

An Elite Female Philanthropist in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham and the Refugees of the French Revolution

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Abstract

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Recent academic studies on aristocratic Georgian women as political hostesses, confidantes and campaigners have highlighted their ability to influence the course of events; their philanthropic peers, however, who initiated the process of reform, remain underexplored. The life of the Anglo-Irish Catholic Marchioness of Buckingham, who married into the Protestant Whig Grenville family, will be used as a lens through which to examine continuity and change in noble philanthropic practice in late eighteenth-century England. Her charitable activities will be placed within the broader context of traditional elite support for local communities. By showing that Lady Buckingham was empowered by her Catholicism and her status, the thesis will demonstrate that the organised philanthropy of the Victorian age had its roots in the Georgian era and was not the exclusive preserve of middling-sort Anglicans, as the literature has tended to imply.

The thesis will show that refugees of the French Revolution brought English aristocrats face to face with the consequences of disruption to the social order. The upheaval induced anxiety amongst the aristocracy and made them seek ways to justify and secure their status; it also gave opportunities for women to develop their organisational and practical skills by introducing new objects for their concern. Lady Buckingham, acting in concert with her husband, increased the scope of her benevolent activity by providing support to émigrés who all shared her religion, and many of whom were of her gender and status. Her increasing awareness of her own capabilities was accompanied by a growing consciousness of the influence she could exert.

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List of Abbreviations

AN: Archives Nationales, Paris

BL: British Library

BRO: Buckinghamshire Record Office / Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

DHC: Dorset History Centre

EH: Elton Hall

ERO: Essex Record Office

HL: Huntington Library, San Marino, California

HRO: Hampshire Record Office

KHLC: Kent History and Library Centre

NRO: Northamptonshire Record Office

SCA: Sheffield City Archives

SRO: Staffordshire Record Office

TNA: The National Archives

WDA: Westminster Diocesan Archives

WSHC: Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre

Introduction

Key concerns

In November 1807 Louis-Stanislas-Xavier, Comte de Provence, the future king Louis XVIII of France, arrived with his court at Gosfield Hall in Essex at the invitation of the Marquess of Buckingham.¹ This offer of support to the exiled French royal family was, on the face of it, simply an act of aristocratic hospitality, but if the focus is shifted to the actions of the marquess's wife, the Anglo-Irish Catholic marchioness,² a picture of striking female aristocratic agency emerges. The thesis analyses the twenty years of benevolent activity by the marchioness that led up to this invitation. Her story reveals much about continuity and change in noble philanthropic activity over the course of the eighteenth century. Tradition, wealth and ambition ensured continuity of charitable provision by the elite, but fear instilled by events in France increased its scope. It sparked a display of benevolence to justify aristocratic status and to stave off comparisons with the French elite. The evidence of Lady Buckingham's philanthropic career discussed below indicates that the change from charitable giving to organised philanthropy occurred earlier than previously allowed, and resulted in part from the influx of refugees from France. They arrived at a time when elite women who already exerted 'unofficial' political influence were finding new ways to justify and secure their status and that of their families. Georgian aristocratic women have been shown to be active political campaigners and hostesses; however, their philanthropic peers who initiated the process of reform are under-represented in the historiography.

The thesis argues that Lady Buckingham deployed a determined marital and kinship strategy within the Protestant Whig Grenville family. Her Catholicism set her apart from the majority of her peers, and separates her from the main narrative of early modern philanthropy. The thesis argues that throughout her life the marchioness's philanthropy was driven by familial, local and national concerns, but that the arrival of the émigrés provided increased opportunities to use organisational and practical

¹ George Nugent-Temple-Grenville (1753-1813), Earl Temple from 1779, Marquess of Buckingham from 1784.

² Mary Elizabeth Grenville (née Nugent) (1758-1812), Countess Temple from 1779, Marchioness of Buckingham from 1784.

skills which might otherwise have remained dormant. She exemplified the willingness and ability of elite women to act promptly and effectively in the face of need, and shows that organised philanthropy was not the exclusive preserve of middle-class Anglicans, as the literature has tended to imply. The thesis contends that fellow-feeling came into play as over half of those whom Lady Buckingham helped were of her gender and class, and all shared her religion, but the nature of the support she provided shows the emergence of a humanitarian dimension to philanthropic activity in England. It extended to those with whom she had no prior contact and no kinship links, and it not only transcended differences of nationality, it extended to citizens of a country with which Britain was at war.

Throughout her married life, in common with her peers, Lady Buckingham organised welfare support for families and established local schools, each intervention the manifestation of a patriotic drive to preserve life and encourage industriousness for the good of the nation. The thesis contends that this experience ‘at home’ equipped her to provide practical support to encourage self-sufficiency in large numbers of French clergy and lay émigrés, whose number included women, children, the elderly, the sick and the injured, as yet largely unidentified; they were occupied, educated and cared for by individuals, most of whom are unacknowledged by posterity. It highlights the moment when the continuum of elite traditions of hospitality and benevolence was marked by an abrupt instance of change and an urgent stepping-up of philanthropic activity was required: the defeat of the royalist émigré army at the battle of Quiberon in 1795 resulted in many French widows and fatherless children in London needing additional support. A focus on this pivotal moment highlights the ‘behind the scenes’ activity in support of a predominantly female group of refugees. The marchioness, it will be argued, was instrumental in the survival of many émigré families and demonstrates the influence that a strong-minded female could exert by bypassing official channels.

Historical Background

Common knowledge of historic immigration to Britain from France is generally limited to the Huguenots: an estimated 50,000 French Protestant refugees fled to England and 10,000 to Ireland following Louis XIV’s revocation of the Edict of

Nantes in 1685.³ Yet just four years after the Protestant Huguenots had been allowed to return to France, following the Edict of Tolerance, issued by Louis XVI in 1787, a decree against refractory priests resulted in a wave of Catholic emigration. Out of the estimated 24,000 to 25,000 Catholic clergy who left France in 1791 approximately 7,000 sought refuge in England and the Channel Isles.⁴ In addition to clerical refugees, a number of royals and aristocrats had decided, or been ordered or advised, to leave in 1789 at the first sign that the monarchy was at risk; a far greater (unknown) number left between 1793 and 1794 when 1,200 aristocrats out of a noble population of 140,000 were guillotined.⁵ The nature of the exodus in the aftermath of the French Revolution was quite different from that precipitated by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Firstly, those fleeing expected to return once the political situation had calmed down; secondly, for many, England, as a Protestant country, was not their first choice. Arriving in waves,⁶ sometimes after months, even years, in exile on the continent, these Catholic refugees were less sure of a welcome than the Protestant Huguenots had been, even from their fellow countrymen, those earlier refugees already settled in England. They were fewer in number, but still significant: according to Donald Greer, quoting from Napoleon's *Émigré Lists* held in the Paris Police Archives, there were 129,099 official émigrés; in addition he estimated approximately 20,000 to 30,000 unofficial émigrés.⁷ This suggests a possible total of 150,000 to 160,000 lay and clergy of all classes leaving France; the total number of those who sought refuge in the British Isles was estimated by Kirsty Carpenter to be 20,000 to 25,000.⁸ This later emigration from France to England, the Catholic émigrés of the late eighteenth century, approximately half the size of the Huguenot

³ 200,000 Huguenots left France in 1685 and settled in non-Catholic Europe. See G. Treasure, *The Huguenots* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). Approximately 1,000,000 left France during the following 40 years. See D. Greer, *The Incidence of the Emigration during the French Revolution* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1966), p.21.

⁴ N. Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, c.1750-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.201-2.

⁵ Figures obtained from M. Girouard, *Life in the French Country House* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), p.26. Others died in prison, but less than ten percent of those executed (160,000) were noble.

⁶ These ranged from the first optimistic departures to desperate last minute escapes. See H. Forneron, *Histoire Générale des Émigrés Pendant la Révolution* (Paris: Librairie Plon 1884-90), vol.1, book 2, pp.211-37. Greer highlighted the swell in numbers in 1793: Greer, *Emigration*, p.21.

⁷ Greer, *Emigration*, p.20.

⁸ K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London, 1789-1802* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), p.41.

influx, has left few traces in the public consciousness yet it constitutes a significant chapter in the British history of refugee reception.

The Storming of the Bastille in Paris on 14 July 1789 coincided with the recovery of George III from the first of several bouts of madness that would afflict him sporadically throughout the rest of his reign.⁹ This temporary return to health narrowly averted the regency of the Prince of Wales and was celebrated during a regal tour of England which demonstrated in a timely manner the accessibility of the ruling monarch to his people, in sharp contrast to the gap perceived to exist between Louis XVI and the citizens of France.¹⁰ The king was fêted wherever he went. Nevertheless, by 1791 the British government braced itself for civil unrest as republican ideology swept over from France, disseminated by a burgeoning print culture in England; inflammatory pamphlets, newspapers, poetry and even sermons fuelled a thirst for change.¹¹ The arrival of émigrés from 1791 onwards, dispossessed and terrorised victims of the new regime, in some ways played into the government's hand; it dispelled the initial optimism, by bringing British people face to face with the consequences of disrupting the established order. The well-travelled aristocracy showed outrage, shock and distress when they learnt that members of the French nobility and royalty personally known to them had been tortured, murdered or guillotined.¹² This caused shock waves across England, even amongst those favourable to the ideals of the revolution. On a political level, the issue of émigré reception was later complicated by the constant fear of invasion by France, most notably by Napoleon's army between 1797 and 1801, and again between 1803 and 1805.¹³ The involvement of the Temple-Grenville family in affairs of state during this volatile period was at the highest level. Buckingham's cousin, William Pitt

⁹ George III had suffered the first episode in 1788, the centenary year of the Glorious Revolution.

¹⁰ W. Doyle, *Aristocracy and its Enemies in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); M. Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹¹ A. Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy: Pamphlets, Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005); K. Francis and W. Gibson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.285-6.

¹² For example, the Princesse de Lamballe (1749-1792) was decapitated during the September Massacres and her severed head was paraded on a pike. See A. Fraser, *Marie-Antoinette* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2001), pp.363-4. Louis XVI was guillotined on 21 January 1793, Marie-Antoinette on 16 October 1793.

¹³ 1 February 1793 France declared war on Britain.

(1759-1806), was Prime Minister and his brother, William Wyndham, Lord Grenville (1759-1834), was Foreign Secretary.¹⁴ The Aliens Act was passed in 1793 to ensure the safety of British nationals by controlling émigré movement, yet despite the unstable political situation, the émigrés arrived at a time which was favourable to their reception on two counts: firstly, the steady pace of religious toleration meant that their Catholicism was less of a problem than it would have been before the passing of the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791; secondly, elite women who had for some time been acting as political hostesses, campaigners, confidantes and advisors,¹⁵ were finding other outlets for their energy and talents, including the exercise of philanthropy. Charitable acts, performed discreetly, were increasingly promoted as a suitable pursuit for wealthy aristocratic and time-rich middling-sort ‘ladies’.¹⁶ The émigrés thus benefitted from a growing and, certainly in the case of Lady Buckingham, capable, independent female involvement in acts of benevolence.

Historiography

The review of the current literature encompasses the British and French aristocracy and the revolution of 1789 which brought them into closer contact than ever before or since. The first section evaluates the historiography of the late eighteenth-century British elite and their obligations. It includes writing on aristocratic men and women, the social issues they tried to resolve, and the philanthropy that was one means of regulating behaviour. The literature was analysed to contextualise the state of the country in which the émigrés sought refuge. Greater emphasis will be placed on the host country in the argument, as this was the angle that most needed addressing. The second section provides an overview of current literature on the émigrés. Their activity in exile has been more extensively researched than that of their hosts, but there remain questions to be answered about individual experience.

Eighteenth-century Britain has been the subject of renewed scholarly interest since the 1980s, including works on the aristocracy and the impact of the French

¹⁴ Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister, 1783-1801 and 1804-6; William, Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary, 1791-1801 and Prime Minister, 1806-7.

¹⁵ E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-90* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

¹⁶ A. Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003; online edition, 2010).

Revolution on its stability. In 1984 John Cannon adopted a political approach in *Aristocratic Century*, a study of eighteenth-century England, contending that aristocratic survival was aided by the continued exclusivity of the peerage.¹⁷ This traditionalist view was reiterated by Ian Christie in *Stress and Stability* which presented late eighteenth-century Britain as a well-ordered patriarchal society with universally accepted values.¹⁸ The link between privilege and obligation in eighteenth-century British society was taken up in *The Aristocracy in England*, John Beckett's study of the relationship between landownership, economy and government from the seventeenth to the twentieth century which provided an overview of the economic responsibility that rested with the landed classes.¹⁹ In *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman* Paul Langford explored the issue of patrician responsibility, which involved demonstrating accessibility, whilst avoiding over-familiarity, and providing support whilst discouraging dependency.²⁰ He delved into the responsibilities of the landowning elite for the ordering of Georgian society. His essentially conservative view placed the emphasis on stability in the eighteenth century, rather than on threats to the status quo, such as the revolution in France.

The social issues that the responsible elite sought to address have been succinctly summarised by Joanna Innes in her contribution to Langford's *Eighteenth Century*.²¹ With an emphasis on social politics and its focus on well-being, as opposed to politics *tout court*, based on power, Innes listed amongst other problems to be dealt with by central and local government, those posed by poverty, sickness, vice and immorality. She explored the rise of associational culture, in particular the formation of societies for the reformation of manners which were 'conceived by some of their

¹⁷ J. Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁸ I. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

¹⁹ J. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

²⁰ P. Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1991).

²¹ J. Innes, 'Governing Diverse Societies', in P. Langford, *The Eighteenth Century, 1688-1815* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.103-39. For a detailed analysis of the evolution of social policy see J. Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Politics in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), especially Chapter 6 'Politics and Morals: The Reformation of Manners Movement in Later Eighteenth-Century England', pp.179-226. This work draws on her extensive backlist of articles on social policy and social reform and the role of associational culture.

elite sympathizers as only one part of a broader ameliorative programme', which included the foundation of schools.²² Of particular relevance to this study is her observation that 'women became more visible as philanthropic entrepreneurs as the century progressed.'²³ However, she confined her examples to middle-class women, citing the much published moralist, Hannah More (1745-1833), and the lesser known Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810), who dispensed practical advice in *Oeconomy of Charity*.²⁴ Innes's study left open the question as to whether elite women's charitable roles altered at the same time.

Any study into the activity of late Georgian aristocratic women, charitable or otherwise, has a firm foundation on which to build. Since Amanda Vickery's rejection of the separate spheres orthodoxy,²⁵ and the ground-breaking *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, edited by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus,²⁶ personal sources have increasingly been used to challenge the elite feminine stereotype of the dependent, subservient wife. Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the House*, increased awareness of the social and financial freedom that many elite Georgian women enjoyed, particularly in the home, but fell short of stressing the extent of their influence in matters other than décor, fashion, childcare and education.²⁷ There is now a greater awareness of the diversity of eighteenth-century aristocratic female experience through studies of individual women, based on diaries, letters and family archives. Hitherto 'hidden' female influence within aristocratic households has emerged from studies such as Amanda Foreman's on Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, Clare Haynes' article on Mary, Duchess of Norfolk, 'a woman of

²² Innes, 'Governing Diverse Societies', p.127.

²³ Ibid., pp.127-8.

²⁴ Ibid., p.128. See for example, H. More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1799); S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity* (London, 1787).

²⁵ A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, vol.36, no.2 (1993), pp.383-414.

²⁶ H. Barker and E. Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow: Longman, 1997).

²⁷ R. Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses, 1670-1830* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2003). See also J. Martin, *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004).

business' and determined political petitioner within a Catholic household, and Emma Purcell's recent thesis on women's agency within the Montagu property network.²⁸

Examples such as these owe much to the growing corpus of writing on the role of women in maintaining aristocratic hegemony.²⁹ Elaine Chalus provided evidence of a 'diverse group of women who took an active part in patronage even at the highest of political levels'.³⁰ In 2005, in *Elite Women in English Political Life*, she explored the agency of women in perpetuating aristocratic political dominance, demonstrating that elite women participated in networking to establish and maintain patronage links, in giving and seeking political advice, and in political canvassing and entertaining.³¹ Chalus raised awareness of legitimate, unrecorded, female intervention in politics. In his review of Chalus's work, Cannon advocated a broader definition of political life for future studies. He called for an exploration of another strand of female participation in 'political' activity: charitable and philanthropic acts such as the patronage or support of hospitals and charity schools. He suggested that elite female involvement in these institutions, as well as within the 'parliamentary definition of political life' as exposed by Chalus, could provide an additional explanation for the longevity of aristocracy by showing its 'acceptable face'.³²

Within a timeframe in line with this thesis, Judith Schneid Lewis's *Sacred to Female Patriotism* provides both the benchmark and framework for further studies into elite female political and social activity in the wake of the French Revolution.³³ Using,

²⁸ A. Foreman, *The Duchess* (1998; London: Harper Perennial, 2008); C. Haynes, '“Of her Making”: The Cultural Practice of Mary, 9th Duchess of Norfolk', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol.31, no.1/2, (2012), pp.77-98; E. Purcell, 'Women's Agency within the Montagu Property Network c.1709-1827', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 2018.

²⁹ See for example, S. Richardson and K. Gleadle (eds.), *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); A. Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), especially pp.89-102; J.S. Lewis, '1784 and All That: Aristocratic Women and Electoral Politics'; A. Foreman, 'A Politician's Politician: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the Whig Party', in Barker and Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp.179-204.

