on the change in practice.[34] What has been written is often misleading. Julien Litten's single page on burial in woollen insists that elite burial in linen after 1660 was motivated by a desire to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population. He writes that

> for the wealthy, the Act for Burying in Woollen imposed but another expense as £5 was but a small price to pay so as not to be buried in a material proscribed for even the lowliest rustic. John Aubrey records how Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher, was "put into a Woollen shroud" at his death in 1679, arguing that had Hobbes received the £100 per annum pension granted by Charles II in 1660 [...] he might not have been buried in such a common shift.[35]

In fact Aubrey records no such thing. The comment on the unpaid pension appears at the beginning of Aubrey's life of Hobbes while Hobbes' death is unsurprisingly at the end. Aubrey does not imply that wool was shameful.

> He [Hobbes] was put into a Woollen Shroud and Coffin, which was covered with a white Sheet and upon that a black Herse cloth and so carryed upon men's shoulders and little mile to the Church. The company, consisting of the family and neighbours that came to his Funerall and attend him to his grave, were very handsomely entertained with Wine, burned and raw, cake, biscuit, etc.

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[33] For example, *The Oxford Handbook of The Archaeology of Death and Burial* ed. by Sarah Tarlow and Liv Nilsson Stutz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jim Morgan 'The Burial Question in Leeds in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', pp. 95-104 and Roy Porter 'Death and the Doctors in Georgian England', pp. 77-94 both in *Death Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. by Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989).

[34] Annia Cherryson, Zoë Crossland and Sarah Tarlow, *A Fine and Private Place: The Archaeology of Death and Burial in Post-Medieval Britain and Ireland* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 2012) pp. 22-34, provides a general literature and source overview on 'dressing the dead' from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries; Phyllis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Costumes for Births, Marriages and Deaths* (London: A. and C. Black, 1972), pp. 160-61; Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 112-14, the majority of sources used by Gittings are from Cunnington and Lucas's research; Hole, *The English Housewife*, pp. 225-26; Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 341; Houlbrooke, 'The Age of Decency: 1660-1760' in *Death In England: An Illustrated History* ed. by Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 174-201 (p. 192) has a single paragraph on the issue; Kenneth G. Sneath, 'Consumption, Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England' (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2008), p. 336 shows that some probate accounts included payments for woollen cloth or burial in linen; Tarlow, *Ritual Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 136, also has a single paragraph.

[35] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, p. 74

Contrary to Litten's comments, mourners were 'very handsomely entertained'.[36]

## Economic Benefits

The economic benefits for the woollen trade of the Burying in Woollen Act trumped cultural and religious concerns. In 1706, Sir John Clerk argued for the economic benefits for Scotland if burial in woollen was extended after the 1707 Act of Union. It would use up 'superfluous wool' and free up linen which could be exported unlike Scottish wool.[37] In an early eighteenth-century Scottish pamphlet supporting English woollen interests in Scotland, even the stabler's wife who disliked burial in woollen recognised the value of the Act for promoting the sale of Scottish wool. While complaining about the Act, she reassured the Mureland-man concerned about the impact of cheap English wool on his sales, 'ill met [sic] ye sell your Wooll; for we can not get leave to burry our dead in Linnen, but must rowl them up in Plaiding and Blankets like as many wat-na-what's'.[38] In the 1720s there were multiple assessments of the success of the English Act.[39] Mandeville stated that 'The Benefit that accrues to the Nation from it is so visible that nothing ever could be said in reason to condemn it', a benefit that contributed to its wider acceptance.[40] Nicholas Amhurst considered the Act to be 'acknowledged, on all hands, to be the greatest support of the wealth of this kingdom'.[41] Jonathan Swift advised the adoption of burying in Irish woollen as a 'fashion' in Ireland to reduce reliance on English imports.[42] However, the economic purpose of the Act was not universally praised. Jethro Tull, inventor of the seed drill, argued that low wool prices were due to overproduction in England, illustrated by the 'Act for burying in Woollen, which

[36] John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. by Oliver Lawson Dick (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin 1972) pp. 305, 319-20. This edition was used by Litten. The following pages with references to Hobbes were also checked, pp. 18, 31, 34, 40, 64, 66, 71, 81, 125-29, 133, 134, 154, 171, 179, 215, 223, 246, 254, 283, 290, 292, 305-20, 321, 334, 364, 385, 399, 403, 412, 430, 435, 468, 470.
[37] John Clerk, *A Letter to a Friend, Giving an Account how the Treaty of Union Has been Received Here* (Edinburgh, 1706), p. 16.
[38] Anon., *A Discourse Between a Mureland Man and a Stablers Wife, Concerning the Burying in Woolen* (Edinburgh, 1707?).
[39] Anon., *The Tribune* (London, 1729), p. 32.
[40] Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 378.
[41] Nicholas Amhurst, *Terræ-Filius: or, the secret history of the University of Oxford*, 2 vols (London, 1726), II, p. 310. See also the earlier Peter Paxton*, A Discourse Concerning the Nature, Advantage and Improvement of Trade* (London, 1704), p. 43 for the implied success of the act.
[42] Jonathan Swift, 'A Proposal for the Universal Use of IRISH Manufacture' (1720) in *The Works of J.S, D.D, D.S.P.D.* 4 vols (Dublin, 1735), IV, p. 21.

because the Living are not sufficient to consume it, obliges the Dead to wear it'.[43] Another writer dismissed it as 'tho' great in its Prospect; nothing in its Consequences'.[44]

## Religion

Burial in linen had religious origins. All four gospels specify that Jesus was wrapped in linen before he was placed in his tomb. Linen is a key part of the Resurrection in the Gospels of Luke (24.12) and John (20.5-8) and is mentioned in Matthew (27.59) and Mark (15.46). Jesus' linen wrappings remained in the tomb, testifying that his body had been present and marking his absence;

> And he stooping down and *looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him and went into the sepulchre and seeth the linen clothes lie and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre and he saw and believed (John 20.5-8)

Religious works from the eighteenth century also referenced Jesus' linen burial clothes.[45] Concerns about the break from this religious tradition appear in several places. A tantalising record of a 1677 debate in the House of Commons reveals continued opposition to the 1666 Act and religious objections. Two arguments against the Act were recorded and they were both religious. Edward Waller, MP for Hastings, commented 'Our Saviour was buried in Linnen. 'Tis a thing against the Customs of Nations and I am against it'.[46] The Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Henry Coventry added 'Great men of the *Romish* Religion desire to be buried in the habit of some Order that they devote themselves to, some the *Franciscan*, some the *Dominican*, but all in Woollen. I fear this Bill may taste of Popery'. The arguments against Waller and Coventry were not recorded and despite

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[43] Jethro Tull, *The Horse-Hoing Husbandry: Or, an Essay on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation* (London, 1733), p. 236. See also Anon., *Proposals for Preventing the Running of Wool and Encouraging the Woollen Manufacture* (London, 1731), p. 30.
[44] Anon., *Review of the State of the English Nation (Cumulation)*, 14, 31 January 1706.
[45] George Herbert, 'The Dawning' in *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (London, 1703), p. 105; Reverend John Matlock, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 2nd edn (London, 1774), p. 260; Mrs Sarah Trimmer, *A Companion to the Book of Common Prayer*, 2 vols (London, 1791), II, p. 301.
[46] *The House of Commons 1660-1690*, ed. by Basil Duke Henning, 3 vols (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983), *Debates of the House of Commons, from the year 1667 to the year 1694. Collected by the Honble Anchitell Grey, Esq*, 10 vols (London, 1763), V, p. 155.

this strongly worded opposition, economic concerns won out. Yet in 1666, the House of Commons vote was not close, with 113 for and 53 against and the bill was passed without amendment in the House of Lords.[47] Despite the importance of Jesus' burial in linen in the Resurrection story, it was possible to introduce the Act for Burying in Woollen because, as Dr. Isaac Watts reflected burial in wool was 'neither commanded nor forbidden by God'.[48]

Religious concerns also appear in the pamphlet, *The Good-Wives Lamentation, or, the Womens Complaint on the Account of Their Being to Be Buried in Woollen* (1678) which satirised arguments against the Act. The first goodwife commented on the religious implications, 'your Husband, neighbour Tattlewell, [...] 'twas very discreetly done of him to Dye before this anti-Christian law came forth' showing concern for the religious implications of the Act, although she was revealed as a religious hypocrite through her comment, 'I shall never endure to see him [her husband] Trussed up in Woollen and yet I would suffer as much as any good Christian woman can bear, to be fairly rid of him'.[49] In contrast to the anonymous author, Mandeville noted without personal attack that some people were never reconciled to the Act.[50] The Good-Wives later discussed the end of the practice of burial in wedding smocks. The author countered concerns about this loss of tradition with a religious reproach, comparing wedding smocks to 'Sacred Reliques' and stating that their retention implies 'we intended our Pride should survive our Bodies and defy Mortality, or tempt the Devil to be kind to us if we should happen into his company'. Further reproach was employed against other supposedly misinformed views when Mrs Tabitha Lipzeal, who had 'screwed her face into the Geneva print' and was more radically Protestant, stated that it was a 'Popish device [...] to make us do Pennance after we are dead' and she would not be buried in wool 'whilst I have a day to breath' (sic), a comment that led to weeping and the melancholy dispersal of the group. However this was also a concern for the senior minister Henry Coventry.[51]

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[47] *Debates of the House of Commons*, V, p. 155; House of Commons, *Journal of the House of Commons*, (London, 1802), VIII, pp. 673, 677-678; *The House of Commons 1660-1690*, 3 vols. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983), II, p. 149.
[48] Thomas Gibbons, *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.* (London, 1780), p. 51.
[49] Anon., *The Good-Wives Lamentation, or, the Womens Complaint on the Account of Their Being to Be Buried in Woollen* (London, 1678), p. 5.
[50] Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 378.
[51] Anon., *The Good-Wives Lamentation,* pp. 6-8; *Debates of the House of Commons*, V, p. 155.