³⁰ Chalus, 'To serve my friends', (p.59). See also idem, 'Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late Eighteenth-Century England', *Historical Journal*, vol.43, no.3 (2000), pp.669-97.

³¹ E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c.1754-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

³² J. Cannon, 'Elite Women in English Political Life c.1754-1790 by Elaine Chalus', *English Historical Review*, vol.121, no.493 (2006), pp.1185-6.

³³ J.S. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in Late Georgian Britain* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

amongst other examples, the role of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, as political canvasser for Charles Fox during the 1784 Westminster election,³⁴ she examined the movement of aristocratic women at the end of the eighteenth century away from such public and obvious political manoeuvring towards what could be termed ‘social work’. She made a clear distinction between philanthropy, which she stated was beyond the scope of her study,³⁵ and the socio-political activity associated with property ownership which was central to her argument. Paternalistic actions were politically expedient. Local acts of ‘charity’, such as looking after ones’ tenants, were a means of ensuring loyalty and votes. However, the intent may not be obvious from looking at a single type of historical source.

Lewis stated: ‘The question of upper-class philanthropy is a large one that has successfully been dealt with elsewhere.’³⁶ The subject had indeed been broached by Christopher Christie, who noted in *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* that: ‘charitable acts were ... a way of establishing women’s independent activity’ but he gave no real clue as to the nature and extent of that independence, confining his examples in the main to gifts rather than deeds.³⁷ With the exception of Donna Andrew’s ‘Noblesse Oblige’ referred to below,³⁸ philanthropy studies to date have tended to focus on the Victorian era in England and on the leisured upper middle class.³⁹ In 1974 Frank Prochaska highlighted the fact that organised charity, generally associated with the Victorians, actually began in the late Georgian era,⁴⁰ but as the main focus of his research was on female philanthropy in nineteenth-century England, there is still a gap to be filled. His 1980 study was reprinted in 2003 and is now available online, evidence that it has not been displaced and is still the

³⁴ Examined earlier in J.S. Lewis, ‘1784 and All That: Aristocratic Women and Electoral Politics’ in Vickery, *Women, Privilege and Power*, pp.89-122. See also Foreman, *The Duchess*, p.84.

³⁵ Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, p.25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ C. Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.104-11.

³⁸ D. Andrew, ‘Noblesse Oblige: Female Charity in an Age of Sentiment’, in J. Brewer and S. Stave (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.275-94.

³⁹ See for example, J. Gerard, ‘Lady Bountiful: Women of the Landed Classes and Rural Philanthropy’, *Victorian Studies*, vol.30, no.2 (1987), pp.183-210.

⁴⁰ F. Prochaska, ‘Women in English Philanthropy, 1790-1830’, *International Review of Social History*, vol.19, no.3 (1974), pp.426-45. See also Prochaska ‘The Changing Fashions and Fortunes of Philanthropy’, *Archives*, xxxvi, (2011) pp.123-4.

standard point of reference on the subject.⁴¹ The appendices list societies founded between 1699 and 1900 showing those which were managed solely by women.⁴²

Andrew's 'Noblesse Oblige' is a work which could usefully be matched by similar studies of Georgian elite women in order to create a broader picture of how their judicious acts of charity perpetuated the tradition of paternalism, but at the same time brought about changes in practice and outcome. In 1991, Langford had drawn attention to the thirty volumes of correspondence documenting the philanthropic activity of Margaret Georgiana, Lady Spencer (1737-1814).⁴³ In 1995, in 'Noblesse Oblige' Andrew exposed the extent of the countess's work by scrutinising this collection of 'begging letters' which revealed 'the web of relationship, the nexus of gift and obligation, of property and protection' that Lady Spencer maintained.⁴⁴ Putting the spotlight on the diligence and modesty of this deeply religious aristocratic woman, whose charitable work had barely been glimpsed until then, Andrew demonstrated that the private practice of philanthropy was an accepted elite female responsibility, an activity quite separate from the charitable foundations she explored in *Philanthropy and Police*. Such organisations fulfilled the dual purposes of allowing for a public display of benevolence by exemplary male benefactors, whilst promoting a regime of hard work and moral rectitude in the recipients.⁴⁵ Langford had contended that '[Countess Spencer's] charitable activities were unmatched by any of her contemporaries'⁴⁶ yet, as Andrew pointed out, her 'private' acts of charity were often carried out in her husband's name, even after his death.⁴⁷ This suggested that further studies of personal correspondence could reveal that philanthropy was a larger part of Georgian aristocratic female life than previously allowed.

Andrew's study challenged the perception of philanthropy as a Victorian female enterprise, a line of argument taken up by Anne Stott in her biography of Hannah

⁴¹ F. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (1980; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.231-45.

⁴³ Langford, *Public Life*, p.572.

⁴⁴ Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige', p.275.

⁴⁵ Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁴⁶ Langford, *Public Life*, p.572.

⁴⁷ Andrew 'Noblesse Oblige', p.276.

More.⁴⁸ More died four years before the accession of Queen Victoria, yet Stott entitled her work: *Hannah More: the First Victorian*. The title emphasises that notions of Victorian feminine virtue had their roots in the eighteenth century and were promoted by a much-published Georgian female moralist. Contemporary evidence located during research for this thesis links Hannah More to Lady Buckingham making it possible to reveal an aristocrat displaying the same level of commitment to good causes as her middle-class contemporary. As noted earlier, the various means by which individuals at all levels of society were able to influence local and national reaction to social problems was demonstrated by Joanna Innes in her work on the formation of social policy in the eighteenth-century,⁴⁹ but the extent of aristocratic female agency at local and national level remains to be shown, in particular how far their efforts could be considered instrumental in bringing about larger scale social change.

Studies of philanthropy in Ireland have highlighted the eighteenth century as a period during which women exercised an influential role in bringing about changes in philanthropic practice. The work of Lady Arbella Denny (1707-92), founder of the Dublin Magdalene Society in 1765, was cited by Rosemary Raughter as ‘less a cause than an indicator of an increasing commitment on the part of upper- and middle-class women to organised philanthropy,’⁵⁰ suggesting that changes in practice may have taken place earlier in Ireland than in England. A major change was the increased female commitment to charities for women and children, which Karen Sonnelitter highlighted as a means by which an elite woman could ‘carve out a sphere of influence’.⁵¹ She emphatically described Lady Arbella Denny as ‘a unique figure’,⁵² a description which may also fit Lady Buckingham; alternatively, if more examples

⁴⁸ Stott, *Hannah More*. See also D. W. Elliot, ‘“The Care of the Poor is her Profession”: Hannah More and Women’s Philanthropic Work’, *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, vol.19, no.2 (1995), pp.179-204.

⁴⁹ Innes, *Inferior Politics*.

⁵⁰ R. Raughter, ‘A Natural Tenderness: The Ideal and Reality of Eighteenth-Century Female Philanthropy’, in M. Valiulis and M. O’Dowd (eds.), *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997), pp.71-88. See also Raughter, ‘A Discreet Benevolence: Female Philanthropy and the Catholic Resurgence in Eighteenth-Century Ireland’, *Women’s History Review*, vol.6, no.4 (1997), pp.465-87.

⁵¹ K. Sonnelitter, *Charity Movements in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Philanthropy and Improvement* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), p.125.

⁵² *Ibid.* p.123. See also Clarissa Campbell Orr’s study of Lady Arbella in ‘Aunts, Wives, Courtiers: the Ladies of Bowood’, in N. Aston and C. Campbell Orr (eds.), *An Enlightened Statesman in Whig Britain: Lord Shelburne in Context, 1737-1805* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), pp.51-78.

come to light, they may both turn out to be representative of their class. Either way, there is the potential to bring the marchioness into the historiography of female philanthropy, linking activity in Ireland with activity in England: she spent some of the early years of her married life in Dublin and her observation of charitable practices there - in particular the employment of children - may have reinforced her commitment to improving the lot of the poor through providing work. The foundation of local schools by Lady Buckingham was briefly recorded in Michael Bevington, *Stowe House*,⁵³ but the fact that they were Schools of Industry, and the extent of her role in their establishment and management remain unexplored.

The ability for women to undertake charitable schemes was dependent upon marital approval and access to funds. The healthy, if complicated, financial status of Lord Buckingham was explored by John Beckett in *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*,⁵⁴ in which he traced assets acquired through inheritance and marriage, and charted the acquisition and loss of land and property during the family's 200 year tenure of Stowe in Buckinghamshire. A chapter on the Nugent-Grenville marriage provided a detailed analysis of Lord Buckingham's gain in marrying an heiress, Mary Nugent, counterbalanced by inherited financial responsibility.⁵⁵ Whereas Beckett's study focused on the economic implications for the estate, other studies of elite marriages have provided useful discussions on the impact of marriage settlements on the lives of aristocratic women.⁵⁶ Those which focus on the legal and practical implications of marriage settlements, such as Susan Staves' *Married Women's Property*, built on the work of John Habakkuk.⁵⁷ Examinations of the practical and emotional implications of arranged marriages, such as Baird's *Mistress of the House* and Anthony Fletcher's *Growing up in England*, owe much to the views of Lawrence Stone and Randolph Trumbach, and provide a nuanced interpretation of elite family life.⁵⁸ Each of these

⁵³ M. Bevington, *Stowe House* (1990; London: Paul Holberton, 2002), p.17.

⁵⁴ J. Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles: Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710-1921* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.65-98.

⁵⁶ See for example, S. Moller Okin, 'Patriarchy and Married Women's Property in England: Questions on Some Current Views', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol.17, no.2 (1983-4), pp.121-38.

⁵⁷ S. Staves, *Married Women's Property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1990); H. Habakkuk, 'Marriage Settlements in the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., vol.32 (1950), pp.15-30.

⁵⁸ Baird, *Mistress of the House*; A. Fletcher, *Growing up in England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008); L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York:

studies raises questions about kinship dynamics based on financial dependence. The study of Lady Buckingham's philanthropy within the context of her marriage benefits from, and has the potential to add to, the literature on eighteenth-century marital arrangements by determining the extent to which her activities were part of a mutually agreed strategy.

This section turns attention to the French beneficiaries of Lady Buckingham's philanthropy. Despite a sizeable body of secondary literature on the Revolution only slight and sporadic attention had, until recently, been paid to the victims of that upheaval. Amidst studies undertaken in the 1960s, Donald Greer's *The Incidence of Emigration during the French Revolution* was the only published work of that decade to give the subject of emigration serious consideration. Greer opened up the subject to academic scrutiny by presenting data which is a solid starting point for any study of emigration from France during the Revolution.⁵⁹ It is a thorough and clear exposition of Émigré Lists held in the police archives in Paris and is still considered to be the most comprehensive and reliable numerical analysis of the exodus. In the same decade, Margery Weiner, pursuing a personal interest in the subject, gathered anecdotal evidence which was published as *The French Exiles, 1789-1815*.⁶⁰ Written in a light and easy-reading style with few footnotes, it does not stand up to scrutiny as an academic text. However, treated with caution, this unique account of émigré experience is valuable for two reasons: firstly, the narrative, which focuses on a small group of émigrés in the parish of St Marylebone, personalised the exodus enumerated by Greer; secondly, the appendix and bibliography provided a route to sources on the émigrés.

In 1989, the bi-centenary of the French Revolution, Harry Thomas Dickinson's *Britain and the French Revolution* brought together in a succinct and accessible style a variety of essays on the impact on Georgian Britain of the Revolution and the

Harper and Row, 1977); R. Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

⁵⁹ Greer, *Emigration*.

⁶⁰ M. Weiner, *The French Exiles, 1789-1815* (London: John Murray, 1960).

Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.⁶¹ In the same year, other contributors to the field included Derek Jarrett who adopted a comparative approach in *Three Faces of Revolution: Paris, London and New York*.⁶² These works did not encompass the emigration but provided a useful analysis of revolutionary upheaval and, by implication, demonstrated clearly that the Britain to which the émigrés fled was an unstable one, its peace with France recent and uneasy and its population excitable and susceptible to revolutionary propaganda. This provided a new angle which contested the view of stability presented in works on the aristocracy, discussed earlier. Whilst absent from these and other works on the Revolution in the 1980s, the subject of the emigration had been broached in France in 1979,⁶³ and England in 1981 when Philip Mansel explored in *Louis XVIII* the itinerary of the exiled future king of France and his court through Europe.⁶⁴ Mansel emphasized the factions and disagreements amongst the aristocratic and royal émigrés in transit on the continent. The arrival of the Bourbon court in England in 1807 presented a dilemma for the government; they simultaneously welcomed and sought to control the influx and movement of royal émigrés.⁶⁵ As well as potentially compromising peace with Napoleonic France, supporting this latest group of disempowered Catholics could pose a threat to the steady progress of religious toleration in Britain.

Works on the progress of Catholic toleration, and on the impact of the presence of émigrés on British attitudes towards Catholics, identified the most direct challenge to English liberality as the clerical refugees who arrived en masse, and whose Catholicism was highly visible in their clothing and demeanour.⁶⁶ Their presence in

⁶¹ H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1989). See also C. Emsley, 'The Impact of the French Revolution on British Politics and Society', in C. Crossley and I. Small (eds.), *The French Revolution and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.31-62.

⁶² D. Jarrett, *Three Faces of Revolution: Paris, London and New York in 1789* (London: Philip, 1989).

⁶³ Duc de Castries, *Les Hommes de l'Émigration* (Paris: Librairie Jules Tallandier, 1979).

⁶⁴ P. Mansel, *Louis XVIII* (1981; London: John Murray, 2005).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.77-110. Mansel's most recent contribution to scholarship on royal émigrés is: 'Courts in Exile: Bourbons, Bonapartes and Orleans in London, from George III to Edward VII' in D. Kelly and M. Cornick (eds), *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2013).

⁶⁶ C. Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c.1714-1780: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); P.G. Paz (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century English Religious Tradition: Retrospect and Prospect* (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood, 1995); D. Rice, 'Combine against the Devil: the Anglican Church and the French Refugee Clergy in the French

significant numbers had the potential to unsettle even the most open-minded Protestants and destabilise the progress of Catholic toleration. Yet, as Nigel Aston observed, animosity should not be overstated: charitable relief was provided by the propertied elites stirred into action by ‘a sense of shame, pity and incredulity at the mistreatment of fellow Christians by the Revolutionaries’.⁶⁷ Empirical research conducted in 1986 by Dominic Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles*, had opened up this area of modern ecclesiastical history which had received scant prior attention.⁶⁸ It documented the flight of clergy and bishops from France following the 1790 decree against refractory priests, examined their reception in Great Britain and the Channel Isles, and provided a biographical list. Accompanied by a series of articles published between 1975 and 1986,⁶⁹ it remains the most authoritative work on the subject and was invaluable in providing leads for the current study.

A lesser number of female religious were also forced to leave France, but until recently their experience of revolution and emigration had barely been considered. Margaret Mason opened up the subject in 1996 in an article on Benedictine nuns who fled from Montargis to Bodney Hall in Norfolk in 1793,⁷⁰ but it is only recently that progress has been made in matching the research on male religious conducted by Bellenger, due in part to the lack of easy access to relevant sources. The recent publication of exiled convents’ records, co-ordinated by Caroline Bowden, will make it easier to fill this gap in the future.⁷¹ The final volume, ‘Convents and the Outside World’ is the most relevant.⁷² It contains a transcript of a Benedictine nun’s account

Revolution’, *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, vol.50, no.3 (1981), pp.271-81.

⁶⁷ N. Aston, ‘Burke, Boisgelin and the Politics of the Émigré Bishops’ in K. Carpenter and P. Mansel (eds.), *The French Émigrés in Europe and the Struggle against the Revolution* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999), pp.197-213 (p.197).

⁶⁸ D. Bellenger *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789: An Historical Introduction and Working List* (Bath: Downside Abbey 1986), p.viii.

⁶⁹ For example, D. Bellenger, ‘The Abbé Carron’, *London Recusant*, vol.6 (1976), pp.19-36 and idem, ‘Dorothy Silburn (1753-1820), Mother of the French Exiled Clergy’, *Northern Catholic History*, vol.17(1983), pp.14-16, 28.

⁷⁰ M.J. Mason, ‘Nuns of the Jerningham Letters: The Hon. Catherine Dillon (1752-1797) and Anne Neville (1754-1824), Benedictines at Bodney Hall’, *Recusant History*, vol.23, no.1 (1996), pp.34-78.

⁷¹ C. Bowden, (ed.), *English Convents in Exile, 1600-1800*, parts 1 and 2, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012 and 2013).

⁷² *Ibid.*, part 2, vol.6, C. Mangion, ‘Convents and the Outside World.’

of daily life in Paris during the revolution, followed by an account of Augustinian nuns' journey from Bruges into exile in England.⁷³

In 1999 Philip Mansel and Kirsty Carpenter edited a volume of essays, *The French Émigrés in Europe*,⁷⁴ to which both Bellenger and Aston contributed.⁷⁵ It added significantly to an awareness of the diversity of émigré experience and opened up several new angles by exploring the distribution, movement and activity of different classes of émigrés, noting the controls imposed on them by the British government. It provided little more than an impression of their reception and of the support given, other than financial, leaving work to be done on this aspect. The collection, which includes essays on French émigrés in Hungary, Portugal, Prussia and the United States, highlighted the impermanence and instability of exile.⁷⁶ Carpenter's chapter was on émigrés in London,⁷⁷ a study she expanded in *Refugees of the French Revolution*, published in the same year. She explored their living conditions, leisure and employment in England, highlighting the fact that the exile was expected to be temporary. Most were not interested in integration; the aim was economic and physical survival, and preparation for a return to France. Integration was neither expected by the 'guests' nor desired by the government. As Carpenter's study concentrated on the city, there remains scope for another dimension to be added by looking at émigré reception in country houses.

Appendix 2 in *Refugees of the French Revolution* includes figures showing dates of emigration from France, distribution of lay and clergy émigrés in and outside London, British subscribers to the voluntary relief fund and émigrés receiving relief, including servants.⁷⁸ This quantitative research into émigré composition and

⁷³ 'An Account of the Community during the French Revolution' (Colwich MSS, P9 MS 45a); 'An Account of the Austin Nuns Travels from Bruges to England - the Year 1794' (Maryland MSA SC 2406, M 9510-1).

⁷⁴ K. Carpenter and P. Mansel (eds.), *The French Émigrés in Europe and the Struggle against the Revolution* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999).

⁷⁵ D. Bellenger, ' "Fearless Resting Place": The Exiled French Clergy in Great Britain, 1789-1815' and N. Aston, 'Politics of the Émigré Bishops' in Mansel and Carpenter (eds.), *French Émigrés in Europe*, pp.198-214 and pp.185-97.

⁷⁶ Carpenter and Mansel (eds.), *French Émigrés in Europe*; K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London, 1789-1802* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999).

⁷⁷ Carpenter, 'London: Capital of the Emigration', in Carpenter and Mansel, *The French Émigrés in Europe*, pp.43-6.

⁷⁸ Carpenter, *Refugees*, pp.191-205, based on TNA T 93.

distribution built on that presented over thirty years earlier by Greer. Carpenter used it to inform qualitative studies of the groups represented by the figures. When she noted: ‘Britain, which was the only country to provide the mass of émigrés with financial support, is a very good example of the internal characteristics of the movement and the diversity of the people involved’,⁷⁹ she made it clear that an awareness of this diversity of experience is key to any real understanding of the exodus. Her enhanced quantitative analysis gave an idea of the variety of backgrounds to which the émigrés belonged and the lives and livelihoods, and often families, they left behind. As the numbers have been recorded, approximate as they are, the call is now for personal stories to be told, particularly of under-represented groups such as women, children, the sick and the elderly.⁸⁰

In ‘The French Diaspora and the Wider World’ Aston observed that the French émigré population ‘existed as a counter-cultural alternative to what France had suddenly and so notoriously become: a militarized republic that had rejected Catholic Christianity.’⁸¹ Catholicism unified this group, but they otherwise had little in common with each other, and Aston drew attention to the pitfalls of generalizing about their experience of emigration. Like Carpenter, he returned to Greer’s figures, noting that only 42 percent of émigrés belonged to the nobility and the clergy.⁸² Of those belonging to other classes, he estimated 17 percent to be professional men or clerks, 14 percent artisans and 20 percent small farmers and day labourers, 51 percent of the total emigration figures. He observed that ‘in the half century since Greer wrote, research on non-elite exiles has been insignificant and it remains one of the most glaring inadequacies in scholarship on the Revolution.’⁸³ At the same time he noted that the study of female emigrants had focused on the elite; yet not even this is complete as writing has perpetuated the focus on personalities of note such as those selected earlier in the century by Joseph Turquan, *Les Femmes de l’Émigration*

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.177.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.176.

⁸¹ N. Aston, *The French Revolution, 1789-1804: Authority, Liberty and the Search for Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.236-7.

⁸² Ibid., pp.237-8.

⁸³ Ibid., p.238.

and Jules Bertaut, *Les Belles Émigrées*.⁸⁴ In fact, until recently little research on émigrés of any class had been undertaken by anyone apart from Mansel, Carpenter and Bellenger, leaving many gaps still to be filled in research on all classes, including the elite.

One of the more recent additions was made by Simon Burrows in *French Exile Journalism*, a study of the London-based émigré press which, like other aspects of print culture provided occupation and remuneration to impoverished refugees, but it also gave them a means of influencing events.⁸⁵ Having contributed to Carpenter and Mansel's *French Émigrés in Europe* in 1999, he praised Carpenter in 2000 for filling a gap in the scholarship by analysing the social composition of successive waves of arrivals and offering 'valuable political and ideological insights.'⁸⁶ The return of the majority of émigrés to France in 1802, Carpenter argued, demonstrated that, within a diverse range of political leanings, 'most émigrés were more anti-republican than pro-Bourbon.'⁸⁷ Juliette Reboul subsequently delved deeper into the motivational forces at work in both the English benefactors and the French refugees. *French Emigration to Britain in Response to the French Revolution* focused on memories, representations, ideologies and cultural exchange to analyse identity created in exile.⁸⁸

Reboul shed light on the manipulation of identity by both the displaced persons and their hosts by charting the protean depiction of émigrés as alien, threatening, morally inferior, innocent and vulnerable. Using advertisements seeking and offering employment and accommodation, she brought into the historical picture of the emigration the service-providers and skilled artisans displaced by the dismantling of the court of Versailles, a class-wide disruption to the luxury market that had previously been largely overlooked. Reboul thus provided a new focus on the lower

⁸⁴ J. Turquan, *Les Femmes de l'Émigration* (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1911); J. Bertaut, *Les Belles Émigrées : La Comtesse de Polastron, Madame de Flahaut, la Comtesse de Balbi, la Marquise de la Tour du Pin, la Princesse Louise de Bourbon Condé* (Paris: Flammarion, 1947).

⁸⁵ S. Burrows, *French Exile Journalism and European Politics, 1792-1814* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 2000).

⁸⁶ Burrows 'Review of Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*', *International History Review*, vol. 22, no.3 (2000), pp.641-3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.642.

⁸⁸ J. Reboul, *French Emigration to Great Britain in Response to the French Revolution* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

echelons of the émigré population and highlighted the fact that support was provided to all classes by all classes, a universality that had not been sufficiently emphasized before.⁸⁹ Yet this angle marginalises aristocratic agency on both sides of the refugee equation, leaving those who led unobtrusive lives under-represented. The Comtesse de Saisseval provides one such example; stories of her more vocal kinswomen have been used imaginatively to reconstruct a heterogeneous picture, but one which is still only partial.⁹⁰

In particular, Reboul's approach underplays the potency of elite British female philanthropic intervention. The memoirs of returned émigrés often lauded in unspecific yet effusive terms the generosity of the host country, whilst congratulating themselves on their own resilience.⁹¹ Faced with these 'biased and anachronistic' descriptions,⁹² Reboul restricted herself to a brief mention of the 'generous efforts' of a small number of 'aristocratic ladies', including Lady Buckingham, who had earlier featured *en passant* in Bellenger and Carpenter.⁹³ Chapter Four, 'British Charities and the Émigré Ideological Pursuit of Social Inequality',⁹⁴ is the most relevant to this study. Here Reboul exposed the manipulation of relief funds, calculated to favour a continuance of *ancien régime* distinctions. Pursuing this underexplored angle, first introduced by Bellenger, she has added to the scholarship on patrician benevolence, but considers noble generosity to have already received sufficient attention, evidence of an anti-elite bias amongst historians which is still inclined to emerge sporadically, although to a lesser extent than at the height of the movement for 'history from below'. In the case of Reboul it could be partly the result of a perceived overstatement of British benevolence at the expense of French endurance and ingenuity.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.100.

⁹⁰ Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*; Carpenter, 'The Novelty of the French Émigrés in London in the 1790s', in D. Kelly and M. Cornick (eds.), *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2013), pp. 69-98.

⁹¹ For example, Vicomte de Broc, *Dix Ans de la Vie d'une Femme Pendant l'Émigration, Adélaïde de Kerjean, Marquise de Falaiseau* (Paris, 1893); Vicomte de Walsh, *Souvenirs de Cinquante Ans* (Paris: Bureau de la Mode, 1845).

⁹² Reboul, *French Emigration*, p.xiii.

⁹³ Ibid., p.93; Bellenger, 'Fearless Resting Place', p. 217; Carpenter, *Refugees*, pp.94-5, 104-5, 158-60; Carpenter, 'The Novelty of the French Émigrés', p.85.

⁹⁴ Reboul, *French Emigration*, pp.91-115.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.93.

Reboul nevertheless presented an area of interest for future investigation: the relating of benevolence ‘to a society of aristocratic spectacle in which old domineering relations were continued’.⁹⁶ The emotive use of the word ‘domineering’, rather than the less hostile ‘paternalistic’, intensifies her argument that self-interested manipulation was at the heart of the process of émigré relief. Orchestrated display was a feature of Georgian aristocratic status; the émigrés found themselves in the hands of a generation accustomed to publicising its generosity by parading recipients of aid before an admiring audience.⁹⁷ This addition to the historiography of the emigration serves as a warning against ignoring the less than praiseworthy motives for supporting the needy, but it sidelines the influence of elite female women in the preservation of the status quo through philanthropy, and their reasons for acting as they did.

Methodology

The reconstruction of Lady Buckingham’s life-story raised significant questions about the nature of the sources one might employ. The scarcity of material meant that a broad-minded view of potential sources was essential if anything meaningful was to be produced. As an indication of the challenges posed by searches into women’s history, the novelist Hilary Mantel observed:

Often if you want to write about women in history, you have to distort history to do it, or substitute fantasy for facts; you have to pretend that individual women were more important than they were or that we know more about them than we do.⁹⁸

Here of course she was referring to historical fiction, which involves embroidering the truth. However, her point is clear: where female protagonists are concerned, finding a truth to embroider is hard. As earlier women’s historians have repeatedly demonstrated, female roles were often behind the scenes, or subsequently portrayed as if they were, so that even though they were agents of change, they are invisible in accounts of those changes. The search for sources therefore involved exploring alternative genres, determining by whom and with what purpose women’s activities were recorded at the time and subsequently.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See S. Lloyd, ‘Conviviality, Benevolence and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Journal of British Studies*, vol.41, no.1 (2002), pp.323-57.

⁹⁸ H. Mantel, ‘Royal Bodies’, *London Review of Books*, 2013 <lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v35/n04/hilary-mantel/royal-bodies> [accessed 8 January 2020].

The primary and secondary case studies are viewed through the prism of quasi-hagiographic sources which provided the route into an aspect of history that has long remained hidden from view. The lack of coverage of Lady Buckingham in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English histories was revealing: absence from the native historical record emphasised that her agency within her family and the wider community had been sidelined by successive generations of English historians, until she was reduced to a one-dimensional figure, more or less indistinguishable from many of her peers.⁹⁹ French histories of the same period contained a few leads on her activity, particularly in expressions of gratitude which provided glimpses of her support for the émigré clergy, but these were insufficient on their own. Therefore, instead of coming from ‘reliable’ historical sources, the strongest evidence of Lady Buckingham’s philanthropic activity came from her periodic resurrection in overtly Catholic British publications from the 1850s onwards which suggested that her influence had at one time been acknowledged - indeed her life was portrayed as exemplary - but had subsequently been disregarded. Her ‘disappearance’ was echoed by that of the secondary case study for this thesis, the Comtesse de Saisseval, who reappeared in French and Irish Catholic literature in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁰

Many of the sources consulted are problematic and cannot be relied upon to be authentic or accurate; their value lies rather in the light they cast on contemporary mores and expectations. It was therefore with reservations that they have been used as a framework for a chronology of Lady Buckingham’s philanthropy. The presentation and organisation of my argument were determined by a decision to demonstrate the evolution in elite female philanthropy before, during and after the French Revolution, rather than delve into issues of memorialisation following the Catholic Revival, so at each stage issues with the sources have been flagged up. Throughout the study partial accounts, mostly written by women and clergy, were tested against archival evidence such as letters, diaries, notes, sermons, invoices and

⁹⁹ See for example J. Milner, *The History and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester* (Winchester: James Roberts, 1839) which includes a section on the émigré clergy. Milner was acquainted with Lady Buckingham and corresponded with her on philanthropic matters, yet she was absent from his account. Lord Buckingham was mentioned in connection with émigré clergy accommodation.

¹⁰⁰ A.M. Stewart, *Earl Nugent’s Daughter; or the Last Days of the Penal Laws* (London: Burns and Oates, 1883); C. M. Caddell, ‘Madame de Saisseval’, *The Irish Monthly*, vol.3 (1875), pp.287-91, 357-61, 386-96, 466-70, 561-70, based on Le R.P. de Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique sur Madame la Comtesse de Saisseval* (Paris: Librairie Poussielgue Frères, 1870).

minutes of meetings. Representations of the marchioness over time, viewed in conjunction with the diverse range of primary sources to which they led, contribute significantly to an understanding of contemporary and subsequent perceptions of her agency, both as a Catholic and as a philanthropist. In addition, a wide variety of published and unpublished primary sources was used to recreate the social and cultural context of the late eighteenth-century, and to substantiate the argument that religious faith was a driving force.

Accounts of the religious life and philanthropic activity of Lady Buckingham's French counterpart, Madame de Saisseval, were easier to locate. This is partly because she was a member of the royal court which is well-documented, and partly because when her life and outlook were dramatically altered by the Revolution she founded in Paris a school for orphan girls which exists to this day and has an online presence.¹⁰¹ The same caution was necessary in the appraisal of the published primary sources to which this led as, just like the marchioness, versions of her life which have appeared in print over time have presented her as saintly to serve a catholicising agenda.

The current study of Lady Buckingham's philanthropic activity examines a case of marital interdependence where neither partner appears to be more dominant than the other, though their strengths and weakness are differently displayed. Looking at both the man and the woman serves to reinforce the argument central to gender history: it is essential to study both genders if we are to increase our understanding of either.¹⁰² An awareness of the limitations of simply inserting histories of women, focusing on personal and private experience, into a history of men, based traditionally on politics and significant events, has therefore informed the methodology of this thesis. The pragmatic, strictly political approach has traditionally been presented as a male preserve, whilst the face-to-face empathetic approach to the relief of distress has been customarily presented as the domain of the female. Yet, inevitably, on closer inspection, this gendering of roles was not as clear-cut as the conduct literature

¹⁰¹ 'Lycée Carcado-Saisseval' <<https://carcado-saisseval.com>> [accessed 20 January 2020].

¹⁰² This draws on the relational concept of gender as outlined by Joan Wallach Scott in 'Gender, a Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, vol.91, no.5 (1986), pp.1053-75.

implied. The Nugent-Grenville marriage was one of mutual benefit with each exerting influence in ways which did not necessarily conform to eighteenth-century conventions of masculine and feminine behaviour. An interrogation of masculine ideals showed the moral choices faced by elite men and aided an understanding of Lord Buckingham,¹⁰³ a man whom many found difficult to deal with, but whose marriage to Mary Nugent was lifelong and happy. A significant corollary of putting the spotlight on the marchioness is that insights into facets of her husband's personality and spheres of activity, hitherto unremarked, have been illuminated and serve to nuance understanding of some of the political decisions upon which his reputation rests.

The choice of an approach, which allowed for a shift in emphasis, bringing in the female perspective without disadvantaging the male, was also in part dictated by the aim to re-open a subject regarded as *passé*: the provision of émigré support by the British. Whilst allowing that governmental support for the émigrés has been explored, the gendered approach nuances our understanding of its implementation by shifting the focus onto an elite female who was actively involved. The roles of husband and wife were complementary as they formulated decisions on family and household matters and on diplomatic and philanthropic activity, including émigré relief. Viewing the government's management of the émigrés through the lens of elite female involvement helps to enhance our understanding of the complexity of issues surrounding their reception and support. The political expedience of restricted aid to enemy aliens was tempered by the personal touch of those in direct contact with them.

Elaine Chalus and Donna Andrew have each shown the insights to be gained from the adoption of the female viewpoint in studies of elite political and philanthropic activity respectively.¹⁰⁴ They paved the way for further studies into the agency of elite women by presenting case studies based on unofficial records. Chalus used scattered sources and a number of case studies from all over England to show that

¹⁰³ See for example, T. Hitchcock and M. Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1600-1800* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999); M. McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*; Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige'.

elite female involvement in politics was widespread, accepted, and acknowledged at the time.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, Andrew focused one archive relating to a specific individual to reveal the extent of her autonomous philanthropic work.¹⁰⁶ Each of these provided useful methodological models: this thesis uses scattered sources for an in-depth study of one philanthropist.

The study re-visits charity from the viewpoint of the elite provider, but with a difference: a female is brought in alongside her male counterpart, to highlight their complementary roles. In his review of *Unfortunate Objects*, Tanya Evans's study of the Foundling Hospital, Leonard Schwarz noted that there is a danger to an approach in which 'one is drawn into seeing things through the eye of the provider.'¹⁰⁷

Schwarz expressed the reservation that, 'a 'kind' view grows on a researcher as he or she works through the papers of those who gave out the relief.'¹⁰⁸ This serves as a warning that too strong an empathetic connection with benefactors seeking to relieve distress is likely to contribute to a picture which is as skewed as the accounts from which it is constructed. Constant cross referral with archival sources mitigates this possibility.

Case Studies

Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham was chosen as a case study as a result of her appearances in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French histories as an active philanthropist. Three other elite women are present to a lesser degree in the same French accounts of the emigration: Lady Sheffield and the Duchesses of York and Devonshire.¹⁰⁹ Despite the lure of these other potential case studies, the need to fix upon a defined focus, within the constraints of time and word count, decided the selection of a single one. Research into Lady Buckingham has the potential to add significantly to the historiography of the Grenville family and Stowe, especially as bankruptcy led to the sale of all moveable items, including the family archive, by

¹⁰⁵ Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige'.