The pamphlet could have been a political satire, but there is no direct connection between the names of the ministers and the good-wives.

Samuel Hill, the Arch-Deacon of Wells, explored ideas of conscience and religious choices in his work *A Thorough Examination of the False Principles Advanced Against the Christian Church* (1708). He stated that if public worship on Sundays and Holy Days (required by Ecclesiastical law) was banned by a monarch, Hill would follow his conscience and continue in his worship. However, Hill asked his reader to consider,

> the intention of the Law [...] whether it affects the Conscience of the Subject under the Peril of Guilt of Sin towards God [...] or only has a sub-penal design to promote some lighter conveniences; as appearances at Sheriffs turns, Juries, *&c*. Burying in Woollen and the like.[52]

Hill's inclusion of Burying in Woollen alongside jury duty both shows that it was widely accepted as unproblematic and also instructed dissenting readers, for example Quakers, that it was not an issue of conscience. The minister Matthew Henry similarly suggested that burial in linen was not an issue:

> it is not necessary that in all Circumstances we imitate the Burial of Christ [...] he being buried after *the manner of the Jews* [John 19.40]; it teacheth us, that in things of this Nature we should conform to the Usages of the Country where we live, except in those that are Superstitious.[53]

Similarly Professor William Blackstone, Solicitor General to the Queen, concluded that the Act did not infringe on civil liberty because it promoted 'the universal good of the nation'.[54]

Concerns remained outside the Church of England. Quakers considered compliance with the Act as against their conscience. Francis Bugg, a vehement anti-Quaker, presented a case against special dispensation for Quaker marriages to the House of Commons. He included the argument 'When the Act for Burying in Woollen came out

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[52] Samuel Hill, *A Thorough Examination of the False principles and Fallacious Arguments, Advanc'd Against the Christian Church [...] In a late pernicious Book, Ironically Intituled, The Rights of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH Asserted* (London, 1708), pp. 125-26.
[53] Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*, 3rd edn, 6 vols (London, 1725), V, p. 613. His denomination is unclear, but he is likely to be Church of England because he references works by Anglican clergy in the preface, pp. iii-vii.
[54] William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols (London, 1765), I, p. 122.

and they forced [sic] to go to the Ministers, whom they call *Baal's* Priests, with Affidavits, this was a *Case of Conscience*; but the Five pound Penalty soon removed this Scruple'.[55] Bugg indicates Quaker struggles between religious conscience and the fine, showing that the monetary consequences were sufficiently punitive to force compliance with the law. The Burying in Woollen Act also contravened Jewish practice, with sufficient money collected from fines from the Jewish cemeteries at Mile End to divide between the poor of 'all hamlets in Stepney parish'.[56]

## Custom

Custom was recognised as a factor that influenced reactions to burial in woollen. Mandeville considered custom and emulation to be key catalysts of the acceptance of burial in wool. He stated that the undeniable economic benefits of the Act

> in a few Years made the Horrour conceiv'd against it lessen every Day. I observ'd then that Young People who had seen but few in their Coffins did the soonest strike in with the Innovation; but that those who, when the Act was made, had Buried many Friends and Relations remain'd averse to it the longest and I remember many that never could be reconcil'd to it to their dying Day. By this time Burying in Linnen being almost forgot, it is the general Opinion that nothing could be more decent than Woollen and the present manner of Dressing a Corps: which shows that our Liking or Disliking of things chiefly depends on Mode and Custom and the Precept and Example of our Betters.

This passage was not included in the first edition of *The Fable of the Bees* in 1714 either because opinion changed slowly or because it was chosen as an example to contribute to the substantial enlargement of the second edition. Mandeville's argument that generational turnover reduced concern and led to a change in custom is convincing – cultural expectations changed.[57] However the role of emulation was not proved. Richard Fides, who was critical of *The Fable*, agreed that Mandeville's example illustrated the role of 'Mode or Custom'.[58] Numerous mentions of the Burying in Woollen Act in contemporary literature also speak to the customary

[55] Francis Bugg*, A Retrospective-Glass for the Mis-Led Quakers; Whereby they (as well as Others) may See the Deceivableness of their Ring-Leaders* (London, 1710), p. 494.
[56] Quoted in Cecil Roth, *The Great Synagogue London 1690-1940* (London: Edward Goldston & Son Ltd., 1950), p. 103.
[57] Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 378
[58] Richard Fiddes, *A General Treatise of Morality, Form'd upon the Principles of Natural Reason Only* (London, 1724), pp. xlix, 1.

importance of burial in linen and wool.[59] Again the MP Edward Waller considered burial in woollen 'a thing against the Customs of Nations' a justification of his opposition to the Act.[60] Custom was not considered a benign force by all. The author of the *Lamentation* launched a crushing attack on custom and those who were horrified by the change in burial practice. The anonymous author wrote that 'wonderful are the Impressions which the Tyranny of *Custom* makes in weak minds: whatsoever is different from the fashions that we have been conversant with, we count *barbarous* or *monstrous*' and 'with what a peevish and obstinate simplicity people are wedded to their little old frivolous Customs' in contrast to the important benefits for woollen and paper manufacture.[61] In response to the *Lamentation*, the author of *The Good-Wives Vindication, or, the Womens Complaint on the Account of Their Being to Be Buried in Woollen* (1678) argued that the Act had turned something 'Innocent and Indifferent [...] Decent, Commendable and Useful' to 'intolerably Unlawful', thus the good-wives' responses were reasonable.[62]

## Social Cachet and Vanity

As we have seen, Litten has suggested that a social cachet developed around burial in linen, which encouraged people to choose burial in flaxen cloth. However, it is Phyllis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas who provide the best evidence for vanity and pride as key motivations for continuing to be buried in linen. They quote Alexander Pope's critical imagining of the words of the actress Mrs Oldfield, who was buried in finery including a Brussels lace and a holland shift.

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[59] Anon., *An Asylum for Fugitive Pieces*, 4 vols (London, 1793), IV, p. 94; Anon., *The Humorous Life, Travels and Adventures, of Christopher Wagstaff, Gentleman, Grandfather to Tristram Shandy*, 2 vols (London, 1763), I, p. 11; Anon., 'The LIFE and ACTIONS of Mr. DISMALL, the Patriot', *London Journal*, p. 410, 10 June 1727; Thomas Brown, *A Collection of All the Dialogues Written by Mr. Thomas Brown* (London, 1704), p. 52; John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee, *Oedipus, A Tragedy* (London, 1727), p. viii; J.R., 'The True and Genuine Explanation, of One King Jame's [James's] Declaration' in *Poems on Affairs of State: From the Time of Oliver Cromwell, to the Abdication of K. James the Second*, 5th edn (London, 1703), p. 196; Jonathan Swift, 'Birthday Verses on Mr Ford' (1723?) in *The Poetical Works of Dr. Jonath. Swift*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1778), IV, p. 45; Swift, *'Squire Bickerstaff Detected* (1708-09), in *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D. Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin*, 12 vols (London, 1755), III, p. 292; Will Whimsical, *Will Whimsical's Miscellany* (Chichester, 1799), p. 176; William Wotey, *Poetical Amusements* (Nottingham, 1789), p. 134.

[60] *Debates of the House of Commons*, V, p. 155.

[61] Anon., *The Good-Wives Lamentation*, pp. 3-4.

[62] Person of Quality, *The Good-Wives Vindication, or, an Answer to a Late Saucy Pamphlet Intituled the Womens Complaint on the Account of Their Being to Be Buried in Woollen* (London, 1678), p. 4.