¹⁰⁷ L. Schwarz, 'Review of T. Evans, "Unfortunate Objects": Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London', *Economic History Review*, new ser., vol.59, no.4 (2006), pp.847-9 (p.848).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Abigail Baker-Holroyd, Baroness Sheffield (1745/46-1793); Princess Frederica Charlotte of Prussia, Duchess of York (1767-1820) and Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806).

auction in 1848 and 1921. The only material evidence of Lady Buckingham in the mansion is a painting (Figure 0.1) which is said to depict her with her eldest son and Apollo, the god of Music. It could not be removed for sale as it was painted directly on to the wall in the Music Room.

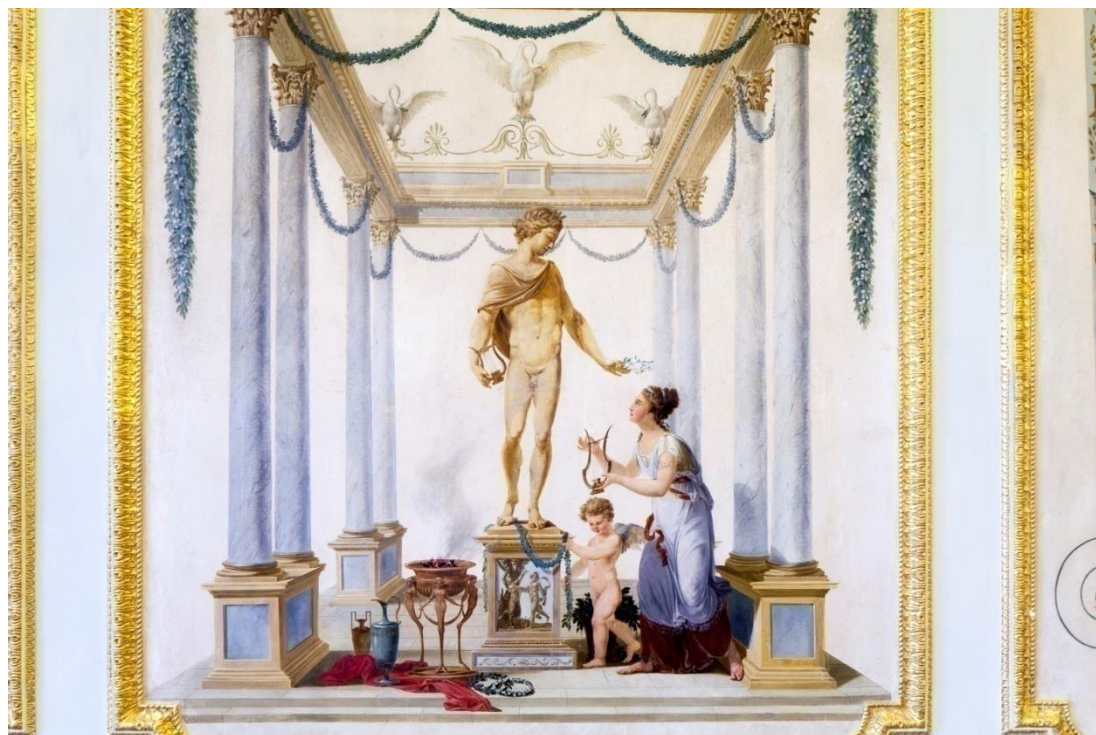


Figure 0.1. Stowe Music Room panel (detail) by Vincenzo Valdrè (1740-1814) c.1780. © Andy Marshall, by permission of the Stowe House Preservation Trust.

With scant evidence available, the current literature on the Grenvilles and Stowe focuses on Lady Buckingham's wealth and sense of fun and acknowledges her artistic and musical accomplishment, but pays little attention to her activities outside the home. Those activities, in particular her charitable works and interaction with the émigrés, have the potential to contribute to an understanding, not only of Stowe, but also of the bigger picture of elite female influence on the formulation of social policy in the eighteenth century. The intention here is not to suggest that Lady Buckingham was alone in offering support, nor that hers was necessarily the greatest contribution, it is more to present an example for which records can be found. With the marchioness as its primary focus, this study does not therefore claim to offer more than passing references to the activities of Lady Sheffield and the Duchess of York, which serve mainly as indicators of research still to be done. The Duchess of

Devonshire has already been the subject of several studies and her prior links with the French court have been documented;¹¹⁰ and whilst each of the others warrants investigation in her own right, the purpose here is simply to cover moments when their philanthropic endeavours briefly coincided with those of Lady Buckingham. This decision to concentrate on a single case study was justified as sources on the marchioness proliferated.

The inclusion of a subsidiary case study was decided upon for two main reasons: firstly, in order to introduce a three-generational family unit, illustrating the level and complexity of need encountered by aid providers; secondly, to mirror Lady Buckingham, the British donor. Madame de Saisseval's desire to maintain her privacy and dignity, and her reluctance to accept charitable support in the face of great need, makes her stand out from previously recounted stories of hardship and allows for a refinement of the emigration narrative. Although there is no evidence of direct contact between the Marchioness of Buckingham and the Comtesse de Saisseval, the two women were linked through the chain of support for émigré clergy, the French court, and a commercial venture in London.¹¹¹ Each initiative was a promotion of the self-help that was at the core of Lady Buckingham's charitable ethos, and central to Madame de Saisseval's determination to preserve her independence.

The necessity of setting boundaries for the research, and the view that the greater lacuna exists on the side of the aid providers, determined the weighting of the two case studies. Each of these women could still easily be passed over: on the face of it there appears to be little surviving, reliable printed primary source material. Unlike some of their contemporaries, they did not seek the limelight by publishing their life stories. The study is therefore largely dependent upon accounts by others, and upon the few remaining traces of their own writing. The qualitative approach of this thesis is based upon a close reading of a diverse range of both published and archival sources generated over a period of more than a hundred years. Treated with caution,

¹¹⁰ See especially Foreman, *The Duchess*.

¹¹¹ The marchioness's fashion and flower shop employed émigré women and sold émigré crafts. See Chapter Four.

they provide a prismatic view of events primarily from the standpoint of a female philanthropist, a counterpoint to other studies of the emigration which have adopted the viewpoint of the émigrés, not their hosts.

The date range spans the lifetime of Lady Buckingham, 1758 to 1812. The decision was made to study her early years to ascertain the roots of her religious conviction. Extending the period under scrutiny beyond the return of the majority of the émigrés in 1802 allowed for the inclusion of the arrival of the Bourbon court in 1807, with the aim of revealing the consequences of the marchioness's earlier charitable initiatives.

Sources

Printed Primary Sources

A wide range of printed sources was used to piece together the historical context of the marchioness's philanthropy. Pamphlets and sermons indicated the class- and nation-wide mobilisation of support for the Catholic refugees, providing evidence of the ecumenical dimension to late eighteenth-century benevolence. Charity reports, plans and minutes of meetings published and sold to raise funds, pinpointed specific instances of Lady Buckingham's involvement in local and émigré relief, but as these were limited in number they were insufficient to ascertain the extent of her presence. Supporting evidence was found in representations of the marchioness in newspapers, magazines and satirical prints, indicating a contemporary interest in her activities and reflecting both praise and criticism which provided an indication of her place within changing ideological notions of the aristocracy, female behaviour, and philanthropy.

The sources through which the life of Lady Buckingham was reconstructed include the pious portrayal of her faith and philanthropy in her daughter's retrospective account: *Memoir and Letters of Lady Mary Arundell*, and a semi-fictional biography that located her within the history of Catholic toleration: Agnes Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter*.¹¹² French sources such as Lubersac, *Journal Historique et Religieuse*, H. Forneron, *Histoire Générale des Émigrés* and Louis Keribiou's

¹¹² J. Hirst, *Memoir and Letters of Lady Mary Arundell* (Leicester: [n.pub.], 1894); Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter*.

biography of the émigré bishop of St Pol de Léon, provided detailed information about the organisation of aid to the clergy, in which the marchioness was personally involved.¹¹³ Translations of these and all other French sources are my own. *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* contained examples of her personal and practical involvement in support for émigré clergy.¹¹⁴

Other published correspondence and diaries provided indicators of contemporary attitudes towards Lady Buckingham on a personal and familial level. These included the *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, a collection of Grenville family correspondence, and *The Wynne Diaries* written in the main by Betsey Wynne (1778-1857) who, by marrying Thomas Fremantle (1765-1819), became part of the Buckinghams' patronage network.¹¹⁵ *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay* referred to émigré clergy support and provided an example of the insights to be gained from revisiting well-known sources from a new angle.¹¹⁶ *The Jerningham Letters*, principally the correspondence between a Norfolk Catholic mother and daughter, Frances, Lady Jerningham of Costessey, and Charlotte, Lady Bedingfeld of Oxburgh was of value in locating Madame de Saisseval and Lady Buckingham within the same elite Catholic context.¹¹⁷

One of the advantages of the Saisseval family case study over similar cases that attracted organized relief is that there are several narratives upon which to base an analysis. Their fleeting appearances in *The Jerningham Letters* were sufficient to

¹¹³ L'Abbé de Lubersac, Vicaire Générale de Narbonne, *Journal Historique et Religieuse de l'Émigration et Déportation du Clergé de France en Angleterre* (London: Cox, Fils et Bayliss, 1802); Forneron, *Histoire*; L. Keribiou, *Jean-François de la Marche, Evêque-Comte de Léon* (Quimper: Paris, 1924).

¹¹⁴ T.W. Copeland (ed.), *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, 1729-1797* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958-78).

¹¹⁵ Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts of J.B. Esq., Preserved at Dropmore* (London: H.M.S.O, 1892-9); A. Fremantle (ed.) *The Wynne Diaries, 1789-1820*, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1935-40). The single volume published in 1952 was also consulted. The published correspondence of female Grenville family members contained limited references to the marchioness: R. Leighton (ed.), *Correspondence of Charlotte Grenville, Lady Williams Wynn, and her Three Sons* (London: John Murray, 1920); V. Birdwood (ed.), *So Dearly Loved, So Much Admired; Letters to Hester Pitt, Lady Chatham from her Relations and Friends, 1744-1801* (London: H.M.S.O, 1994).

¹¹⁶ C. Barrett (ed.), *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay* (London: Swann Sonnenshein, 1892).

¹¹⁷ E. Castle (ed.), *The Jerningham Letters, 1780-1843*, 2 vols. (London, Richard Bentley and Son, 1896). About one third of the letters were published, some in full, some as excerpts. Frances, Lady Jerningham, née Dillon (1747-1809); Charlotte Georgiana, Lady Bedingfeld, née Jerningham (1770-1854).

raise questions about elite émigré family life, especially issues of bereavement and motherhood. The serialisation of the comtesse's story in *Irish Monthly* in 1875 provided evidence of its afterlife in English.¹¹⁸ It showed that, in the same way that Lady Buckingham's 'conversion' fed the late nineteenth-century trope of sanctity, the comtesse's story of ordeal in exile was appropriated by Catholics in search of exemplary lives. As with the marchioness, there is a tension between identifying the critical importance of faith as a motivating factor, and the difficulty of disentangling the role of religious faith in the comtesse's life from nineteenth- and twentieth-century hagiographic and didactic biographies. The most comprehensive account of her life was in the early twentieth-century Marquis de Lastic, *Chronique de la Maison de Lastic*.¹¹⁹ The marquis supplemented information from the family archive held at Parentignat in the Auvergne with details found in a late nineteenth-century biography, le R.P. de Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique sur Madame la Comtesse de Saisseval*.¹²⁰ The comtesse's re-appearance in a mid-twentieth-century French Catholic text by the hagiographer, Claire Auberive: *L'Héritière du Vœu de Madame Élisabeth*, demonstrated the continued potency of her example.¹²¹ Drawing on the *Chronique de la Maison de Lastic*, and linking Madame de Saisseval with Madame Élisabeth, sister of Louis XVI, the work is of particular relevance to the current study as it provided an account of the formation of the comtesse's religious ideals.

Memoirs and novels were consulted to build a picture of the milieu in which the émigrés lived. Based on first-hand experience, many were written by women and published in London and Paris from 1792 to c.1900. A number have recently been re-published,¹²² whilst others have been digitized.¹²³ In addition, François-René de

¹¹⁸ Caddell, 'Madame de Saisseval'. Cecilia Cadell (1814-77) was a prolific writer of hymns, stories and pieces on Irish history.

¹¹⁹ Marquis de Lastic, *Chronique de la Maison de Lastic, d'Après les Archives du Château de Parentignat et Quelques Autres Documents*, 3 vols (Montpellier : Firmin et Montaigne, 1919-21).

¹²⁰ Le R.P. de Ponlevoy, *Notice Biographique sur Madame la Comtesse de Saisseval* (Paris: [n.pub] 1870). L.P. de Ravignan also wrote a biography, date as yet unknown. I assume the author to be Gustave-François-Xavier de la Croix de Ravignan (1795-1858), Jesuit preacher and writer. Name cited in C. Auberive *L'Héritière du Vœu de Madame Élisabeth, Charlotte Hélène de Lastic, Comtesse de Saisseval* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1946), p.32.

¹²¹ Claire Auberive (1889-1977), a member of the Société des Filles du Cœur de Marie, was a novelist, hagiographer and dramatist. Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu de Madame Élisabeth*.

¹²² For example, K. Carpenter (ed.) *Madame de Souza, Eugénie et Mathilde, ou Mémoires de la Famille du Comte de Revel* (London: MHRA, 2014).

¹²³ For example, Broc, *Dix Ans*.

Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe* helped to re-imagine the comtesse's passage through Brussels,¹²⁴ and Joseph-Alexis Walsh, *Souvenirs*, provided a record of aristocratic émigré women earning a living by creating and selling craft and fashion items in London.¹²⁵ Gaston de Lévis, *Lettres à Pauline* illustrated a contrasting experience of elite émigré family life, highlighting the diversity of response to the crisis.¹²⁶

Archives

The *Archives Nationales* in Paris contained a small but significant file on the Lastic/Saisseval family which served to authenticate elements of Lastic, *Chronique*. Further sources in French were located in the record office in Stafford: unpublished correspondence between Madame de Saisseval, one of her daughters, Félicité, and Lady Jerningham.¹²⁷ For Lady Buckingham, archival sources complemented and tempered the eulogistic tone of many of the printed sources cited above. The final analysis relies heavily on Grenville family letters which furnished details of lived experience unlikely to be found in official or other published sources. Searches in The National Archives and regional record offices near to Grenville properties yielded examples of correspondence between and about family members; references to the marchioness's philanthropy before, during and after the Revolution, were plentiful though scattered. Regional record offices housing personal correspondence of relevance include Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, Northamptonshire, Sheffield and Wiltshire. In addition, the private collection of 1st Earl of Carysfort and his family held at Elton Hall in Cambridgeshire was consulted.¹²⁸ A bound manuscript of thanks to the marquess and marchioness, *Collection de Portraits et Médailles de Cheveux*, revealed the extent and the personal nature of their involvement in royal émigré support.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ F-R. de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, 2 vols (Paris: [n.pub], 1849-50).

¹²⁵ Walsh, *Souvenirs*, pp.65-6

¹²⁶ C. Pailhès (ed.), *Gaston de Lévis, Écrire la Révolution 1784-1795: Lettres à Pauline* (Cahors: La Louve, 2011), especially pp.83-6, 519 -37.

¹²⁷ SRO D641/3/P/3/10/168-180: Letters from Félicité de Saisseval and her mother to Lady Jerningham.

¹²⁸ EH NRA 26174 Proby, Correspondence of 1st Earl of Carysfort and family.

¹²⁹ BL Add. MS 33793, Marquis de Sy, *Collection de Portraits et Médailles de Cheveux* (London, 1813).

The Stowe Papers held at the Huntington Library, California, validated earlier findings on Lady Buckingham. The main sources consulted were letters received by Lady Buckingham; there were very few letters in her hand. The majority of those received were written by her husband.¹³⁰ A smaller number, both to and from the marchioness, was found in the archive relating to the Rev. Dr. Charles O’Conor (1764-1828), her Catholic confessor.¹³¹ Loosely catalogued receipts and invoices relating to local schools and local and national charities provided evidence of the Buckingham’s joint commitment to good causes and individual cases; brief notes hastily written revealed Lady Buckingham’s personal involvement in cases of immediate need.¹³² Finally, a school record book showed the marchioness’s efforts to encourage responsible aristocratic behaviour in her daughter.¹³³

Structure

The Introduction has presented the key concerns, historiography, methodology, sources, and now, the structure. The first chapter will analyse the stages in the formation of Lady Buckingham as an elite female philanthropist, alongside her politically disappointed husband. This will include an exploration of their upbringing, arranged marriage, early married life, first political appointment and early experiments in setting up a school and an industry. This background will allow for an analysis of their compatibility, aspirations and work ethic in the light of contemporary ideals. The second chapter will focus on elite family life and the local community, looking particularly at the education of the Buckinghams’ daughter, and the education and occupation of the local poor. This will demonstrate the ways in which their gendered roles were in line with contemporary practice, and the ways in which they exceeded what was expected of them as members of the elite. Throughout the analysis the marchioness is placed firmly centre stage, with her husband in the background, a reversal of previous studies of Grenville marriages.

In Chapter Three the focus broadens to encompass the arrival of the first émigrés to be helped by the Buckinghams: male and female religious in England, and lay

¹³⁰ HL STG Boxes 47 and 48.

¹³¹ HL STO Boxes 4 to 10.

¹³² For example, HL STG Accounts Box 169: Charities; HL STG Schools and Education Box 2.

¹³³ HL STG Schools and Education Box 1.

émigrés in Jersey. It will expound the view that Lady Buckingham's experience in establishing local schools of industry, and her practical involvement in welfare schemes in her neighbourhood, gave her the skills needed to provide immediate relief to the émigrés. Chapter Four introduces the Comtesse de Saisseval, providing details of her courtly background and religious ideals. It then analyses the chain of events which linked her to Lady Buckingham, through support for the émigré clergy. It reveals the extent of the marchioness's agency in supporting female émigrés and argues that her intervention differed from previous elite practice in that she promoted work and self-sufficiency. The chapter concludes by contending that even though the comtesse had lost the privileges of rank, she educated her daughters to uphold its responsibilities, just as the marchioness did.

Chapter Five argues that Lady Buckingham capitalised on her husband's political and dynastic ambitions in the fulfilment of her different but complementary agenda. Empowered both by her religion and her successful philanthropic schemes she showed an ambition that had not been evident earlier. She supported her husband as they oversaw together the accommodation of the French royal family and their courtiers at Gosfield then Hartwell, against the wishes of the government who wanted them further from the capital. Visits by the royal family and Bourbon court to Stowe from 1807 legitimised the open celebration of Mass within the Protestant household which fulfilled the marchioness's long-held wish, but attracted criticism of her Catholicising influence. Anxiety became evident in her eagerness to demonstrate through religious practice and continued philanthropic activity that she was a good Catholic who could justify her faith and her station in life.

The Conclusion, argues that the historic reinvention of Lady Buckingham's life story has much to tell us about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century attitudes to female behaviour and religious practices. Throughout the thesis, against a backdrop of religion as a source of empowerment, the marchioness's agency within familial, local and national affairs challenges the perception that aristocratic female status precluded direct involvement in the practical aspects of charitable work. The introduction of a noble Catholic into the historiography of late eighteenth-century female philanthropy in England serves to diversify its Anglican, and predominantly

middle-class, focus. Finally, the findings suggest strongly that further examples of the autonomous working lives of aristocratic wives and mothers are likely to be found unpublished in the archives.

The themes of religious faith, self-belief, elite marriage, motherhood and philanthropy will thread through this study, interwoven with questions of gender, wealth, status and responsibility. These all play a part in a constantly evolving perception of the hierarchy of need: family, local, national. The level of need in each of these categories fluctuated as a result of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars which affected both the native and refugee population. Religious and national differences are shown to be temporarily irrelevant during the period of crisis and disruption in the wake of the Revolution when aristocrats were anxious to redefine their roles.

Chapter One: The Formation of an Elite Female Philanthropist

This chapter seeks to uncover the origin of a major philanthropic effort which transcended familial and national religious differences and the boundaries between two countries at war. George and Mary, the future Marquess and Marchioness of Buckingham, moved in the highest political circles, which raises questions about the agenda their benevolence served. It will be argued that the political disillusionment of George Grenville following his second tour as Viceroy of Ireland had a major impact on the philanthropic activity of both husband and wife. In analysing the forces that drove the couple to instigate projects for émigré relief which went beyond those of their contemporaries in scope and duration, elite traditions of hospitality and charity are taken into account. An exploration of the respective upbringings of George Grenville and Mary Nugent considers how their sense of duty and responsibility was formed. It aims to ascertain the extent to which their backgrounds predisposed and prepared them for the benevolence they later displayed towards refugees from an enemy territory. A study of the teenage conversion of Mary Nugent to Catholicism questions whether it was the catalyst for her lifelong commitment to good causes, while her upbringing empowered her to challenge gendered norms. An analysis of George Grenville's visit to Paris during his Grand Tour shows clearly his anxious personality, conscious of the responsibility of rank and wealth.

Letters between husband and wife demonstrate their compatibility and affectionate interdependence based on a rigorous work ethic; it has much to tell us about their joint and individual aspirations. Two tours as Viceroy of Ireland from 1782 to 1783 and 1787 to 1789 alerted Lord and Lady Buckingham to problems of poverty, sickness and unemployment in Dublin and to the philanthropic systems put in place to alleviate them. The experience opened their eyes to possibilities for personal intervention which they would later deploy on their estates and, ultimately, in support of the émigrés. Evidence suggests that Lady Buckingham's charitable activity during her husband's viceroyalty singled her out as an early proponent of a type of elite female philanthropy that was beginning to differ from earlier practices by being more proactive, more diverse, and more public. Such changes were gaining in momentum towards the end of the eighteenth century as aristocratic women's

political influence declined - a movement that has been observed by Donna Andrew and Judith Lewis, among others.¹ The example presented here adds weight to their argument that elite female engagement in matters outside the home and family was widespread, expected and effective.

The impact of experience in Dublin is clear. The change in expectations, and the nature, of female philanthropic activity in Ireland in the second half of the eighteenth century was explored by Rosemary Raughter in 'A Natural Tenderness'.² She observed that: 'women's benevolence did during this period assume a new dimension, with the growing importance after mid-century of associated and institutional philanthropy.'³ The change was not a positive one for benevolent women for two reasons. Firstly, deprived of decision-making status, an increasingly practical role was allotted to them in the newly-established male-run societies. These subordinate roles also, as Karen Sonnelitter contended, steered charitable activity away from 'feminine' sympathy towards 'masculine' practicality.⁴ Lady Buckingham's time in Ireland coincided with this change; more elite and middle class women were becoming actively involved in philanthropic work, but in the newly formed charities they generally only occupied supportive roles; in general, there was a move towards excluding women from decision-making in an increasingly masculinised philanthropy.⁵ Charities which supported men and women were increasingly taken over by men. However, charities which supported women and children were considered appropriate objects of female concern, so it was within this restricted field that women started to take on management roles as well as being practically involved.⁶

¹ D. Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige: Female Charity in an Age of Sentiment', in J. Brewer and S. Stave (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.275-294; J. S. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in Late Georgian Britain* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

² R. Raughter, 'A Natural Tenderness: The Ideal and Reality of Eighteenth-Century Female Philanthropy', in M. Valiulis and M. O'Dowd (eds.), *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997), pp.71-88.

³ *Ibid.*, p.71.

⁴ K. Sonnelitter, *Charity Movements in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), p.125.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.145.

A Catholic Upbringing?

Lady Buckingham's family background holds the key to her receptiveness to evolving philanthropic practices observed in Dublin. On 2 January 1757 Robert, Lord Clare, later Earl Nugent (1709-1788), married as his third wife, Elizabeth, widow of the 4th Earl of Berkeley.⁷ In December 1758 their daughter, Mary, the subject of this study, was born.⁸ In 1761 the couple separated on hostile terms, with Nugent refusing to acknowledge the paternity of a second daughter, Louisa, born in December 1761.⁹ From the age of three Mary Nugent was, like many of her contemporaries in an age of high maternal mortality, brought up by an aunt, her father's unmarried sister, Lady Margaret Nugent (c.1724-1794).¹⁰ Beckett quoted a contemporary describing Nugent as: 'a jovial and voluptuous Irishman who left Popery for the Protestant religion, money and widows.'¹¹ This referred to his apostasy upon marriage to Anne Knight in 1737.¹² Through this marriage (his second) he added estates in Essex to those he owned in Carlanstown, County Westmeath. He also gained the parliamentary seat of St Mawes in Cornwall, which had been purchased by the deceased John Knight.¹³ His marriages facilitated his rise from Irish Catholic gentry to landed aristocracy,¹⁴ and although his political climbing and social ambition were criticised, they shaped Mary's future standing in society and provided her with a secure and substantial dowry.

The personality of her Irish father had a lasting impact on Mary. His behaviour frequently caused amused but critical comment; he showed a disregard for propriety, displayed through a love of practical jokes and a propensity to mockery, character

⁷ P. Woodland, 'Nugent, Robert Craggs, Earl Nugent (1709-1788), politician and poet' <www.oxforddnb.com>[accessed 2 January 2016]

⁸ John Beckett gave a birth date of 1759: J. Beckett, 'Gosfield Hall: A Country Estate and its Owners', *Essex Archaeology and History*, vol. 25 (1994), pp.185-92(p.188); This does not tally with the inscription on her coffin in the columbarium at Wotton Underwood which states that she died on 10 March 1812, aged 54. The National Archives gives a birth date of 1758, which will be adhered to throughout.

⁹ Beckett, 'Gosfield Hall', p.188. Lady Louisa Harvey (née Nugent), 1761-1841.

¹⁰ Age: seventy; date of death: 18 November 1794. See plinth with urn, Church of St Catherine, Gosfield, Essex.

¹¹ Beckett, 'Gosfield Hall', pp.185-92 (p.187); *Complete Peerage*, IX,(1936) p.794n

¹² His first marriage was to Emilia Plunkett in 1730. She died in childbirth, leaving a son, Edmund.

¹³ Beckett, 'Gosfield Hall'.

¹⁴ Created Viscount Clare in 1767, Earl Nugent in 1776.

traits later seen in his daughter.¹⁵ Being in his company involved physical activity, fun and laughter which would have been stimulating for Mary as a child and would have helped to build the resilience that was apparent in her as an adult. In the absence of parental correspondence or tutors' records, the reconstruction of Mary's early childhood relied on a small number of references in published sources. In Claud Nugent, *Memoir of Robert, Earl Nugent*,¹⁶ a detail from 'A Family Group' by Johan Zoffany portrayed Mary as a cheerful child standing on a table in a flamboyant, balletic pose, supervised by her aunt, Lady Margaret, while Earl Nugent looks on affectionately.¹⁷ Mary's gaze is on Edmund her half-brother, Colonel Nugent, (d.1771) who leans towards her. All eyes are on Mary, making her the focal point. The painting suggests a well-loved child, encouraged to perform playfully. If this activity was typical of her formative years it would have helped build her confidence for the public role she was to play later.

Moralistic concern over the development of sociability in young women that could lead to a future outside the home prompted a flurry of conduct literature in the late 1700s. It was aimed principally at the aspiring middle classes, but pointed out the responsibility of the female elite to set an example of demure, maternal and charitable behaviour.¹⁸ Growing up in the 1760s and early 1770s in a wealthy household, Mary Nugent benefited from a home education that escaped these later strictures. The Reverend John Bennet, for example, advocated quieter pursuits for girls than those likely to enable them 'to make a noise and sparkle in the world.'¹⁹ Mary seems to have been encouraged 'to make a noise and sparkle': evidence suggests that mischief-making was one way in which she engaged with intelligent

¹⁵ *The Spectator*, 14 January 1899, recorded: 'Possibly he possessed the genius of companionship, and understood better than his fellows the art of entertainment'.

¹⁶ C. Nugent, *Memoir of Robert, Earl Nugent* (London: W. Heineman, 1898).

¹⁷ J. Zoffany, 'Family Group', Nugent, *Memoir*, opposite p.14. Dated 1765: C. Lerche, *Painted Politeness: Private und Öffentliche Selbstdarstellung im Conversation Piece des Johann Zoffany* (Weimar: VDG, 2006), pp.358.

¹⁸ See in particular, M. Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life* (London: J. Johnson, 1787); H. More *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education: With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune*, 2 vols. (London: T. Caddel Jun. and W. Davis, 1799).

¹⁹ J. Bennet, *Letters to a Young Lady on a Variety of Useful and Interesting Subjects* (Warrington: W. Ayres, 1789), vol.1, p.6, cited in K. Halsey, 'The Home Education of Girls in the Eighteenth-Century Novel: The Pernicious Effects of an Improper Education', *Oxford Review of Education*, 41:4 (2015), pp.430-446 (p.433).

adults. This reinforces Michèle Cohen's argument that informal education amongst the leisured classes could appear haphazard, but cultivated wit and repartee, important ingredients in the art of pleasing that was central to eighteenth-century politeness and sociability.²⁰ An anecdote in Nugent, *Memoir* showed Mary completely at ease in the company of the playwright Oliver Goldsmith (c.1728-1774), a close friend of Earl Nugent:

Nugent's daughter Mary was a great favourite of Goldsmith's, and an amusing story is told of how on one occasion, when he was asleep after dinner, she tied his wig to the back of his chair, so that on waking and rising to his feet his wig was dragged from his head exposing his baldness. He treated the joke, however, with the utmost good nature, and put the incident in his delightful comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*.²¹

These examples provide evidence of a sociable household in which Mary mixed easily with adults; the fun-loving togetherness of father and daughter continued into her adult life. His visits to her following her marriage to George Grenville were recorded by a tenant farmer's wife, Elizabeth George. Describing family portraits at Stowe House in 1844-45 she wrote:

I have heard my father relate surprising tales of madcap pranks played at Stowe by this Irish nobleman, when he used to visit his daughter – who was not far behind him in that respect –... she delighted in playing practical jokes upon all around her – was no way particular into whose house, or what time, she made her visits.²²

Accounts of her adult life in the *Wynne Diaries*, to be explored later, were peppered with pranks and hilarity.²³ These sources show that in adulthood as in childhood, Lady Buckingham shared with her father a tendency to mischievous behaviour and a disregard for social protocol. They provide evidence that her effervescent personality delighted many of those around her and lightened the politically charged atmosphere of Stowe.²⁴

²⁰ M. Cohen, 'Familiar Conversation: The Role of the 'Familiar Format' in Education in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England', M. Hilton and J. Shefrin (eds.), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures and Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.99-116 (pp.101-3).

²¹ Nugent, *Memoir*, p.22; O. Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, first performed at Covent Garden, 15 March 1773.

²² G. Clarke (ed.) 'The Journal of Elizabeth George of Dadford', in *Recollections of Nineteenth-Century Buckinghamshire*, vol. 31 (1998), pp.65-123 (p.117).

²³ A. Fremantle, (ed.), *The Wynne Diaries, 1789-1820*, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1935-40). See also the single volume published in 1952.

²⁴ See Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue Esq., Preserved at Dropmore*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1892-99), vol.1, p.xxxii.

Published versions of Lady Buckingham's religious life by the Catholic writers, Thomas Brindle, Agnes Stewart and Joseph Hirst,²⁵ made claims of a conversion and presented a different picture of her relationship with her father. They portrayed Nugent as a man prone to outbursts of anger which frightened his daughter: 'Of an authoritative and violent temper, his daughter early learnt to fear him and to bow to the decisive opinions which he launched forth.'²⁶ These sources are problematic. They fed the trope of sanctity surrounding conversions in the second half of the nineteenth century. The tone had been set for this 'new Catholic library of fiction'²⁷ by *Fabiola*, by Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, set in ancient Rome, and *Callista*, by Cardinal John Henry Newman, set in North Africa.²⁸ A key feature of the genre lay not in its authenticity but in its emotive power. A backdrop of barbarism and persecution highlighted the purity of a heroine convert.²⁹ The quasi-hagiographical treatment of Lady Buckingham marks out her significance as an exemplary Catholic and provides a window onto an elite female life, through its afterlife. She became through her marriage a highly placed personality renowned for her philanthropy and her Catholic identity within a Protestant household. Vilified by satirists who mistrusted the Grenvilles, the persecution, a necessary feature in convert literature, was easy for the writers to seize upon from the press, and embroider. Visible, philanthropic and persecuted, she provided an example of female piety and virtue overcoming ignorance and prejudice.

Whilst the authenticity of her conversion cannot be verified, evidence of the intensity of her religious faith during her adult life makes it possible that some kind of religious awakening took place during her adolescence. The stories related that by

²⁵ Thomas Brindle (1791-1871), President of Prior Park, Bath. T. Brindle, 'A Conversion under the Old Penal Laws', *The Rambler: a Catholic Journal and Review*, new ser., vol.3 (1855), pp.44-59, 117-25; A. Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter; or the Last Days of the Penal Laws: A True Story* (London: Burns and Oates, 1883; digital reproduction, 2009); Joseph Hirst, President of Ratcliffe College, Leicestershire, 1880-1895. J. Hirst, *Memoir and Letters and Lady Mary Arundell* (Leicester: [n.pub.], 1894).

²⁶ Brindle, *Conversion*, p.46; Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter*, p.8: 'the terrible anger of her father'; p.9: 'you know how violent he is'.

²⁷ S. Gilley, 'Life and Writings', in I. Ker and T. Merrigan (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.1-28 (p.16).

²⁸ N. Wiseman, *Fabiola or the Church of the Catacombs* (1854; New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1886); J.H. Newman, *Callista. A Tale of the Third Century* (1855; London: Longmans, Green and co., 1904).

²⁹ Gilley, 'Life and Writings', p.16.

the age of thirteen or fourteen Mary Nugent, the future Lady Buckingham had converted to Catholicism, the religion of her Irish forebears, rejected by her father in order to raise his social status. They insisted on the need for secrecy, initially from her 'Protestant' father, and subsequently to placate her husband, Earl Temple, nervous about public knowledge of her faith while discrimination against Catholics persisted.³⁰ However, on the first point, as with fellow apostates, Sir Thomas Gascoigne and Charles Howard, Earl of Surrey (later 9th Duke of Norfolk), Nugent's Protestantism was not taken seriously by himself or his contemporaries.³¹ It was a matter of expedience, not spirituality. Nathaniel Wraxall recorded that Surrey had asserted when drunk: 'that three as good Catholics sat in Lord North's last parliament as ever existed, namely, Lord Nugent, Sir Thomas Gascoyne [sic], and himself'.³² As for Earl Temple, letters to his wife suggest that her religion was never a problem within their relationship.³³ Like her fellow Catholics, she simply exercised discretion (possibly at his request) in order not to compromise the progress of toleration.