"Odious ! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke
(Were the Last words that poor Narcissa spoke)
No, let a charming chintz and BRUSSELS lace,
Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face:
One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead
And – Betty – give this cheek a little red"

Cunnington and Lucas also cite Richard Steele's widow in *The Funeral* (1702) who said that 'if you should [...] out-live me, take care I an't buried in Flannen, 'twould never become me, I'm sure', sentiments which were echoed in *A Trip from St. James's to the Royal Exchange* (1744): 'the extravagant Pride of some People, in going to their Graves dress'd in *Lace* and *Velvet* has greatly enhanc'd the Price of Interment'. Their argument is also supported by *A Discourse between a Mureland Man and a Stablers Wife*. The latter described burial in wool as 'such an ugly Fashion', demoting it to a concern for the vain.[63]

Concerns about the Act were typically dismissed in pamphlets by associating them with stereotypical women's concerns. Vanity, fashion, pride and ignorance were considered appropriately damning associations by supporters of the Act. Both the satirical pamphlets *The Good-Wives Lamentation* and the response, *The Good-Wives Vindication*, use this trope. In the *Lamentation*, the anonymous author constantly derided the conversation of a 'Conclave of Good-wives', drunk on burnt claret, near hysterical, almost fainting at the mention of the Act. The good-wives are characterised by the author as having disproportionate emotional reactions to an economically rational decision. Mrs Prate-a-pace said that she would pay the £5 fine to bury her husband in linen 'rather than he shall travel so long a Journey as into the other World like a Beggar, without a Shirt to his back', comically adding that 'if we must make a Banquet for Worms, why should we not allow the poor Creatures Napkins and Table-linnen at their Dinner [...] to wipe their chaps after it'. Another

[63] Anon., *A Discourse Between a Mureland Man and a Stablers Wife*; Anon., *A Trip from St. James's to the Royal-Exchange* (London, 1744), p. 27; Cunnington and Lucas, *Costume for Births, Marriages and Deaths*, pp. 159-63; Alexander Pope, *Moral Essays, in Four Epistles to Several Persons* (Edinburgh, 1751), p. 11; Richard Steele, *The Funeral: or, Grief A-la-mode* (London, 1702), p. 67. Cunnington and Lucas incorrectly attribute 'the extravagant Pride' quote to *Tricks of the Town* (1747). The mistake occurred because they used the title of the volume which contained several pamphlets; Anon., *Tricks of the Town: Being Reprints of Three Eighteenth Century Tracts* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1927).

woman complained of the ‘tenderest skin’ which blistered if it was not touched by expensive Holland smocks and silk stockings, adding ‘if they should offer to Case me in Wollen, I should never lye at quiet in my Grave’ especially without a sheet to sleep on.[64] Similarly, in the *Vindication*, which purported to defend the Good Wives, most of the pamphlet focused on criticising women, from their frivolous concern with dress to their licentiousness: they ‘have ever been obedient enough and ready to *bear* what ever is laid upon them: how often have the kind Souls exposed their tender flesh to sturdy Buff’ (soldier’s uniforms).[65] However accusations of vanity and pride only appear in satirical works, so it is not possible to assess how influential these concerns were.

## A Case Study of Cucklington and Henstridge, Somerset

The motivations given for burial in linen by contemporaries were religion, custom, vanity, pride, snobbery and stupidity. Untangling the polemic from the truth can only be undertaken through examining the success of the 1678 Act through burial registers which list burials in wool, linen and fines or referrals to churchwardens or Overseers. Archaeological artefacts are of limited use to assess change to burial in wool due to the limited survival of textiles and the sample bias towards animal fibres which degrade slower than cellulosic fibres such as flax. An archaeological study of the burials in the crypt at Christ Church, Spitalfields suggests that the Act was generally adhered to before the repeal of the Act in 1814. Dated burials before 1814 were all in wool apart from three in the 1790s where pieces of silk were found, perhaps indicating an increasing laxity in the lead up to the abolition of the Act. After 1814 there was a quick shift to the use of cotton for burial garments.[66]

The fine was prohibitive for the poor, but anyone with an estate of at least £5 could literally afford the fine, meaning that there was the potential for widespread disobedience. However this did not emerge in burial records from four Somerset parishes and two Kent parishes examined.[67] Similarly Hannah Stockton’s examination of a sample of Kent probate records also indicated a rapid change to

[64] Anon., *The Good-Wives Lamentation*, pp. 4-5.
[65] Person of quality, *The Good-Wives Vindication,* pp. 5-7.
[66] Davidson, ‘Grave Emotions’; Janaway ‘The Textiles’, pp. 111-12, 117-19.
[67] KHC, P/41/1/9, Register of Burials; P/181/1/4, Register of Burials; SRO, D\P\ed/2/1/2, Register,1678-1812; D\P\e.pen/13/2/1, Overseers Accounts and Rates, East Pennard, 1681-1760; D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials; D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials.

burial in wool.[68] Reverend Sir John Cullum recorded that in the parish of Hawsted, Suffolk, only one 'inferior' person was buried in linen from 1678 to the time of publishing in 1784 while 'the persons of chief note adopted it as soon as the act passed', showing a rapid change in the parish. He suggested that 'perhaps no act of Parliament is better observed', because 'the common shroud is so cheap and decent a dress, that there is no temptation to use any other'.[69] Complete success was prevented by small numbers of people who chose to be buried in linen, decades after the Act. Cunnington and Lucas suggested that affidavits were not needed when the poor were buried in flowers, herbs or hay. A newspaper account, however, recorded that a gentleman was fined under the Act for the 'stark naked' burial of his servant.[70] No evidence survives of naked or herb burials in the Cucklington and Henstridge burial registers. Rates of change in burial registers and other documents therefore indicate that religious conscience, custom and vanity were considered less important than the fine or economic benefits.

Two Somerset parishes are used for a quantitative examination of the rate of change to burial in woollen. Locality had a significant impact on meanings and conventions associated with material culture, therefore two neighbouring parishes, Cucklington and Henstridge, Somerset are compared.[71] Somerset was chosen due to the excellent survival of burial in woollen records. The Act was enforced in Cucklington from 1678 to 1760 when the burial register ends. Enforcement ended in Henstridge in 1758. There was clear clergy engagement with the process, Joseph Hopkins' certificate was brought late in 1732 and it was noted in the burial register was 'under ye Rector hand of Oburn [...] wch I did not think authentic', although no fine was issued.[72] Over time less procedural detail was provided, for example, after 1710 the recipients of the fine amongst the local poor were no longer recorded and the name

[68] Hannah Stockton, '"Death is a Leveller"? A Common Culture of Grieving in Seventeenth Century England', (Unpublished MA thesis, V&A/RCA, 2013), pp. 87, 89, 107.
[69] Cullum, *The History and Antiquities of Hawsted*, p. 70.
[70] Anon., 'London', *London Evening Post*, 1737, 30 December-2 January 1738-39; Cunnington and Lucas, *Costume for Births, Marriages and Deaths*, p. 159.
[71] Dolan 'The Decline of the Multifunctional Hall?', pp. 46-49, 108-39; Peter King, 'Pauper Inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor*, ed. by Tim Hitchcock, King and Pamela Sharpe (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 155-91.
[72] SRO, D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials, Joseph Hopkins, February 1732.

**Figure 7.2, St Lawrence's Church, Cucklington, Somerset, monument to Nicholas Watts 1729.**

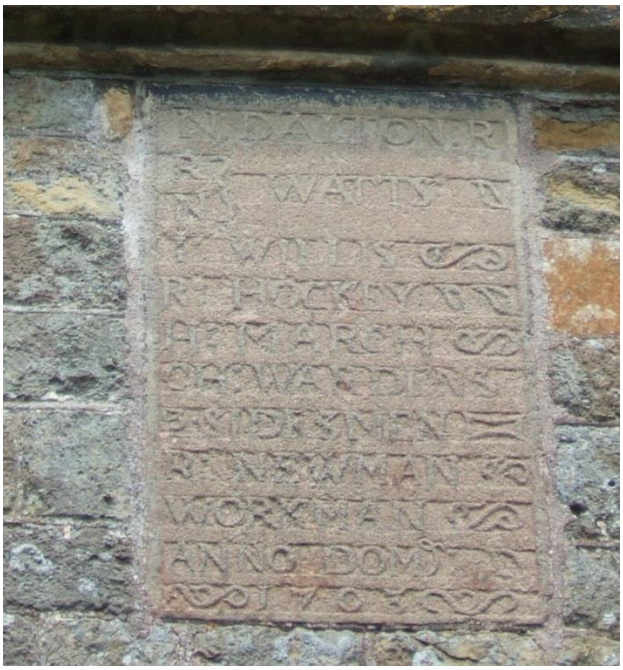

**Figure 7.3, St Lawrence's Church, Cucklington, Somerset.** Founding stone on tower below the clock.

of the JP was noted only until 1730.[73] In contrast this information was never recorded in the burial register of neighbouring Henstridge.[74]

The Cucklington burial register contains 505 entries; 261 women, 239 men and 5 of unknown gender. The Overseers account books do not survive for this period therefore fines cannot be traced. There were eighteen burials in linen, making up 3.6 per cent of burials. The first was recorded in 1682 and the last in 1755, so seventy-seven years after the second Burying in Woollen Act was passed, people still chose to be buried in linen indicating the continued cultural significance of the practice. Uncovering individual attitudes is impossible due to the reticence of burial registers and gravestones. However, there were patterns in the practice. Eleven of the eighteen people buried in linen were from the Watts family, members of the local gentry. While the register rarely lists occupations, both Hugh and Richard Watts were listed as 'gentlemen'. It is unclear whether religion or status influenced the

[73] SRO, D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials, see the three pages following November 1683. Also, for example Margaret Lanelaw, January 1685; Dorothy Nichols, June 1685; Mary Brickle, November 1685; Hugh Watts, August 1710; Nicholas Watts, November 1730; Grace Watts, December 1730. Compare these to Grace Watts, February 1733 and Mary Dalton, May 1755.
[74] SRO, D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials.

decisions to bury family members in linen, but it is possible that custom also had an influence. Intriguingly, two members of the Watts family, Richard and Mary, were buried legally in wool rather than linen.[75] Despite his burial in linen, there is a monument to Nicholas Watts inside St Lawrence's Church, Cucklington (figure 7.2) which confirms that burial in linen did not preclude burial or memorialisation inside a church, a higher status location than the churchyard. Furthermore, on the outside of the church, a carved stone dated 1703 lists R&N Watts (Richard and Nicholas) seemingly as churchwardens (figure 7.3). Nicholas was buried in linen in 1729 again confirming that leaders in the church community could still be buried illegally in linen. Probate documents provide no insight, their rate of survival is exceedingly poor. The wills of Hugh and Nicholas Watts are rare surviving examples, but neither specified burial in linen in their wills although the practice was requested in some wills.[76] Other Cucklington residents buried in linen were Dorothy Nichols, a gentleman's wife in 1685 and the gentleman Robert Knight in 1701. The status of the remaining individuals is unknown, Margaret Lanelaw, Mary Brickle, the wife of James Ryal, Mary Ringle and Mary Dalton. It was, however, recorded that Mary Brickle was buried in the churchyard.[77] There was a gender bias. Women made up twelve out of eighteen linen burials and the only men buried in linen were from the Watts family. It is not clear whether there was a particular religious significance to this.