Interest in Lady Buckingham was ignited by her daughter, Lady Mary when,³⁴ during a visit to Prior Park in 1840,³⁵ she gave Brindle an account of her late mother's conversion. He considered it significant and asked her to write it down. Published in *The Rambler* in 1855, in 1883 it formed the basis of a semi-fictional biography by Stewart. In 1894 Hirst, in turn, cited Stewart and quoted verbatim sections of Brindle. Archival evidence suggests that if Brindle recorded Lady Mary's narrative accurately, an element of maternal self-fashioning cannot be ruled out; pious filial embellishment is even more likely. In the absence of the original account it is impossible to determine its contents, or even if it existed.

³⁰ Brindle, 'Conversion', p.49; Hirst, *Memoir*, p.2.

³¹ Nugent was one of eight apostates who sat in parliament between 1754 and 1790. See A. Lock, *Catholicism, Identity and Politics in the Age of Enlightenment: The Life and Career of Sir Thomas Gascoigne, 1745-1810* (Woodridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), p.143, fn.249.

³² N. Wraxall, *Posthumous Memoirs* (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), vol.1, p.32, cited in Lock, *Catholicism*, p.109.

³³ HL STG boxes 47 and 48.

³⁴ Styled Lady Mary until her marriage in 1811 to James Everard, 10th Baron Arundell of Wardour (1785-1834). Buried at Ratcliffe College, Leicestershire: 'The History of Arundel' <<http://ratcliffe-college.co.uk/arundel/>> [accessed 1 December 2017].

³⁵ By 1855 Prior Park was in severe financial difficulty and closed in 1856: E. Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp.79-80.

Brindle and Stewart overstated Earl Nugent's rejection of Catholicism for dramatic effect. They maintained that the seeds were sown for Mary's conversion by her struggle to understand her father's view: 'She found it difficult to believe that Catholicity taught the monstrous errors which she heard imputed to it.'³⁶ The stories related that Aunt Margaret's Catholic faith, the religion of the entire Nugent family apart from Earl Nugent, was not strong enough to enable her to defy her brother and discuss religion with Mary. The young girl, it was said, was thus denied the opportunity for debate and, instead, spent her time reading:

To divert her many solitary hours, she had recourse to a large and well-filled library, the contents of which even at that early age, she had already learned to appreciate.³⁷

To imply difficulties overcome, the books on Catholicism, inherited from Nugent's ancestors, were described as having been placed on the highest shelves, out of immediate view and out of easy reach.³⁸ Lady Mary recounted: 'Often she has shown me the library-steps, on the top of which she has passed whole mornings reading.'³⁹ The Catholic texts she explored stood up to her scrutiny; the Protestant texts did not. In this idealised example of self-taught youthful Catholic piety, quiet hours in the library of Gosfield Hall, prior to going to London for the winter months of 1772, convinced Mary of the rationality of Catholicism and led to her conversion that year.⁴⁰ This display of the willpower, even if it is fictional here, was a hallmark of her adult personality.

Stewart and Hirst incorporated additional sources, giving a semblance of historical accuracy and a broader perspective than Brindle. Stewart's 'true story' aimed to recreate the 'startling scenes' of the late eighteenth century, starting with the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780 and 'the sanguinary revolution [that] sent some thousands of French clergy and the flower of the noblesse of France to seek refuge on the shores of England'.⁴¹ She contextualised the marchioness's life story within the French Revolution and the progress of Catholic toleration, claiming to derive

³⁶ Brindle, 'Conversion', p.46. See also Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter*, pp.6-8.

³⁷ Brindle, 'Conversion', p.47.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.; Hirst's version began with Mary's conversion, not what led to it, *Memoir*, p.1.

⁴¹ Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter*, p.1.

background details ‘from the lips of relatives’.⁴² Intertwining hearsay with extracts from the *Annual Register* and Charles Butler, *Historical Memoirs of the English Catholics*,⁴³ she admitted that she ‘sketched’ the narrative and ‘on the whole...considered it best to adhere to the facts’, whilst insisting that Brindle’s account (itself suspect) had been ‘scrupulously adhered to’.⁴⁴ These caveats would have been known to Hirst, but he omitted to caution his reader when he based his *Memoir* on Brindle’s unsubstantiated account, and Stewart’s semi-fictional ‘true story’. He enlarged upon their versions of Lady Buckingham’s religious life in adulthood and recounted more about the clerical emigration and the marchioness’s involvement in their relief. All were variations of convert literature convention but with a real person as their subject, fiction was indistinguishable from fact.

Despite the fact that the penal laws were rarely enforced, Mary’s conversion in London in 1772 was presented as a courageous move:

Most of the penal laws against Catholics were still in force: priests dared not to appear publicly; for saying a Mass, a priest incurred the penalty of death; and the individual at whose house it could be proved that Mass had been celebrated suffered forfeiture of property and transportation for life.⁴⁵

Mary walked to her former governess’s house to receive the religious instruction early in the morning.⁴⁶ Gaining in confidence, she began to walk un-chaperoned.⁴⁷ This scenario exploited genteel aversion to independent female activity but demonstrated that it was permissible in a righteous pursuit. It was highly unusual for a young aristocratic girl to walk alone, so it entailed risk and attracted attention. Mary demonstrated a knack for playacting:

...once being alarmed by the rude admiration of some young men who followed her, yet not frightened from her stedfast [sic] purpose, she ever after, when she went unattended, muffled her face in the hood worn in those days, and limped in her gait, to assume the appearance of age.⁴⁸

She was portrayed as a virtuous young woman with a saintly lack of vanity: in her pursuit of true religion she resisted the advances of men by assuming a physical

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ C. Butler, *Historical Memoirs Respecting English, Irish and Scottish Catholics from the Reformation to the Present Time* (London: John Murray, 1819-21).

⁴⁴ Stewart, *Earl Nugent’s Daughter*, p.1

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.10; Brindle, ‘Conversion’, p.48.

⁴⁶ Brindle, ‘Conversion’, p.49; Stewart, *Earl Nugent’s Daughter*, pp.10-11.

⁴⁷ Brindle, ‘Conversion’, p.49. This aspect of the story was not taken up by Stewart.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

deformity associated with old age. Arguably, it is likely that the enjoyment of histrionics that she exhibited in adulthood provided the inspiration for this adolescent scene; adult personality traits were projected backwards into accounts of her conversion.

In reality, Nugent's reputation for shrewd manoeuvring in political and personal affairs make it possible that, rather than forbidding discussion of religious matters as the accounts maintain, he engineered the meetings to facilitate his daughter's Catholic education to suit his own agenda. Despite his apostasy, Catholicism remained such an important part of his identity that his London home was targeted during the Gordon Riots. George Grenville, then Earl Temple, in Woolwich with his regiment to help quell the riots, wrote to Mary, Lady Temple: 'Your father has changed his lodging and is gone elsewhere this night.'⁴⁹ Nugent then fled the capital and took refuge with his daughter at Stowe.⁵⁰ It was certainly assumed in some quarters that Mary had a Catholic upbringing. Nugent's arrangements for her education were reported in a letter dated 23 March in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of May 1789, contradicting earlier claims in the same publication:

The Marchioness of Buckingham was taken by Lord Nugent, and educated in his house, in the Roman catholic religion, by Mrs Peg Nugent, his Lordship's sister.⁵¹

The appropriation of Lady Buckingham's story by later generations of Catholics contributes to an understanding of the strength and reputation of her faith. For an aristocratic female, status demanded a lifetime of familial and social duty; religious observance dictated the same obligations. Lady Buckingham's Catholicism - whether the result of conversion or not - was as central to her identity as her aristocratic status. The sources support the argument that her religion combined with the formative influence of paternal ebullience, emboldened her to sidestep convention in her philanthropic activities.

⁴⁹ HL STG Box 47 (14) George, Earl Temple to Mary, Countess Temple, 8 June 1780.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 13 June 1780: 'Many and every expression of regard to your father, I am happy that he is with you.'

⁵¹ G. Wood, 'Family of the Late Earl Nugent', *Gentleman's Magazine*, (May 1789), p.406.

Elite Male Angst

George Grenville, whom Mary would marry in 1774, shared neither her religion nor her confidence. Life at Wotton with two brothers and four sisters to whom he was very close,⁵² particularly after the death of their parents, had promoted an insularity which made forging friendships outside the immediate family circle difficult, although friendships once sealed were strong and long-lasting. A feeling of insecurity was accentuated by a stutter which though not unusual, in George's case did cause comment, suggesting it may have been more serious than most. A programme of correction by the Irish actor and orthoepist, Thomas Sheridan (c.1719-1788) was undertaken at Bath in 1770 and 1771 at the instigation of Dr. Cleaver, his tutor at Oxford.⁵³ But, as Sheridan's biographer pointed out, not everyone agreed that he improved his pupils' speech. She noted a contemporary criticism that students who could read reasonably well before correction, became 'almost unintelligible from an over application of "scientific grace"'.⁵⁴ This would have made the self-conscious young man appear pompous. A letter from Sheridan's daughter in 1786 casts doubt on whether George's stammer was cured, as has been asserted.⁵⁵ She reported Earl Nugent asking her father if he had seen Lord Buckingham. On receiving the reply: 'Yes my Lord', Nugent retorted: 'Well he stutters as much as ever, doesn't he?'⁵⁶

Treatment for George Grenville's stammer was part of an attempt to fashion him as a young gentleman; he was then sent on the Grand Tour to complete the process.⁵⁷ A previously unexplored aspect of his Grand Tour exposes an insecurity which made life difficult for him, and throws light on the challenge faced by his wife. He lost first his mother, Elizabeth Wyndham, (c.1726-1769) and then, within a year, his father,

⁵² Thomas (1755-1846), William (1759-1834), Charlotte (d.1832), Elizabeth (d.1842), Hester (d.1847) and Catherine (d.1796).

⁵³ E.K. Sheldon, *Thomas Sheridan of Smock Alley* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1967), p.257. Thomas Sheridan was the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. A. Lefanu, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs F. Sheridan* (London: G. And W.B. Whittaker, 1824), p.320.

⁵⁴ Sheldon, *Thomas Sheridan*, p.257 fn.7: *Public Advertiser*, 21 August 1788.

⁵⁵ In M. Bevington, *Stowe House* (London: Paul Holberton, 2002), p.16.

⁵⁶ Bath, July 1786. W. Lefanu (ed.), *Betsy Sheridan's Journal: Letters from Sheridan's Sister 1781-1786 and 1788-1790* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960), p.91.

⁵⁷ He was tutored by William Cleaver (1742-1815) and attended Eton College from 1764 to 1770. He matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford in 1770 without taking a degree: R.W. Davis, 'Grenville, George Nugent-Temple-, first marquess of Buckingham (1753-1813)' <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 6 November 2017].

George Grenville (1712-1770), a leading politician.⁵⁸ At the age of seventeen he became the ward of his uncle, Richard, 2nd Earl Temple, who was thenceforth responsible for his education. At the age of twenty in 1773, in well-established elite tradition, he was tasked with collecting from Italy furniture, paintings and statuary for Earl Temple's mansion and landscape garden at Stowe, which was nearing completion. The young man was familiar with the iconography of Stowe which incorporated political and moral messages relating to vice, virtue and friendship,⁵⁹ and his classical education had equipped him to make informed choices.⁶⁰ The accepted account of the Tour, undertaken in the company of Thomas, Viscount Bulkeley (1752-1822), started in 1774 and focused on the successful acquisition of items in line with his uncle's vision.⁶¹ Visiting Naples, Rome, Bologna and Venice he would have found himself amongst likeminded Grand Tourists following a similar itinerary, enjoying similar experiences and making similar purchases.⁶²

The less comfortable experience prior to George Grenville's tour of Italy reveals much about eighteenth-century male sense of duty. His sojourn in Paris, September-October 1773, led to a series of letters that show an anxiety to act in accordance with an accepted code of conduct. Moving from Nancy, where he had been staying with his uncle Henry (1717-1784),⁶³ Grenville went reluctantly to Paris in an attempt to save his travelling companion from disgrace. Lord Bulkeley had become enmeshed in a romantic misunderstanding which culminated in a duel at which Grenville felt duty-bound to act as second, and then remain with him while he recovered from a wound to his hand.⁶⁴ Grenville was unhappy from the moment he arrived in Paris, 'a

⁵⁸ Prime Minister 1763-5.

⁵⁹ See J.M. Robinson, *Temples of Delight: Stowe Landscape Gardens* (Andover: Pitkin, 1990); R. Guilding, *Owning the Past: Why the English Collected Antique Sculpture, 1640-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014); P. Ayres, *Classical Sculpture and the Idea of Rome in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶⁰ This included the purchase of heroic statuary for the Marble Saloon. See M. Bevington, 'Stowe House: A Proposal for Refurbishing the Marble Hall (and South Portico)', (unpublished, 2005).

⁶¹ Davis, 'Grenville, George, Nugent-Temple-'.
⁶² For typical travel plans, itineraries and reactions see R. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and J. Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003). See KHLC U1590/S2/C1, Letters from George Grenville to Henry Grenville, 1774.

⁶³ Henry Grenville, brother of Richard, Earl Temple, and of George Grenville, Prime Minister. Governor of Barbados from 1746; British Ambassador in Constantinople 1762-1765.

⁶⁴ KHLC U1590/S2/C1, George Grenville to Henry Grenville., Paris, 8 October 1773: 'the dual took place on 26 September.'

scene of dissipation',⁶⁵ which he had not intended to visit.⁶⁶ His upbringing had left him unprepared for the flirtatious sociability enjoyed by many Britons in Paris and, declaring himself to be 'improperly situated' and 'exposed to temptations',⁶⁷ he distanced himself from his fellow travellers as their behaviour was 'not compatible with my views in travelling'.⁶⁸ His classical education had drilled into him the idea that wealthy men had an obligation to take part in public life,⁶⁹ and, as he wished to do so with an unblemished reputation, he assured his uncle that he had followed the path of duty and resisted the lure of vice in all its guises.⁷⁰

Grenville's letters indicate his anxiety over the conflicting demands of friends and family. His loyalty to Lord Bulkeley was plain: 'dearly as I love my family no motives should have prevented my attendance on my friend';⁷¹ but it had to be balanced with respect for his uncles. His need for his Uncle Henry's approval, though not unusual, was exaggerated: 'I should hope that my follies are local; this I plead lest any reports should injure me in your good opinion.'⁷² This insecurity, understood by those closest to him, made him appear priggish to others. The good opinion of his guardian, Earl Temple, upon whom his future prosperity depended, was also crucial to his peace of mind: 'I feel too much the obligations I am under to him for his paternal attention to my family and me to be insensible to his good opinion.'⁷³ As soon as he was in Naples, he was careful to reassure Earl Temple: 'I am proud... of the choice I have made of my friend, for since I have travelled with him I have never found in him one quality which I did not admire.'⁷⁴ The Grand Tour bound him to someone whose ill-advised behaviour had tested their relationship, but whose qualities included being 'spaciously wide in his interests' and being 'given to

⁶⁵ Ibid., 24 September 1773.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 14 September 1773.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See C. Reid, *Imprisoned Wranglers: The Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons, 1760 -1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) and M. McCormack, *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) for elite male duty.

⁷⁰ KHL C U1590/S2/C1, George Grenville to Henry Grenville, 14 September 1773.

⁷¹ Ibid., Lyons [?], 9 November 1773.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., [?], 15 December 1773.

⁷⁴ Naples, 26 March 1774, quoted in L. Namier and J. Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754-1790* (1964; London: Secker and Warburg, 1985), p.128.

acts of discreet and highminded philanthropy,⁷⁵ characteristics that Grenville admired in others, and is therefore likely to have aspired to.

This episode is significant because it gives a clear indication of Grenville's sense of duty, social unease and lack of engagement with the resident Anglo-French or the native French in Paris. His letters to his uncle contain no mention of polite sociability in Paris. Unlike many of his compatriots, whether Catholic or Protestant, he does not seem to have visited either a school or a convent to deliver a message from friend or relative.⁷⁶ He does not appear to have visited the Palace of Versailles, which was on the itinerary of the curious - for example, Hester Thrale (1741-1821), the diarist, who found it uninspiring,⁷⁷ as well as of those with ties of friendship (such as Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, with Queen Marie-Antoinette and Yolande de Polastron, Duchesse de Polignac).⁷⁸ If he was not stirred into action by ties of kinship or by new alliances forged during the Grand Tour, there must be a different source of motivation for his later involvement in émigré relief.

The Nugent-Grenville Marriage

The lifetime of philanthropic activity that culminated in support for the exiled Bourbon court was the result of the marriage of two very different personalities. Unpublished correspondence gives an insight into the birth and evolution of an effective and enduring partnership between George and Mary based on affection on both sides.⁷⁹ Mary's support was crucial to George especially when he inherited in 1779 the title and property of his paternal uncle, Richard, 2nd Earl Temple (1711-1779). George Grenville, 3rd Earl Temple, was regarded by many as a vain man,⁸⁰ yet he took seriously the responsibility of completing Stowe House and garden in

⁷⁵ Thomas Richards, cataloguer of the Baron Hill archive, quoted in NRA 29946, Crispin Powell, Lord Lieutenancy Papers, 1775-1872, Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon Record Office (1990).