The nearby parish of Henstridge presents an informative comparison to Cucklington. There is greater ambiguity over burial in linen in Henstridge. Seven out of 1223 entries or 0.5 per cent were linen burials and they were focused in the period 1684 to 1715. However there was a larger group of twenty-eight entries where no burial certificate or affidavit was brought within eight days. These cases were referred to the Churchwardens and thus treated as though they were buried in linen. More detailed information does not survive, so it is not clear how many of these cases were buried in linen or simply had disorganised relatives or survivors. These

[75] SRO, D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials. See footnote 17 of this chapter. Also October 1706, Richard Watts; April 1713, Mary Watts.
[76] SRO, DD\S\WI/41, Holton, Wincanton, etc., Probate Copy of Nicholas Watts' will 1692; DD\BR\wcr/5, Probate Will of Nicholas Watts of Cucklington, proved 1730; Gilbert Geis and Ivan Bunn, *A Trial of Witches: A Seventeenth Century Witchcraft Prosecution* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 206.
[77] SRO, D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials, Margaret Lanelaw, January 1685; Dorothy Nichols, June 1685; Mary Brickle, probably November 1685; wife of James Ryal, April 1688; Mary Ringle, June 1689; Robert Knight, April 1701; Mary Dalton, May 1755.


**Figure 7.4, St. Nicholas Church, Henstridge, Somerset, gravestone of the Bingham family.** Robert senior buried 1696, his son Robert junior buried 1696, his wife Joan (Joanna) who died in 1733, their daughter (or daughter-in-law) Sarah buried in 1744 and their son John buried in 1746. Ten other Binghams died in this period. All of the Binghams were buried in wool. This is the only gravestone or monument to survive for the period within the church.

ambiguous entries are henceforth referred to as ‘unclear’. They occurred between 1678 and 1758. If the affidavit was brought too late, the £5 fine still had to be levied, which provided a strong incentive to meet the requirements of the law.

As for Cucklington, the Henstridge burial registers indicate a strong relationship between status and burial in linen. From 1678 to 1707 burial locations were listed at St Nicholas’ Church for 460 people in the church yard, church and the more specific aisle and chancel. Comparison of the location of burial with fibre type provides a means of establishing the relationship between status or wealth and burial in linen or wool. Unsurprisingly the three travellers buried in Henstridge were all buried in wool. Inside the church there were five linen burials, forty-eight woollen burials and two unclear burials. Only the gravestone of the Bingham family survives in the Church, (see figure 7.4). All of the Binghams were buried in wool. The Vicar of Henstridge

was one of the unclear entries and he was likely to have been buried in wool because he did not disobey the Act when he buried his wife fourteen years earlier. Three of the five linen burials were from the Cooth family, Jonathan and his two children who predeceased him, again showing a family pattern similar to the Watts in Cucklington. At least 401 out of 403 churchyard burials were in woollen (there were two unclear burials). One of the two people with unknown burial locations was buried in linen so it is possible that he was buried in the churchyard.[78] Linen burials in Henstridge from 1678 to 1707 were, therefore, more likely to be inside the church. There was therefore a connection between wealth and burial in linen. While the percentage of people buried in linen in the church was low it was not insignificant; 9 per cent, or 5 out of 55 burials in the church were in linen, up to a maximum of 13 per cent of burials if all the unclear entries were in linen. There was no gender bias in Henstridge. Three women and four men were buried in linen. Amongst the 'unclear' entries there was a small male bias: 15 out of the 28 deceased were men.

The majority of people in Cucklington and Henstridge quickly shifted to burying their dead in woollen thus favouring the personal or national economic impact of the Act over the security of tradition and religion that linen burial clothes provided. In the Henstridge burial register, linen burials only constituted 0.6 per cent of all burials, or 3 per cent if unclear burials were in linen. In the Cucklington register 4 per cent of burials were in linen. These percentages indicate a significant decline in linen burials from 1678. This change in custom is all the more remarkable when it is considered that another attempt to reduce reliance on linen cloth failed in the 1680s. The East India Company ordered 200,000 cotton shirts and shifts from Madras in 1682, an act considered to be of 'National Benefit' because it aimed to reduce reliance on continental linen imports. However cotton underwear was not popular with consumers. Riello argues that an 'aesthetic and tactile training' was needed to popularise cottons.[79] Woollen burial garments and shrouds were not worn by the living, so did not require the same day to day physical interactions as cotton shirts. Similarly, the 1678 Act was more successful than Puritan attempts to simplify burial

[78] SRO, D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials, Jonathan Cooth, February 1684; Mary Cooth, November 1689; Jonathan Cooth, December 1699; William Berkenhead August 1704; Robert Green, February 1706; Luce Cox, November 1707; Ann Bowden November 1747, unknown traveller, torn page 1750/1, Mary Brooks, October 1755. The unclear burials are Samuel Chant, August 1678 and Hester Hopkins, May 1693.
[79] Riello, *Cotton*, pp. 98-99, 115, 117, 121, 123.

rituals in the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries, which Claire Gittings attributes to the comforting continuity of tradition.[80] The greater success enjoyed by burial in woollen compared with Puritan attempts probably relates to the limited nature of the change involved, the successful political intervention, the economic benefits, the fine and the fact that there was material continuity in the ongoing use of white burial textiles.[81] The enforcement measures in the 1678 Burying in Woollen Act were clearly effective enough to lead to widespread change in Cucklington and Henstridge.

However, a small minority of people still chose burial in flaxen cloth. The analysis indicates the role of locality. The villages are within ten miles of each other but there is a significant difference in their burial practices and the speed of the cultural shift. Analysis of the number of burials during the first thirty years of the 1678 Act indicates differing rates of change. Around 1 per cent of burials in Henstridge were in linen for the first thirty years. In contrast over 5 per cent of Cucklington burials were in linen. Change was faster in Henstridge, partly because the Cucklington Watts family were stalwarts of burial in linen. Burial in linen did decline slightly from 1708 to 1760 in Cucklington with only eight burials in linen. There were no specifically linen burials in Henstridge after 1708, but there were twenty-four unclear burials, which could have been in linen.[82] The 1678 Act certainly did not eliminate burials in linen entirely.

## Conclusion

The 1678 Burying in Woollen Act led to a rapid change in the textiles used to dress the majority of the English dead. Economic forces were sufficiently strong to override other factors. An Act motivated by national economic objectives succeeded in overcoming centuries of tradition; the £5 fine was sufficiently high to deter the vast majority from burying their dead in any textile other than wool. Religious objections from some members of the Church of England were overridden. The extent of Quaker adherence is unclear and requires further investigation as does Jewish burial practice. Contemporary commentary strongly indicates that vanity and pride led to the rejection of woollen cloth. However the day-to-day truth of these satires is unclear.

[80] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, pp. 50-56.
[81] Henri Misson, *M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England* (London, 1719), p. 89; Cunnington and Lucas, *Costume for Births, Marriages and Deaths*, p. 161.
[82] D\P\cuck/2/4/1, Register of Burials; D\P\hens/2/4/1, Register of Burials.

The importance of custom largely died out with generational turnover, while any anxieties caused by the change in custom were mostly counteracted by the fine in the parishes studied. However the continuation of burial in linen fundamentally reveals linen's continued cultural significance for the material culture of death in the eighteenth century. While for most, a £5 or £2 10s. fine was a sufficient deterrent, others chose to pay the fine and bury their dead in linen. Further support for the cultural significance of linen is that although witnesses were required to swear that the deceased was not buried in any fibre other than wool, 'Flax Hempe Silke Haire Gold or Silver'.[83] Those buried in linen chose not to be buried in more expensive textile status symbols such as silk or textiles with precious metals. This decision emphasises the continued cultural significance of linen.

In Cucklington and Henstridge, burial in linen was mainly an elite practice but specific motivations are unclear. Religion, pride, vanity or custom could all have played their part. The study of Henstridge revealed that the vast majority of those listed as buried in linen were buried in the church rather than the churchyard, but the idea that burial in linen was intended to demarcate elite burials cannot be proved from the burial registers. The difference in burial practice between two villages in close proximity suggests that local and regional differences in rates of change were rife. Overall it is clear that the meaning of linen changed before and after the 1666 and 1678 Burial in Wool and Woollen Acts. A cultural norm that reflected biblical practice was forcibly destroyed.

[83] 30.Car.II c.3, 'An Act for Burying in Woollen'.

## Conclusion

Flaxen and hempen textiles were essential in everyday life during the long eighteenth century. They clothed and protected bodies, beds, tables and goods in transit. Linen's popularity during the period 1678 to 1810 relied on its status as a necessity. It was retained and demand grew as the population rose because it fulfilled essential social needs across the human life cycle, from nappies for babies to shrouds for Jewish people. The dual life cycle approach used in this thesis allows in-depth interrogation of linen's necessity status. The cellulosic composition of linen and cotton meant that they possessed many similar physical properties – they were both fibres that produced bleachable, washable, colourfast textiles – but cotton was only gradually adopted for underwear, bed and table linens. The slow rate of change was due to linen's superior durability which meant that it offered better value for money until cotton prices reduced sufficiently. The technology to manufacture cotton warps was only developed in 1769 and it took another half century for prices to fall far enough to change established material culture traditions. As Riello argues, 'familiarisation' with cotton was needed before its use could become widespread.[1]

This thesis contributes to early-modern economic history by providing a new angle on linen manufacture, an industry central to protoindustrialisation debates. Chapter 3 contributes a micro-level understanding of small-scale manufacture on farms, the organisational form used across Europe for linen production. Key insights are that the Latham family's linen manufacture decisions were economically driven, whether purchasing flax fibre to spin into yarn or growing their own fibre when flax prices rose. Some yarn was retained for domestic use and the rest was probably sold to local weavers or manufacturers. Chapter 3 also emphasises the flexibility of domestic textile manufacture, highlighting the significant impact that Nany Latham's life cycle had on flaxen yarn production and how seasonality shaped spinning work. In consequence spinning households should not be considered to have a consistent yarn output but one that varied with the seasons and the life cycles of their inhabitants. The Lathams also lend support to Jan de Vries' notion of an early-modern industrious revolution and their industriousness indicates a cause of the continued use of linen – it was cost effective to produce linen for domestic use on

[1] Riello, *Cotton*, p. 112.

small farms unlike cotton. The Lathams (see Chapter 3) produced flaxen yarn at home, sold some and used the rest to clothe the family. They could achieve greater profits when undertaking this process with flax that they had grown themselves. In contrast it was impossible to grow cotton in Lancashire and the cotton fibre that the Lathams spun was most probably supplied by manufacturers, so could not be used to clothe the family.

The economics of institutional textile provisioning were examined through a case study of the Foundling Hospital. The Hospital considered it essential for the Foundlings to be taught to be industrious and textile work was a key means of training. A good work ethic and skills that allowed them to make future economic contributions meant that the Foundlings could support themselves in adulthood rather than relying on parish rates to survive. Business-centred attitudes to production were paramount at the London and Ackworth Hospitals. High savings as well as control over the speed of production were achieved through the in-house manufacture of linen garments and household linens for Foundling infants and children at Ackworth and elsewhere. In-house production was essential due to the high numbers of children received at Ackworth in the late 1750s and 1760s, with 13,442 shirts and shifts produced in a ten year period. Ackworth also supplied the London Hospital for a few years in the mid-eighteenth century by weaving yarn spun by the London Hospital and commissioning and purchasing linen cloth at Yorkshire markets. Correspondence between Ackworth and London emphasised the difficulties of procuring textiles to meet institutional demands.

The thesis also contributes to understandings of production's counterpart – consumption. Scholarship on early-modern consumption typically focuses on status, gender, geography and meanings. 'Traditional' goods such as linens are essential to understanding plebeian consumption – they were universal forms of consumer engagement. Underwear was owned by all and fulfilled the same fundamental purposes – tools to achieve cleanliness, which made other clothing last longer, indicators of respectability which provided white edgings at the neck and cuffs of an outfit. It was only quantity that allowed greater freedom from washing and a less pungent scent. Therefore we must not neglect the role of 'traditional' goods in eighteenth-century material culture because basic daily necessities provided the

base line from which contemporaries made other material decisions. To understand eighteenth-century material culture we must understand linen.

Status fundamentally altered relationships with linen. The Ackworth Foundlings were forced to spin flax; the Lathams chose to spin it to supplement their household income; while some amongst the elite chose to be buried in linen because the £5 fine presented no concern. Chapter 3 acts as a reminder of the centrality of domestic textile production within many eighteenth-century households and emphasises how time consuming domestic textile work was. Wealth and status led to social differentiations in linen ownership, determining quantity, quality and fibre type (see Chapter 4). The thesis supports historiography that suggests that the quantity of linen owned affected how frequently it could be washed and shaped perceptions of personal decency based on cleanliness. There was a hierarchy of bast fibres which was based on material properties and expressed through prices. Flaxen tear was at the top, then hempen tear, flaxen tow and finally hempen tow at the bottom. This variety made a basic level of decency available for poorer members of society while marking them out by linen that was visibly coarser and browner than the linens of the middling sorts. Underwear therefore acted as a crucial indicator of status during the long eighteenth century. Despite these differentiations, there were however, basic similarities across ranks. Infant clothing of the rich and poor was decorated using similar techniques, the quality of trimmings were the main differentiation (Chapter 1). Furthermore, most eighteenth-century people must have shared an appreciation of linen as a commodity to be bought and sold, while also understanding its capacity to express emotion, whether in the form of the aristocratic Derwentwater sheet, or a fisherman's bequest of sheets to his son (see Chapters 6 and 7).

One of this thesis' most significant findings has a transformative effect on understandings of gender and material culture. The discovery that plebeian men typically owned twice as many shirts as their wives emphasises the pragmatism of consumer activity (see Chapter 4). Survival of the household relied on higher-paid men's work outside the house, while most women's paid employment allowed them to work at home. Men were more reliant on respectable clothing to earn a living therefore they needed the change of underwear more than their wives. Plebeian respectability as defined by underwear was therefore differentiated by gender and marital status. This gender division offers the final death knell for theories of

consumption that rely on reckless female purchasing. It also requires a rethink of expectations of basic standards of cleanliness and decency. On washday women with only one shift had to stay at home and this impediment would have meant that they were unlikely to wash their underwear more than once a week. Yet, ownership of only one piece of underwear was not a sign of destitute poverty for married women. Most of their female peers would have been in the same situation and therefore would not have regarded it as disreputable but a necessary fact of daily life.

Geographies influenced relationships with linen. The long distance transport of goods across the globe and within England made packaging essential to protect commercial investments. Bast textiles were important options for packaging because they could be shaped around goods, waterproofed, marked and repaired (see Chapter 5). These characteristics all relied on the materiality of flaxen tow and hemp fibres. In particular their cheap prices combined with their strength made them essential in commercial activity, particularly transporting goods, because they reduced losses of goods and provided some security. Although England's global horizons expanded during the eighteenth century, it was still an intensely regional country as the differences in the incidence of coarse linens in inventories showed (see Chapter 4), further confirming the geographical emphasis of inventory studies. Regional differences in the ownership of 'linens' of flaxen and hempen tear and tow could reflect regional production and markets. They might represent textiles produced specifically for local sale or domestic production for domestic use. Chapter 6 implied regional differences in attitudes towards linens in wills, an idea supported by the differing rates of decline of burial in linen of two neighbouring Somerset villages in Chapter 7.

The meanings of linens were explored in Chapters 4, 6 and 7. Several eighteenth-century male novelists considered quantities and qualities of linen a valuable signifier of the status of their characters because they could be confident that these material signs would be implicitly understood by all of their readers. Chapter 6 revealed that linens were widely considered to be primarily commodities, which is significant given the extent of historiographical emphasis on the role of objects in expressing identity. The Chapter's systematic analysis of the relationship between emotion, touch and linen revealed that bodily intimacy did not endow linens with greater emotional

potency than other textiles. This finding acts as a reminder that emotional relationships with objects had their restrictions and their limits, that the economic should be understood alongside the emotional for a rounded understanding of an object's meaning. The power of economic imperatives was also revealed in Chapter 7 which showed that the 1678 Act for Burying in Woollen successfully forced widespread change in material culture customs. Economic concerns triumphed over established practices. The Act provoked relatively little comment within surviving documents despite its reversal of centuries of tradition. Only a few religious groups expressed concerns: Jewish people and Quakers because the Act challenged burial practices based on religious beliefs. Burials in linen continued in small numbers in two Somerset villages but the motivations are unclear, persistence of the practice could have related to social cachet, custom or beliefs.

New findings in the thesis also inform dress history. Aside from gendered ownership of underwear, insight into children's dress was provided in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 shows the limited impact of age and seasonality on plebeian infant dress and emphasises that the physical properties of textiles were paramount for infant clothing. In terms of decoration, plebeian infant gowns were printed using recent technology and the aesthetics of white-on-white and translucency were favoured by the elite and plebeians alike. Medical views did not always influence institutional provisioning. The Foundling Hospital ignored much of the advice of William Cadogan, the same advice that it ordered to be published. Infants under the care of the Foundling Hospital were provided with fewer garments, particularly linens, than were provided to poor mothers in receipt of charity lying-in boxes because nurses unlike mothers did not need to recover physically from childbirth and were able to undertake gruelling washing immediately. Chapter 2 provided further insight into the institutional uniforms worn by poor children which on one occasion even extended to their place of work after apprenticeship.