⁷⁶ Catholic Anglo-French families regularly visited Paris to visit young relatives being educated in convents. For example, Charlotte, Lady Bedingfield (née Jerningham) attended the Couvent des Dames Ursulines. See also J. Clark 'Samuel Johnson: The Last Choices, 1775-1784', in J. Clark and H. Erskine-Hill (eds.), *The Politics of Samuel Johnson* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.168-222.

⁷⁷ B. Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (2001; paperback ed. London: Harper Collins, 2002), p.174.

⁷⁸ Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire had close links with the French court and regularly visited Versailles. A. Foreman, *The Duchess* (1998; London: Harper Perennial, 2008), p.41; C. Chapman, *Elizabeth and Georgiana* (London: John Murray, 2002), pp.36, 99-100.

⁷⁹ HL STG Boxes 47 and 48.

⁸⁰ J. Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles: Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710-1921* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p.65.

accordance with his benefactor's expectation;⁸¹ it was the material expression of his duty to his forbears. He possessed the academic capacity to manage the project but his temperament, combined with his ideals, inclined him to overexertion. Dogged by a lack of confidence that surfaced as bombast, his deeper and private intentions have not yet been probed; and neither have those of his strong-minded wife.

George Grenville's letters to Mary span their courtship and married life and provide insights into their personal aspirations, in tune with aristocratic ideals of patriotism and duty.⁸² The Nugent-Grenville engagement is one of a diverse range of negotiations that continue to emerge, challenging the view of Lawrence Stone and Randolph Trumbach that during the early modern period 'affective bonds' superseded dynastic and monetary considerations in marital choice.⁸³ Promoting a less polarised view, historians of marriage have demonstrated time and again that wealth and status continued to play a role in aristocratic marriage arrangements throughout the eighteenth century and beyond, but that practice was far from uniform.⁸⁴ Beckett's study of the Grenville alliances demonstrated clearly the primary importance of wealth and land in their marriage settlements, but that bonds of affection were formed.⁸⁵ George was certainly enamoured from the outset, and was more fortunate than some of his contemporaries in that his inclination coincided with his duty.

The series of letters that documents his sojourn in Paris provides an introduction to Mary Nugent to whom he became engaged on his return from the Grand Tour. Grenville clearly looked forward to his marriage, arranged by his uncle, Richard, Earl Temple and her father, Robert, Earl Nugent, political allies and friends:⁸⁶

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.66.

⁸² HL STG Boxes 47 and 48. Only one of Mary's letters to George has survived: HL STG Box 34 (12) 1803.

⁸³ L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977); R. Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family* (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

⁸⁴ See for example: S. Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England 1660-1833* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1990); J. Bailey, 'Favoured or Oppressed? Married Women, Property and 'Coverture' in England, 1660-1800', *Continuity and Change*, vol.17, no.3 (2002), pp.351-72.

⁸⁵ Beckett, *Rise and Fall*, p.67.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.65-98.

Join with me then my dear Uncle in the joy I feel at the prospect of being united to a lady chosen by my inclinations, and warmly approved by all my family...I am now the happiest man in England, in the prospects of my future life.⁸⁷

When the arrangement had first been mooted the prospects seemed fair to both parties. The childless Earl Temple was set to bequeath his estates in Buckinghamshire and Dorset to his nephew, George Grenville, who had been in receipt of a highly lucrative tellership of the exchequer since the age of ten.⁸⁸ Likewise, at the time of their engagement the 'pretty and well-behaved' Mary Nugent was described as being in possession of 'a great fortune'.⁸⁹ The appeal of the match had been enhanced by Mary's large inheritance from her father, Robert, Earl Nugent. The reason for her inheritance was that her elder half-brother, Edmund, who would have inherited had he outlived his father, had died in 1771. As Beckett explained, 'a flaw in Edmund's marital arrangements rendered his sons illegitimate'.⁹⁰ The consequence of this was that they, Nugent's grandsons, were not eligible to inherit. Mary, the only one of two daughters for whom Nugent would acknowledge paternity, became at the age of twelve, heiress to a significant fortune which made her a useful pawn in the marriage market. Nevertheless, Malcolmson has highlighted the guesswork involved in matches based solely on fortune: 'Marrying an heiress was more a matter of chance than of calculation.'⁹¹ This was a result of the constant fluctuation in the financial situation of the landed aristocracy.⁹² According to his argument, the initial choice of marriage partner was not necessarily based on wealth, but subsequent negotiations were designed to satisfy the financial aspirations of the parent or guardian of both bride and groom.⁹³ Evidence indicates that both Nugent and Temple were fond of their charges and hoped to secure a happy outcome,⁹⁴ but ultimately, elite Georgian marriage was a practical arrangement,

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.67; KHL C U1590/S2/C1, George Grenville to Henry Grenville, Bolton St, London, 16 December 1774.

⁸⁸ BRO D/104/106: Tellership of the Exchequer, granted by George III to George Grenville the younger in 1764.

⁸⁹ A. Hall (ed.), *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delaney* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) vol.5, p.82. Mary Delaney to Bernard Granville, December 1774.

⁹⁰ Beckett, *Rise and Fall*, p.68.

⁹¹ A.P.W. Malcolmson, *The Pursuit of the Heiress: Aristocratic Marriage in Ireland, 1750-1820* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1982), p.39.

⁹² Ibid., p.3.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Beckett, *Rise and Fall*, p.68.

negotiated as a means of ensuring aristocratic hegemony and financial security for all concerned.

For Earl Nugent, the desirability of the Nugent-Grenville match was not solely based on monetary considerations or dynastic aspirations. Their union illustrates the variety and evolution of marital patterns by bringing into play an underexplored factor in the choice of a spouse: religious persuasion. Potentially a complicating factor, this has received little attention from historians of marriage until now. In a recent study on marriage within a Catholic recusant family in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Kate Gibson raised awareness of work still to be done in this field: 'Religious endogamy is taken for granted but with no consideration of how this would impact on either the marriage process or the selection criteria.'⁹⁵ In the Nugent-Grenville case it was not a matter of marrying within the faith, but it was a matter of kin control in order to ensure its continuance. To Nugent, marrying his daughter into a Catholic family in England would have been counterproductive: denied a place in government, their influence was restricted. Placing his charming daughter, with her ability to 'sparkle', within the politically influential Grenville family was a far more astute move. Carrying on the Catholic faith through the female line was a known and accepted tactic: women's religious practices were less contentious as their lives were more private.

Mary's usefulness to her father from 1771, when she became the major beneficiary of his will, makes it seem likely that, as has been shown above, he facilitated her Catholic education, despite assertions to the contrary by Brindle, Hirst and Stewart. The timing of the guided preparation for her 'conversion' in 1772 is significant: it took place a year after her half-brother's death.⁹⁶ As was noted earlier, apostatizing was the accepted route to political power with the aim of furthering Catholic interests from within the government. In the absence of a male heir, Nugent would have looked to his daughter not only to carry forward to the next generation the name of Nugent and to safeguard his estate, a *quid pro quo* of the marriage settlement,⁹⁷ but

⁹⁵ K. Gibson, 'Marriage Choice and Kinship among the English Catholic Elite, 1680-1730', *Journal of Family History* vol.41, no.2 (2016), pp.144-64 (p.145).

⁹⁶ Hirst, *Memoir*, p.1

⁹⁷ Malcolmson, *Heiress*, p.22.

also to uphold the family's long tradition of Catholicism. Acceptance of her religion was the price that George had to pay for her fortune.

This does not seem to have been a cause of any great concern, or at least not of the magnitude reported by Brindle, Hirst and Stewart. It was certainly not sufficient to dampen George's emotional response to Mary. In a birthday poem written in the first year of their marriage he exclaimed: 'Shall he the transports of his heart conceal / or mask those joys which only love can feel'.⁹⁸ Four years later, he appeared just as besotted: 'Four happy years are nearly past / since marriage made you mine; /each moment happier than the last /each bliss a gift of thine.'⁹⁹

Public Duty and Family Life

Two tours as viceroy of Ireland provide an insight into the strength of the Temple-Grenville marriage and into how an elite wife and mother reconciled her duties as consort with her marital, familial and local responsibilities. In August 1782, at the age of twenty-nine, George Grenville, Earl Temple since 1779, was selected as Lord Lieutenant, chief representative of the Crown in Ireland. He replaced William Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland (1738-1809), who because of a change of government, had served for only five months.¹⁰⁰ During the first of his two tours of duty he was accompanied by his wife, vicereine at the age of twenty-four, mother to one child, Richard, aged six.¹⁰¹ (Figure 1.1.) A second child, Mary, had died four months earlier.¹⁰²

Presiding over the Viceregal Court at Dublin Castle, Temple was placed in a position of authority and power greater than he had ever experienced before. At his side, Countess Temple was granted the same access to influence through sociability as preceding consorts had enjoyed. In private, she acted as confidante to her husband.

⁹⁸ HL STG Arts and Lit Box 1 (10), dated 19 December 1774, corrected by archivist to 1775.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 19 December 1779.

¹⁰⁰ He left upon the collapse of the Rockingham Whig administration.

¹⁰¹ Richard Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville, 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (1776-1839).

¹⁰² Epitaph in All Saints Church, Wotton: 'Mary Grenville, infant daughter of George Earl Temple and Mary Elizabeth Nugent his wife. Died 10th April 1782'.



Figure 1.1. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Temple Family*, 1780-82. © National Gallery of Ireland.

In public, she was his consort at official events, many of them held in the Castle where her artistic skill and appreciation led to the couple's discerning patronage of artists. These included Horace Hone (1756-1825),¹⁰³ whose miniature of Countess Temple is shown in Figure 1.2. Attending fund-raising theatre performances, organising charity balls, and visiting factories and warehouses were also part of the viceregal routine.¹⁰⁴ Praise in print for Countess Temple's involvement in these benevolent activities reflects both the changing nature of charitable practice in eighteenth-century Ireland, and elite women's role within it.¹⁰⁵

The Lord Lieutenancy was at all times subject to censure, a high profile position which, as James Kelly observed, most incumbents found demanding, or even disagreeable.¹⁰⁶ When Temple took office in 1782 the political situation was a challenging one.¹⁰⁷ Four months before his arrival, under the leadership of the patriot, Henry Grattan, Irish legislative independence had been granted,¹⁰⁸ and Temple was faced with the issue of renunciation.¹⁰⁹ Temple's tenures as lord lieutenant both fell within the period of 'Grattan's Parliament', 1782 to 1799, referred to by Cannon as 'the high-water mark of the Protestant Ascendancy',¹¹⁰ during which the landowning ruling elite was determined to maintain its dominant position. As that height was threatened by demands for concessions for Catholics, careful handling was required and, in particular, there was a need for Countess

¹⁰³ Hone went to Dublin at the invitation of Countess Temple in 1782 and under her patronage established a practice there: 'Hone, Horace' in W.G. Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists* (1913; Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), pp. 508-13 (pp.508-9).

¹⁰⁴ See P. Gray and O. Purdue (eds.), *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy, c.1541-1922* (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2012) for an overview.

¹⁰⁵ 'Character of the Right Honorable Countess Temple, (With a Beautiful Likeness of her Ladyship)', in Walker (ed.), *The Hibernian Magazine or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge* (Dublin, 1783), pp. 169-170. Hereafter, *Hibernian Magazine*, April 1783; Raughter, 'A Natural Tenderness', pp.71-88.

¹⁰⁶ J. Kelly, 'Residential and Non-Residential Lords Lieutenant -The Viceroyalty 1703-1790', in Gray and Purdue (eds.), *Irish Lord Lieutenancy*, pp.66-96 (p.67).

¹⁰⁷ P. Jupp, 'Earl Temple's Viceroyalty and the Question of Renunciation, 1782-83', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol.17, no.68 (1971), pp.499-520 (p.502).

¹⁰⁸ 16 April 1782.

¹⁰⁹ See A. Smith, 'Earl Temple's Resignation, 22 December 1783', *Historical Journal*, vol.6, no.1 (1963), pp.91-7; Jupp, 'Viceroyalty and Renunciation'; P. Jupp, 'Earl Temple's Resignation and the Question of a Dissolution in December 1783', *Historical Journal* vol.25, no.2 (1972), pp.309-13; J. Cannon, *The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution, 1782-4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.126 -153.

¹¹⁰ J. Cannon (ed.), *Oxford Companion to British History* (1997; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.430.

Temple to be discreet in the profession of her faith. According to *La Belle Assemblée* the vicereine aided the viceroy in placating both sides of the political divide as she ‘knew well how to unite the reserve becoming her station with that affability of manner necessary to conciliate all parties without appearing to give a preference to any.’¹¹¹ Earl Temple was dependent upon her support as he massaged ascendancy egos by conferring honours, and attempted to satisfy their appetite for socialising amid accusations of parliamentary corruption.¹¹²

These were formative years for the Temples. They threw themselves into every aspect of the role, maintaining a degree of separation between their public and private lives by residing at the Viceregal Lodge in Phoenix Park, rather than at the Castle.¹¹³ Letters written during a delay in the countess’s arrival demonstrate Temple’s concern for her comfort: ‘I have been employed in what to me is the only pleasant employment, the getting ready of our apartments’,¹¹⁴ and his eagerness for her company: ‘I was overjoyed to hear of your quick and safe passage.’¹¹⁵ They also hint at the toll his attitude to work would take on his health:

I was much worn down yesterday by the council and the people whom I was obliged to see ... my cough ... (as usual) exhausts me but it has got looser and consequently less troublesome.¹¹⁶

His interest lay in domestic affairs, particularly economical reform, in which sphere his assiduousness was noted.¹¹⁷ Lord Charlemont (1728-99) recorded:

From nine in the morning until five or six in the afternoon he never left his closet, where all the time that was not taken up in audiences was employed, sometimes in writing, but principally in the inspection of the national accounts, by which means he soon made himself perfect in all the complicated business of the revenue, and in everything relative to receipt and expenditure.¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ *La Belle Assemblée*, January 1812, pp.3-5.

¹¹² For ascendancy socialising, see Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles*, p.67. For corruption see Jupp, ‘Viceroyalty and Renunciation’, pp.509-10.

¹¹³ Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles*, p.68: ‘The Temples chose to eat and sleep at the Viceregal Lodge: the earl came to the Castle each morning, gave audience and presided over social events of the day.’

¹¹⁴ HL STG Box 47 (16) George, Earl Temple to Mary, Lady Temple, c.19 September, 1782.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* c.26 September, 1782.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Jupp, ‘Viceroyalty and Renunciation’, p.507.

¹¹⁸ Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, 1st Earl of Charlemont* (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-94), vol.1, p.157.

In his attempt to reduce the number of sinecures Temple faced several difficulties, not least the fact that he was in possession of a significant sinecure himself which made him vulnerable to accusations of hypocrisy. This issue affected Lady Temple too; it was ingrained in all aspects of viceregal life in a complex web of patronage; even minor roles involved complicated issues of dependency: a letter from Lady Harcourt on behalf of a court trumpeter who could not perform the duty in person, made it clear to Lady Temple that his sisters were as reliant as he on the money the sinecure brought in.¹¹⁹

Confining himself to his cabinet during the working day, Temple nevertheless revelled in the opportunity for ostentation afforded by the Castle. His love of pageantry and ceremony was satisfied by the creation of the Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick, approved by George III as a means of placating those seeking English peerages which he was unwilling to bestow. Limited to sixteen by royal statute in 1783, the members were chosen by Temple, William Wyndham Grenville (his youngest brother, serving as chief secretary) and the king.¹²⁰ The benefit of the scheme went beyond providing an acceptable form of recognition of loyalty to the Crown by Irish Ascendants; commissions for silk regalia provided work for Ireland's struggling textile industry.¹²¹ This continued the practice of earlier viceregal couples and followed the pattern of elite support for British industry. It emulated the highly publicised patronage of local manufacturers, including the Spitalfields silk-weavers, by Queen Charlotte and other members of the royal household.¹²²

Countess Temple insisted that guests follow her example: 'None were countenanced at the Castle, of either sex, but such as appeared in Irish Manufacture; and in her ladyship's exertions were at the same time experienced, the happy qualifications of

¹¹⁹ Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, p.85; HL STG Box 48 (5), Elizabeth, Countess of Harcourt to Mary, Lady Temple, 31 March 1783.

¹²⁰ Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles*, p.90. William Wyndham Grenville, 1st Baron Grenville (1759-1834) served under his brother as Irish Chief Secretary in Dublin during Shelburne's ministry of 1782-3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.91-92. H. Berry, *A History of Royal Dublin Society* (London: Longman, Green and co., 1915), pp.5-6.

¹²² J. Styles, 'Trade, Industry and Empire', in J. Marshner (ed.), *Enlightened Princesses: Caroline, Augusta and Charlotte, and the Shaping of the Modern World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), pp.452-73.

bringing the long-neglected attributes of charity and patriotism into fashion'.¹²³ Her use of her position as vicereine for the benefit of the working poor is apparent in an address she made to a deputation of weavers who 'attended on her' at Dublin Castle in December 1782:

I shall always be happy to give every encouragement and protection to the labour and to the produce of a kingdom, with which I am connected by so many ties, and particularly to that important and valuable branch of commerce, the Silk Manufacture, which will always have my best wishes and support.¹²⁴

Support for Irish silk-weavers would have met with royal expectation but, as the Hanoverian monarchs were renowned for their frugality, it was unlikely that lavish ceremonies would meet with the approval of George III. The painting commissioned by Temple to celebrate the installation of the Knights of St Patrick placed him centre-stage with Countess Temple in the foreground on the left.¹²⁵ The image denoted their high status and set the tone for their high expectations.