Between 1678 and 1810 England was transformed from a country which imported the vast majority of its linen from Europe to a country with a large national industry, whose additional needs were met by Scotland, Ireland and to a lesser extent continental Europe. In 1810 the British and Irish linen industries promised future growth as the industry gradually mechanised and technological improvements allowed the production of increasingly fine yarns by machine. However, twenty years

later linen was no longer the fabric of life. The British and Irish linen industries were in rapid decline, victims of low cotton prices, lengthier fibre preparation processes and a slower rate of innovation. Linen’s centuries of dominance were over.

## Appendix 1. The 1660 Book of Rates Valuations for Calculating Import Duties on Linens[2]

'Rates Inwards' for 'Linnen Cloth'

| Page | | | £ | s | d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 78 | | Callicoes fine or course, the piece | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Cambrick | the half piece, containing six ells and a half | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | the piece cont. 13 ells | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Canvas voc. | Dutch barras and Hessens Canvas the 100 ells cont. six score | 3 | 10 | 0 |
| | | French or Normandy Canvas and Line narrow, brown or white, the hundred ells containing sixscore | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| | | French Canvas and line-broad for tabling, being an ell and half a quarter and upwards, the hundred ells, containing six score | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Packing canvas, guttings and Spruce canvas the hundred ells, containing six score | 2 | 10 | 0 |
| | | Poledavies the bolt, cont. 28 ells | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Spruce, Elbing, or Quinsborough canvas, the bolt, containing 28 ells | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| | | Stript or turfted canvas with thread, the piece cont. 15 yards | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 79 | | Stript, tufted, or quilted canvas with silk, the piece containing 15 yards | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Stript canvas with copper, the piece containing fifteen yards | 4 | 0 | 0 |

[2] *A Subsidy Granted to the King of Tonnage, & Poundage and other Sums of Money Payable upon Merchandize Exported and Imported. Together with a Book of RATES* (London, 1667).

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| | | Vandalose or Vittery canvas the hundred ells containing six score | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Working canvas for cushions narrow, the hundred ells containing sixscore | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Working canvas broad, the hundred ells containing sixscore | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Working canvas of the broadest sort, the hundred ells containing sixscore | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| | Damask | Tabling of Holland making, the yard | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Towelling and Napkening of Holland making, the yard | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| | | Tabling of Silesia making the yard | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| | | Towelling and Napkening of Silesia making, the yard | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 80 | Diaper | Tabling of Holland, making the yard | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| | | Towelling and Napkening of Holland making, the yard | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | | Napkins of Holland making the dozen | 1 | 16 | 0 |
| | | Tabling of Sletia making, the yard | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| | | Towelling and Napkening of Sletia making, the yard | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| | Lawns | the half piece, containing six els [sic] and a half | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | the piece, cont. 13 ells | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | | voc. Callico lawns the piece | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| | | voc. French lawns the piece | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| | | voc. Sletia lawns the piece cont. between 4 and 8 yards | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Flanders<br>Holland Cloth | Flemish cloth<br>Gentish cloth<br>Isingham cloth<br>Overisils cloth [all] the ell<br>Rouse cloth | 0 | 5 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Brabant cloth<br>Embden cloth<br>Freeze cloth | | | | |
| 81 | [uncategorised] | Brown Holland<br>Bag Holland | [both] the ell | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | | Brittish the hundred ells, cont. five score | | 6 | 13 | 4 |
| | | Cowffeild cloth or plats the ell | | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| | | Driling and pack duck, the hund. ells, cont. six score | | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Elbing or Dansk cloth double ploy the ell | | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| | | Hamborow and Sletia cloth broad, the hund. ells cont. 120 white or brown | | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Hamborow Cloth narrow, the hundred ells, cont six score | | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Hinder lands, Middlegood, Headlake & Muscovia linnen narrow, the hund. ells, cont. six score | | 2 | 13 | 4 |
| | | Irish cloth the hundred ells cont. six score | | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Lockerams, vo. | Treager, grest and narrow, or common dowlas, the piece, cont. 106 ells | | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Broad dowlas the piece containing 106 ells | | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 82 | [uncategorised] | Minsters, the roul, cont. 1500 ells, at five score to the hundred | | 56 | 13 | 4 |
| | | Ozenbrigs, the roul containing 1500 ells at five score to the hundr. | | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Soultwich, the hundred ells, containing six score | | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Lubeck, narrow Sletia, narrow Westphalia, narrow Harford, plain napkenning and all other narrow cloth of high Dutchland and the East Countrey, white or brown and not | | 4 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| otherwise rated, the hundred ells, containing six score | | | |
| All Linnen of Germany, or high Dutchland and Silesia, not above three quarters and a half broad, shall be accounted narrow Linnen; and all above that breadth shall be accounted broad and pay accordingly. | | | |
| Stratsborough or Hamborow linnen, the ell | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Twill and Ticking of Scotland, the hundred ells cont. sixscore | 3 | 0 | 0 |

Source: *A Subsidy Granted to the King of Tonnage, & Poundage and other Sums of Mony Payable upon Merchandize Exported and Imported. Together with a Book of RATES* (London, 1667).

## Appendix 2. Hundreds – a Linen Quality Description

There were two forms of description for linen cloth during the long eighteenth century. Firstly names such as cambric, holland and dowlas were used to describe textiles from particular regions or those which were associated with particular material properties, weave structures and other characteristics. Secondly, the quality of the cloth, which was typically described in consumer settings through terms such as fine or coarse. When the production of flaxen cloth was discussed, linen was described by the set of the reed (the number of holes in the tool used to beat the warp into place), for example twelve hundred cloth, also written as 12 hundred or $12^{00}$. Hundreds describe the number of holes in the reed not the number of warps. It was standard practice to put two warp threads into each hole in the reed. Therefore there were twice as many warps as reed holes, so 12 hundred cloth or a 12 hundred reed contained 2400 warps.[3]

Contemporaries used a 'web-glass' to check how many hundreds there were in a piece of linen cloth. A web-glass was the predecessor to thread counters used by textile researchers today. The diameter of the hole in the Scottish web-glass was a $200^{th}$ of the set of the reed, so it showed a $200^{th}$ of the number of splits or holes in the reed. Different glasses were required depending on the width of the reed.[4] The Scottish method worked because it was standard to have two warps in every split in the reed, therefore a Scottish 6 hundred reed would typically contain 12 hundred warps. Therefore the web-glass diameter – whose size was based on the reed – was a $200^{th}$ of the reed width because it allowed for the fact that there were double the number of warps to splits. Peddie recommended using the glass more than once and averaging the count because weaving could be uneven.[5] English web-glasses were calibrated differently and were used to count the number of threads per inch, measuring a quarter or half inch.[6] John Duncan recorded the method for naming reeds in Lancashire and nearby counties in 1808: 'Their reeds are divided into

[3] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, pp. 12, 22; John Watson, *The Theory and Practice of the Art of Weaving by Hand and Power* (Glasgow: George Watson, 1863), pp. 39-42; Beaumont, *Mathematical Sleaing-Tables*, p. 40.
[4] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, p. 236; Peddie, *The Linen Manufacturer*, p. 217.
[5] Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*, p. 217.
[6] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, p. 236.

portions of 19 splits each, which they call *bares* and the number of these contained in 24 inches, is called the number of the reed'.[7]

Converting extant linen cloth into hundreds is simple. Although 'hundred' was the Scottish and Irish term, it is used because Arthur Young's observations on linen manufacturing in Ireland are unrivalled in detail, therefore it is possible to calculate the time taken to produce an extant linen (see Chapter 3). No comparable English sources were found. Furthermore, Irish and Scottish cloth was commonly used in England. To calculate the number of hundreds in an extant linen...

1) count the number of warp threads in an inch.
2) multiply the number of threads by the width of the textile – measured from selvage to selvage.
3) divide the total by 2 to get the number of hundreds.

Thread counts should be taken in several different places and the results averaged as Peddie suggested.[8] Averaging is necessary because the number of warps per inch vary in most surviving linen cloth. Two potential criticisms of the method can be dismissed. Linen shrank when it was taken off the loom which means the width of the cloth is different from the width of the reed but the method calculates the number of warps in the cloth and is unaffected by cloth shrinkage.[9] Secondly, while it is true that sometimes weavers varied from the standard of two yarns in each split, use of the web-glass would still lead to the description of the cloth based on a reed with two yarns in each split.

This simple trick has significant implications for the interpretation of eighteenth-century linen both extant and as discussed in text because it allows the application of eighteenth-century descriptions to surviving fabrics, meaning that they can be re-interpreted through texts and expand understanding of the texts themselves. Quality of yarn was described in several ways, Young mentions yarn for different hundreds of cloth and also uses descriptions of the number of hanks to the lb. Only the former descriptions are used because they can be related to surviving linens. The yarn-

[7] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, p. 23-24.
[8] Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*, p. 217.
[9] Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*, p. 23; Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*, pp. 201-02; Watson, *The Theory and Practice of the Art of Weaving,* pp. 49-50; 'Cloth always shrinks in the breadth after it is taken out of the loom'.

spinning speeds recorded by Young specifically note the quality of the textile to which they refer. When interpreting extant textile quality, it is essential to remember that the Scottish and Irish method of measuring in hundreds needs to be used carefully when comparing surviving linens of different breadths. An 8 hundred linen had 1600 warps, whether it was on a 37 inch or 40 inch reed, therefore quality was relative to the breadth of the cloth – 8 hundred linen produced on a 40 inch reed was coarser than 8 hundred linen produced on a 37 inch reed because it had fewer warps per inch.

## Glossary

| Term | Definition[10] | References |
|---|---|---|
| Bagging | Likely to have been coarse tow or hemp cloth used for bags or sacks. | |
| Barrow | A barrow was a wrapping petticoat, normally flannel, which possibly developed from the 'bed'. | Buck a) p. 28; Marshall, p. 57 |
| Battledore | Also known as a beetle, it was a piece of wood shaped like a (sports) bat used for beating washing and sometimes for smoothing it. | OED Online |
| Bays / baize | A coarse, tabby textile with a worsted warp and woollen weft. It was used for clothing and furnishing. | Montgomery, p. 159 |
| Bed | Not just a piece of furniture, a bed was also an infant garment. It was a long piece of cloth which wrapped a child from chest to toe. It was folded over the feet. | Buck a), p. 21; Marshall, p. 60 |
| Bed cords | Cords or ropes used to attach a sacking bottom to a bed. | |
| Beetling | Several definitions of beetling exist from rippling seed to pounding the final textile to give it lustre. This thesis uses Clarkson's definition, that it separated flax fibres into finer strands before heckling. | Clarkson, p. 477 |
| Biggin | A 'close-fitting cap worn over another cap, over a triangular piece of linen' or forehead cloth. Biggins were infant dress. | Buck a) p. 21 |

[10] The following works have been used for the glossary. 7 Geo. I, c.7; LMA, H01/ST/A/126/002/A/001, Linen Books, St Thomas' Hospital; *LEA* (Anon., *The Lady's Economical Assistant*); Buck (a) *Clothes and the Child*; Buck (b) *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*; Burnam, *A Textile Terminology*; Clarkson, 'The Linen Industry'; *Collins English Dictionary*, <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/jack-towel> [accessed 20 January 2016]; Cox and Dannehl, 'Clam - Club head', in *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820* (Wolverhampton, 2007), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820/clam-club-head> [accessed 24 February 2015], also 'Load – Longhee', <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820/load-longhee> [accessed 24 February 2015]; Duncan, *Practical and Descriptive Essays*; Ellis, *The Modern Husbandman*, III; J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open*; Houghton, *Collection*, II; Johnson, *Dictionary*, II; Levey, *Lace*; Montgomery, *Textiles in America*; Peddie, *Linen Manufacturer*; *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/> [accessed 20 January 2016]; Riello, *Cotton*; Styles (a) 'Fashion, Textiles'; Styles, (b) 'What were Cottons for?'; Sykas, 'Fustians'.

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|---|---|---|
| Blanket | 1) a warm bed covering<br>2) cloth wrapped around an infant, worn inside and outside. Used for a mantle by plebeians. | 2) Buck a) pp. 44-45, 257 |
| Bodice-coat | An exact definition, other than a coat for infants, has not been located. | |
| Body linen | Linen undergarments and accessories. | |
| Breaking / brakeing | The process of breaking the hard inner core of a flax stem into small pieces using a brake. | |
| Broad cloth | A fulled tabby-woven wool textile. Fulling was felting, so the weave was hidden under the felted surface. It was commonly used for men's tailoring. | Montgomery, pp. 177-79, 243 |
| Brown linen | Unbleached linen. | |
| Bucking | A stage in the bleaching of linen. The linen was soaked in warm lye for six to twelve hours then bleached on grass for four days with regular watering to keep it damp. The linen became a brighter white with each bucking. | Dunbar, pp. 26-33 |
| Buckram | Flaxen or hempen cloth covered in a gummy substance which stiffened it. | Montgomery, p. 181 |
| Caaming tables | Tables used by weavers to calculate the quantity or weight of yarn needed for a specific textile with a specific reed width. | |
| Calendering | The process of pressing linen using rollers to make it 'smooth, even, and glossy'. | Montgomery, p. 184 |
| Calico | A term used in the eighteenth century to describe textiles that were pure cotton tabbies. Calicoes could legally be printed for export in England but it was illegal to use printed calicoes in England from 1701-1774. Use of plain calicoes was still legal. | 7 Geo. 1, c.7; Buck a), p. 259; Riello, pp. 118, 123; Styles a) |
| Camblet | A worsted textile which could also be mixed with silk, generally a tabby. | Buck a) p. 258 |

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| Cambric | A fine linen often used for dress accessories for example headwear and handkerchiefs. | J.F., pp. 5, 37; Montgomery, p. 187 |
| Canvas | A coarse textile used for a variety of purposes including needlework, to line and stiffen garments, for clothing, towels and sails. | Montgomery, p. 191; Peddie, p. 371 |
| Carding | The process of cleaning and aligning wool fibres for spinning. | Montgomery, p. 375 |
| Check | A textile with a checked design. Checks were woven rather than printed, were typically blue and white in the eighteenth century and were fashionable dress textiles for plebeian women. | LMA, Foundling Billet Books |
| Cloths to pin before | See pin-cloth. | |
| Clout | A cloth. In the context of early modern infants they were nappies. | |
| Combing | The process of cleaning and aligning worsted fibres for spinning. | Montgomery, p. 375 |
| Cordage | Cords or ropes. | OED Online |
| Cotton / cotten / cotting | Terms used in the eighteenth century to describe textiles with linen warps and cotton wefts. Printed cottons could legally be used in England from 1701-1774 while the use of printed calicoes was illegal. | Styles a); Riello, pp. 118, 123 |
| Cotton-linen mix | A modern term for a mixed textile containing cotton and linen. It would have been known as a ‘cotton’ in eighteenth-century England. | |
| Damask | A weave type which uses floating threads (a warp or weft with sections that were not woven into the textile) to create a design. Damask designs are formed with a satin weave (over-five or more yarns, under-one) and are reversible. Design can be very complex. | Burnham, p. 36; Buck a) p. 258 |

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| Diaper | A weave type which uses floating threads (a warp or weft with sections that were not woven into the textile) to create a design. Diapers have a small repeating pattern, often in a lattice design. A twill weave is used to form the design (for example over-two/three/four, under-one). | Burnham, p. 36 |
| Dimity | A harness loom woven textile, either a pure cotton or cotton-linen mix. It could also be woven with silk. | Buck b), p. 225; Montgomery, pp. 218-19 |
| Dowlas / dowls | A coarse, strong, flaxen textile widely used for underwear for the poor. | J.F., p. 8; Johnson, II; Montgomery, p. 223 |
| Drab | 1) 'Thick, stout, closely woven overcoating, which was heavy and expensive'.<br>2) 'Undyed cloth of grey-beige colour' | Montgomery, p. 224 |
| Dressing (fibre) | The processes involved in turning a flax or hemp stem into fibre that could be spun. | |
| Ferret | 'A tape, ribbon, or binding'. | Montgomery, p. 237 |
| Flannel | A textile made from loosely spun wool. It was described by one contemporary as 'soft and spongy' rather than durable. | Montgomery, p. 238 |
| Flax | Also known as *Linum Usitatissimum* or common flax, the fibres in the flax stem are used to create linen. | |
| Flaxen | 1) textiles made from flax<br>2) a specific type of linen textile. It is not clear how 'flaxen' differed from other types of linen textile in the period. It was manufactured in England and Ireland in 1695. The term is used in inventories. | 2) J.F. pp. 15-16 |
| Flocks | Wool or torn cloth used to fill soft furnishings. | OED Online |
| Flowered | A textile decorated with a design incorporating flowers. The majority of the printed textiles in the Foundling Billet Books are 'flowered'. | |
| Forehead cloth | A 'triangular piece of linen' worn by infants under at least one cap. | Buck a) p. 21 |

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| Frock | 1) a coat for men.<br>2) An infant garment with a combined bodice and skirt which tied at the front unlike open-fronted gowns. | Buck a) pp. 36, 46; Marshall, p. 104 |
| Fustian | A specific type of textile often used for men's clothing made from a cotton and linen mix. It should not be used as a general description for all cotton-linen mixes (see 'cotton'). Before the eighteenth century the term 'fustian' was also used for wool and linen mix textiles. | Sykas, pp. 1-18; Styles b), p. 322 |
| Harden / hurden | Textiles made from hards or hurds. They were made from the coarsest fibres. | Houghton, II, pp. 391-96. |
| Hards / hurds | Other terms for tow. They were the tow from the first heckling so they were the coarsest fibres extracted. | Houghton, II, pp. 391-96. |
| Head-cloth | A head garment for an infant. It is unclear how this different from a forehead cloth, but both were listed in the printed lists on the Foundling billets. | |
| Heckle | The tool used to heckle (or comb) flax fibres. Some were as simple as nails hammered through a piece of wood. | |
| Heckling / hackling | The process of combing the flax to remove matted fibres and align the fibres for spinning. | |
| Hemp | Hemp fibre comes from the cannabis plant. | |
| Holland | Typically a higher quality linen. However it did come in lower qualities. It is possible that the term could have been used for linens that were not manufactured but were bleached in Holland. | Thesis pp. 61-63. |
| Hollie lace | Needlepoint lace (rather than bobbin lace). | Levy, p. 60. |
| Huckaback | A weave type which uses floating threads (a warp or weft with sections that were not woven into the textile) to create a design. Huckabacks have a tabby ground with a small repeating design on the whole textile. They were coarser and stronger than diapers and damasks. | Burnham, p. 72 |

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| Inkle / incle | 1) decorative tape or braid<br>2) linen thread | Buck b), p. 226; Hamilton, p. 304 |
| Irish | An ambiguous term for linen. Irish was originally made in Ireland. After Ireland developed bleaching expertise, the term could have been extended to linen bleached in Ireland. In 1817, setting tables for 'Irish linen' were given in a manual for weavers, suggesting that 'Irish' indicated a particular quality of linen. However it is likely that the quality of 'Irish' varied over the eighteenth century. | Peddie, p. 360 |
| Jack-towel | The eighteenth-century context of this word is unclear. A modern definition of a jack towel is a roller towel – one where the widths are 'sewn together'. | Collins Dictionary Online |
| Kenting | A fine lawn used for table linens and dress accessories. | J.F., pp. 5, 26; Montgomery, p. 272 |
| Lawn | A fine, 'delicate' linen used for underwear, aprons and accessories. | Montgomery, p. 275 |
| Lawn, clear | A near transparent lawn. | Cox and Dannehl |
| Lawn, long | The specific properties of long lawn are not known. | Cox and Dannehl |
| Leading strings / leaders | Reins used on children who were beginning to walk. They were sometimes sewn onto clothing. | Buck a) pp. 64-65 |
| Line | See tear. | |
| Linen / linnen / lining | A textile made from flax. | |
| Linens | Contemporaries described flaxen and hempen textiles as 'linens' due to the similar cultivation and processing of flax and hemp fibres and their overlapping properties. In Chapters 4 and 5 the term 'linen' describes flaxen and hempen textiles. In the rest of the thesis 'linen' is used to describe flaxen textiles alone. Plain linens are those that are not dyed, printed or painted. | |

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| Linsey-woolsey | A textile made from linen and wool used for clothing and furnishings. The white linen yarns can often be seen. | |
| Lockeram | A coarse linen cloth first made in Locronan, Brittany which was probably coarser than dowlas. | Montgomery, p. 279 |
| Long-stays | Used to position an infant's head, they were a form of swaddling. Long-stays were probably bands which went over the head and were pinned onto the chest. | Buck a) p. 28; Marshall, p. 220 |
| Lye / lee | An alkaline mixture of wood or fern ash and water used for washing and bleaching linens. | Dunbar, pp. 10-13 |
| Mantle | A shaped garment wrapped around infants, worn with separate sleeves or cut to enclose the arms. Some were like 'long sleeveless waistcoat[s]'. | Buck a) p. 28; Marshall, p. 161 |
| Mumpins | Partly processed flax, possibly also hemp, fibre. No evidence has been found which provides further information on mumpins. | |
| Osnaburg | A coarse unbleached textile made from flax or hemp first made in Osnabrück, Germany. It was used for trousers, sacks and bags. | Montgomery, p. 312 |
| Pearching | Inspecting cloth for damage. | |
| Petticoat | 1) skirt<br>2) underskirt | Buck a), p. 261 |
| Piece (of cloth) | A term used by manufacturers, traders and retailers to describe a complete, finished textile. A 'piece' was not a specific measure, but it referred to a very large bit of cloth often 20 or more yards long. | |
| Pilch | Cloth to cover a child's nappy. | Buck a), p. 261 |
| Pin-cloth | A protective infant garment which was an alternative to a bib or apron. It was 'made from a single piece of cloth meeting at centre back, it was hollowed at the neck with slits for the arms, and almost completely covered whatever was worn beneath'. They were given to | Buck, p. 31. |

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| | Foundling babies and older children. | |
| Pomerania linen | Linen from Pomerania. | |
| Pulling | The process of harvesting the flax. | |
| Putting-out system | A common manufacturing system in early-modern Europe. Merchants gave people raw materials to turn into a product (for example cotton to spin into yarn) which was collected and paid for at a later date. This work was typically undertaken at home. | |
| Reed | The bar used to beat the weft straight on the loom. | |
| Retting | The process of rotting off the outside of the flax stem. This could be done in a pond or on grass through dew retting. | |
| Rippling | The process of removing flax seed heads and seeds so that the seed can be used and is not ruined during retting. | Houghton, II, p. 395 |
| Robe | An infant garment which appears to have been similar to a mantle: open fronted and sleeveless. | Buck, a) p. 36 |
| Roller | A loose swaddling garment for infants wrapped around a baby's belly over the navel. | Buck, a) p. 28; *LEA*, p. 29 |
| Russia / Rushey | A coarse cloth made from flax or hemp in Russia. In 1695 flaxen Russia was whiter and wore better than hempen Russia. Uses included towels and cleaning cloths. | LMA, H01/ST/A/126/002/A/001; J.F. p. 35 |
| Sacking bottoms | Very coarse textiles tied onto the bed frame to hold the mattress up. | |
| Salop | Shropshire. | |
| Scotch / Scots | Linen produced in Scotland. | Buck a) pp. 262. |
| Scutching / swingling | The process of removing the remaining core and beginning to separate the fibres. Scutching was undertaken after breaking and before heckling. The fibre was laid on the edge of a piece of wood and hit with a | |

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| | wooden knife at a 45˚ angle. | |
| Selvage | The finished edge of a piece of cloth. The selvage runs along the length of the loom, therefore if the selvage survives on a textile the direction of warp and weft can be identified. | |
| Serge | ‘A twilled cloth with worsted warp and woollen weft’. Serge was a new drapery. It was middle weight, lighter than broad cloth cheap and hardwearing. | Montgomery, p. 344. |
| Setting tables | See caaming tables. | |
| Shalloon | ‘A cheap twilled worsted’. | Montgomery, p. 346 |
| Sheeting | A specific type of middling or coarser linen. It is unclear how it differed from flaxen or dowlas. | Duncan, p. 14; Peddie, p. 371 |
| Shift | The most basic item of underwear for women. It was a long shirt which touched the skin. Stays (corsets) were worn over the shift. | |
| Shirt | The most basic item of underwear for men. It was a long shirt which touched the skin. | |
| Shirting | Textiles used for shirts. Yarn weights needed for shirting were listed in weavers’ manuals but the more specific properties of eighteenth-century shirting are lost. | Thesis, p. 65. |
| Snarlings | A type of hemp fibre. According to the farmer William Ellis they were ‘the shortest, knotty, and worst of hemp’ and ‘they wear with very uneven Threads, and soon out’. | Ellis, p. 88. |
| Splits | The holes in the reed which the yarns run through on a loom. | |
| Stuff | A descriptor for any type of worsted textile. | Montgomery, p. 353 |
| Swaddling | Strips of linen used to wrap babies to keep them safe, warm and to ‘help the limbs grow straight’. | Marshall, p. 227 |
| Swanskin | A fine, tabby woollen textile ‘related to flannel and bay’. In | Montgomery, p. 354 |

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| | the late eighteenth-century the term was also used to describe ‘fleecy cotton’ or a calico with a raised nap. | |
| Tabby / plain weave | The most basic weave pattern, over-one under-one. | |
| Tear | Tear was produced from flax and hemp plants. Tear fibres were longer, finer and more expensive than tow fibres. The finest flaxen tear fibres were used to make transparent linens. | |
| Thread count | The number of warps (listed first) and wefts (second) in an inch or cm. Thread counts were and still are used to describe how fine or coarse a textile is. | |
| Thread stockings | Linen yarn stockings. | |
| Tow (fibre) | Tow was produced from flax and hemp plants. Tow fibres were shorter, coarser and therefore cheaper than tear fibres. They were used to produce coarser linens and were used for underwear and domestic linens as well as for commercial purposes. | |
| Tow / towen (textile) | Textiles made from tow. At their coarsest they could have pieces of stem woven into the textile. Tow textiles were used for underwear and bed sheets across England. | |
| Tucker | A ‘band of linen, muslin, silk or lace, plain or frilled, edging a low-necked bodice’. | Buck a), p. 261 |
| Twill | A weave type. Examples of twills are over-two/three/four and under-one or over-two and under-two, etc. Modern jeans are woven with a twill weave. Twill is used to create diaper designs. | |
| Warp | The yarn tied onto the loom. The weft goes over and under the warp. | OED Online |
| Weft / woof | The weft goes over and under warp to produce cloth on a loom. The weft is shunted from side-to-side by the weaver. | OED Online |

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| Wet-spinning | When water or steam is used in the flax spinning process. Wet-spinning allows the production of smoother flaxen yarns and was essential for the mechanised production of fine yarns. Mechanised wet-spinning was only developed in the late 1820s. | |
| Whitework | White embroidery on a white textile. | |
| Worsted | Long wool fibres, (typically) combed to prepare them for spinning. Worsted fibres are shiny. 'Worsted' also described textiles made from worsted fibres. Norwich and Yorkshire were key worsted manufacturing areas during the eighteenth century. | Montgomery, pp. 375-377 |
| Wrapper | Something used to wrap other goods. Wrappers were typically textiles and were commonly used to cover and protect goods in transit. | |
| Yarn | The product of fibre spinning. Yarn was used for weaving and knitting. | |

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