Although pomp was very much to Temple's taste, the niceties of less formal socialising were best shared with his wife, not least because she attracted favourable comments from the press. With no evidence to support the statement, she was described in *The Hibernian Magazine* as an 'ornament of the British court' prior to her marriage.¹²⁶ Her 'travel to foreign courts' also appears to be without foundation.¹²⁷ Yet, however fictitious these statements may have been, they differed from those about the vicereine between the countess's two tours of duty. The Duchess of Rutland, vicereine from February 1784 to October 1787, was praised for her beauty, which 'seemed created to command the admiration of mankind', but no other qualities were noted.¹²⁸ 'This superb production of nature' a contemporary observed, was not 'lighted up by corresponding mental attractions'.¹²⁹ By contrast, although Lady Temple's beauty was alluded to, it was not seen as her only appeal. Her appearance in Dublin at a time of chronic food shortages was portrayed as

¹²³ *Hibernian Magazine*, April 1783.

¹²⁴ *Dublin Evening Post*, 17 December 1782.

¹²⁵ John Keyse Sherwin, *Installation of the Knights of St Patrick in St Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle in March 1783*, 1785, National Gallery of Ireland.

¹²⁶ *Hibernian Magazine*, April 1783.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Freemans Journal*, May 1784, cited in Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles*, p.70.

¹²⁹ N.W. Wraxall, *Posthumous Memoirs of His Own Time* (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), vol.2, p.354, cited in Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles*, p.70.

miraculous; she was described as an ‘administering angel’.¹³⁰ The article recounted that ‘her charity was unlimited’ when a crowd of destitute roomkeepers had descended on Dublin Castle to appeal for aid.¹³¹ The countess was credited with providing relief, using Earl Temple’s funds:

Hundreds of poor wretched room-keepers crowded round the castle and were as abundantly relieved as if the princely fortune of Earl Temple were to be directed to no other appropriation but that of benevolence.¹³²

While the extent of her contribution is uncertain, the example suggests her participation in the growing trend towards a reliance on personal judgement in directing funds. She was reported to have instructed ‘ministers and church-warden of the different parishes’ to prioritise the cases of greatest need.¹³³ This experience provided an introduction to the organisational skills required to ensure fair distribution of aid and can be seen as an apprenticeship that was to prove its worth when, six years later, an influx of French refugees required urgent support.

The viceroyalty brought Lady Temple face to face with contrasts between the prosperity of the Irish elite and the destitution of the lower orders in Dublin, but protocol dictated the activity in which she could be involved.¹³⁴ A viceregal event encapsulates the interplay between the recreations of the aristocracy and the needs of the poor. On 18 March 1783, the day after the inauguration of the Knights of St Patrick at Dublin Castle, a celebratory ball was held. As the castle was no longer considered suitable for a gathering of this nature and size, it was held at the Rotunda, the fund-raising entertaining space attached to the Lying-in Hospital which, from 1767, gave the hospital its name.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ *Hibernian Magazine*, April 1783.

¹³¹ Roomkeepers were paupers who, ashamed of their condition, remained hidden in squalid lodgings where many died of starvation. D. Lindsay, ‘The Sick and Indigent Roomkeepers’ Society’, in D. Dickson (ed.), *The Gorgeous Mask: Dublin, 1700-1850* (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1987), pp.132-173 (p. 133). A society was formed for their relief in 1790.

¹³² *Hibernian Magazine*, April 1783.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ For an overview see Dickson (ed.), *Gorgeous Mask*.

¹³⁵ N. Casey, ‘Architecture and Decoration’ in I. Campbell Ross (ed.), *Public Virtue, Public Love: The Early Years of the Dublin Lying-In Hospital, the Rotunda* (Dublin: The O’Brien Press, 1986), pp.53-95 (p.77). Founded in 1745 by Dr. Bartholomew Mosse, the Rotunda is the earliest maternity hospital in Europe to still be functioning today. It moved to its present location in 1757; the Rotunda was added in 1764. See T. Kirkpatrick and H. Jellett, *The History of the Rotunda Hospital* (London: Adlard and Son, Bartholomew Press, 1913).

Countess Temple fulfilled her duty by opening the ball:

Tuesday night there was ball and supper given at the Rotunda by the illustrious Knights of St Patrick ... About ten o'clock his Grace the Duke of Leinster, and the Countess of Temple, opened the ball ¹³⁶

The hire of the rooms at a cost of £300 contributed a far greater sum to the hospital than the usual fee of £50.¹³⁷ On this occasion there was, however, a tension between the various functions of the building: financial gain for the institution came at considerable inconvenience to patients and staff. As a result of the presence of so many aristocratic guests at the ball, rooms in the hospital itself were used, resulting in poor pregnant women who should have been accommodated there being treated in their own homes instead.¹³⁸ This ironical occurrence showed that the rich saw no incongruence between their own enjoyment of polite entertainment and meeting the needs of the poor.¹³⁹ It also highlighted the increasing overcrowding of the hospital which was partly a result of the Governors' decision in 1780 to extend to Catholic clergy the right to recommend patients.¹⁴⁰ This was a significant move away from the original charity's Protestant emphasis: Dr Bartholomew Mosse, founder of the hospital, had instructed that the painting in the newly constructed chapel (opened in 1762) should be 'free from any superstitious or Popish representations'.¹⁴¹ In Ireland as in England there was an increasingly ecumenical dimension to charitable activity which must have gratified the Catholic countess.

Countess Temple followed in the footsteps of earlier vicereines in donating the profits from regular fund-raising balls to Dublin's Lying-in Hospital, the Rotunda.¹⁴² In line with customary practice, on a commemorative board in the hospital her name

¹³⁶ 'Ireland: Investiture of the Knights of St Patrick', *Scots Magazine*, vol.45, March 1783, pp.160-163 (p.163)

¹³⁷ Casey, 'Architecture and Decoration', p.77.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ I. Campbell Ross, 'The Early Years of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital' in Campbell Ross (ed.), *Public Virtue, Public Love*, pp. 9-52 (pp.22-3).

¹⁴⁰ The governors included Luke Gardiner, who had introduced the Relief Act of 1788. See Casey, 'Architecture and Decoration', p.83.

¹⁴¹ Campbell Ross, 'The Early Years', p.30. The chapel opened in 1762.

¹⁴² For contemporary images and a description of the Lying-in Hospital, 'the principal ornament of the north western quarter of the city...the vortex of all the fashion of that part of town', see J. Malton, *A Picturesque and Descriptive View of the City of Dublin* (1799; Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1978), plates 21 and 22 (pages unnumbered).

headed the list of donors, as an example to others: ‘Lady Temple, Proceeds of Ball, £104’.¹⁴³ But a difference can be seen between the board dated 1783, headed by Countess Temple, and those for subsequent years. Her donation was followed by the contributions of nineteen other donors; some of the subsequent years listed on the boards show only one, two or three donations, or smaller amounts, indicating that later vicereines were less assiduous or less successful in eliciting support for the lying-in charity. Her ability to inspire others appears to have exceeded that of her contemporaries. This early indication of her motivational impact was later acknowledged in *La Belle Assemblée*:

She was hailed as the arbitress of fashion – but what was more she made charity and benevolence fashionable; and the hospitals, for the relief more particularly of her own sex, owed much both to her munificence and example.¹⁴⁴

The comment reflects approval of her focus on female welfare, which was increasingly encouraged. The more money she raised for the hospital, the more potential there was for an improvement in the conditions under which poor women gave birth.

Official viceregal rounds of the city would have brought to the attention of Countess Temple projects initiated and overseen by the philanthropist Lady Arbella Denny (1707-92), who in her later years continued to take an interest in the charities in Dublin to which she had devoted herself since being widowed at the age of thirty-five.¹⁴⁵ Her initiatives included reforming the management of the Foundling Hospital established in 1704 to care for orphans, and founding the Magdalene Asylum in 1767 for the rescue and rehabilitation of prostitutes.¹⁴⁶ The idea for the latter originated in London, and was implemented at the request of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the time, Francis Seymour-Conway, Earl of Hertford (1718-94). His wife, Isabella Seymour-Conway (1726-82), and Queen Charlotte were nominated patronesses for

¹⁴³ Viewed in Rotunda Hospital corridor, 23 April 2014.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Biographical Sketches of Illustrious Ladies: The Most Noble the Marchioness of Buckingham’, *La Belle Assemblée* vol.5, no.28 (January 1812), pp.3-5.

¹⁴⁵ C. Campbell Orr, ‘Aunts, Wives, Courtiers: the Ladies of Bowood’, in N. Aston and C. Campbell Orr (eds.), *An Enlightened Statesman in Whig Britain: Lord Shelburne in Context, 1737-1805* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), pp.51-78 (p.78). In 1783 she provided premiums for wet-nurses at the Foundling Hospital.

¹⁴⁶ Campbell Orr, ‘Aunts, Wives, Courtiers’ (p.58)

life.¹⁴⁷ This illustrates the movement of ideas between England and Ireland and is indicative of the influence of the lord lieutenant and his wife could bring to bear on social and welfare matters.

Dublin was the site of proactive female involvement in charitable work. According to Sonnelitter, Lady Arbella Denny exemplified those exceptional elite females who had been able to ‘carve out spheres of influence’ by mainly confining their charity to women and children.¹⁴⁸ But Lady Arbella pushed the boundaries of elite female activity beyond the conventional norms through her involvement with the Royal Dublin Society, becoming its first female (honorary) member in 1766.¹⁴⁹ This opening up of the possibility of a more active role for women is likely to have resonated with the young vicereine. Promoting local industry was part of the remit of the Royal Dublin Society and the viceroy was automatically nominated president. As Clarissa Campbell Orr observed, visiting workshops and commissioning items to decorate homes and public buildings became a fashionable elite pastime.¹⁵⁰ This gave Countess Temple an insight into the process of manufacturing as a route out of poverty.

Lady Arbella demonstrated what could be achieved by relating agriculture to industry through the introduction of sericulture on her estate for the production of silk clothing and regalia.¹⁵¹ It seems likely that this initiative interested the young viceregal couple: the agriculturalist Arthur Young (1741-1820) credited both the Marquess and the Marchioness of Buckingham with the introduction of the straw-plait industry to Gosfield for the production of straw hats which saved the local population from penury.¹⁵² A connection can also be seen between Lady Arbella’s offer of premiums for carpet-making and the tapestry industry subsequently established in Winchester by Lady Temple (by then Marchioness of Buckingham) to

¹⁴⁷ Sonnelitter, *Charity Movements*, pp.131-2.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.125.

¹⁴⁹ Berry, *Royal Dublin Society*, p.142.

¹⁵⁰ Campbell Orr, ‘Aunts, Wives, Courtiers’, p.56.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.59; p.77.

¹⁵² Circa 1795. A. Young, *General View of Agriculture in the County of Essex* (London: [n.pub], 1807), p.395.

enable French émigré clergy to achieve self-sufficiency.¹⁵³ Campbell Orr noted that Lady Arbella was ‘what would now be called a major social entrepreneur.’¹⁵⁴ She not only supported charities for the poor and the sick, she also encouraged schemes that would create work and enable the poor to be self-sufficient.¹⁵⁵ She was granted a premium ‘for the encouragement of bone lace by children in the work-house of the city of Dublin’¹⁵⁶ so it is perhaps no coincidence that, shortly after her return from Ireland in 1789, Lady Buckingham was instrumental in the establishment of a school of industry at Stowe where one of the products was lace.¹⁵⁷

Earl Temple’s first tour was hailed as a success and regret at his departure in June 1783 was recorded in *The Hibernian Magazine*.¹⁵⁸ However, Temple’s pursuit of the king’s favour resulted in a decision which tarnished his political reputation: in December 1783 he delivered to parliament on behalf of George III a speech on the East India Bill which suggested that anyone who voted in its favour would be regarded as an enemy of the king. This loyal but constitutionally dubious utterance, which brought down the Fox-North coalition, compromised his position and, fearing impeachment, he resigned after just three days in post as Secretary of State in the newly formed government of his cousin, William Pitt.¹⁵⁹ Temple’s biographer observed that this showed ‘pride, passion and imprudence’,¹⁶⁰ yet it has been argued elsewhere that it was a selfless act which safeguarded the integrity of Pitt’s Cabinet. Either way, family loyalty remained intact: on 23 December, Pitt wrote to Temple two letters which were ‘not only cordial but affectionate in tone’.¹⁶¹

¹⁵³Campbell Orr, ‘Aunts, Wives, Courtiers’, p.57; D. Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles After 1789* (Bath: Downside Abbey 1986), p.76.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 57

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., and Berry, *Royal Dublin Society*, p.413.

¹⁵⁷ See Chapter Two.

¹⁵⁸ *Hibernian Magazine*, June 1783, p.333.

¹⁵⁹ J. Cannon, *The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution, 1782-4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.147-53.

¹⁶⁰ Davis, ‘Grenville, George, Nugent-Temple-?’.

¹⁶¹ A. Smith, ‘Earl Temple’s Resignation’, 22 December 1783’, *Historical Journal*, vol.6, no.1 (1963), pp.91-7 (p.95): Chevening MSS., printed in Stanhope, *Miscellanies*, II (1872). See also Jupp, ‘Earl Temple’s Resignation’.

It was in a quite different frame of mind that the young man, by then Lord Buckingham, approached his next tour as viceroy.¹⁶² He had the advantage of increased age and experience but being elevated again to this prestigious position above many of his peers catapulted him back into the limelight. It flattered his vanity but resulted in a feeling of anxious isolation that only the company of his wife could dispel. The second tour proved more challenging than the first and illustrates the difficulties of balancing public duty and family commitments. Another child, named Mary like her deceased sister, had been born in July.¹⁶³ Problems with Lady Buckingham's health and that of their children caused difficulties from the start. At the St Patrick's Day celebration in 1788, although Lord Buckingham socialised with the guests, and Lady Buckingham showed her support for Irish industry by wearing a locally made satin dress 'brocaded with shamrocks and harp',¹⁶⁴ as a result of a recent illness she was: 'afraid to mingle with the crowd, [and] beheld the dancing from a box prepared for her on purpose, at the Upper end of St Patrick's Hall.'¹⁶⁵

During this difficult second tour, in support of her husband, the marchioness fulfilled her viceregal duties as far as she was able. She headed the 1788 list of female subscribers to the new Public Assembly Rooms, an addition to the fundraising entertainment space at the Rotunda.¹⁶⁶ The foundation stone had been laid by the Duke of Rutland on 17 July 1784, and he and his Duchess had enjoyed the first use of the rooms on 12 March 1787.¹⁶⁷ Their extravagant entertainment reflected contemporary taste and resulted in increased expectations of splendour which Lord Buckingham attempted to match. When the interior decoration of the great supper-room was still incomplete in 1788 as a result of a shortage of funds, he received a petition accompanied by drawings of the intended decorative scheme, which provides evidence of a link between the hospital and the Knights of St Patrick.¹⁶⁸ Above the fireplace was shown a copy of Robert Hunter's portrait of Lord

¹⁶² His chief secretary was Alleyne FitzHerbert, 1st Baron St Helens (1753-1839).

¹⁶³ Mary Arundell (1787-1854).

¹⁶⁴ *Hibernian Magazine*, March 1788, p.222.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ See 'Original Subscribers to the Public Assembly Rooms', in *Hospital for the Relief of Poor Lying-in Women, A List of the Proprietors of Licences for Private Sedan Chairs* (Dublin, 1788), 18th page, (unnumbered).

¹⁶⁷ Campbell Ross, 'The Early Years', p.47; p.50.

¹⁶⁸ Casey, 'Architecture and Decoration', p.88.

Buckingham wearing the ceremonial robes of the Grand Master of the Order.¹⁶⁹ This association of the new Order with the new rooms would undoubtedly have appealed to the marquess's sense of self-importance and gratified the marchioness as public recognition of his aristocratic, charitable credentials, which in a less elevated role, she shared.

Socializing at the Rotunda raised funds which then needed to be allocated. The following example illustrates that process, showing a clearly defined managerial role for men, and a practical one for women. The lord lieutenant was automatically one of the governors of the Rotunda, the body of men who made decisions regarding the running of the maternity hospital. Twelve wives or daughters of governors were 'requested to become monthly visitors in rotation.'¹⁷⁰ Having inspected diet, accommodation and cleanliness they were to meet once a month to present their comments in writing. A weekly 'Ticket' was presented to the 'Ward-maid' who was 'most exemplary for Cleanliness and Attendance' and an annual prize was given to the ward with the most tickets.¹⁷¹ In addition, 'Flannel Cloathing, or otherwise, to the Relief of the most necessitous Patients' was allocated 'at the Discretion of Ladies the Wives of Governors'.¹⁷² In addition to fundraising and lending her name to the cause, the marchioness would have become aware of the process involved in allocating funds and in improving standards of care. Her subsequent involvement in lying-in provision for local women and French refugees suggests strongly that she built on such experience.

In view of Lady Buckingham's interest in maternity and infant care, it is ironic that her own experience of childbirth in Ireland caught the unfavourable attention of the press. Rather than at the Viceregal Lodge, or the Castle, where building work was underway, her second son, George,¹⁷³ was born on 31 December 1788 during a stay in temporary lodgings at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, a home for wounded soldiers. The event was captured in a satirical print which implied that her baby had

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Plate 24. The original, dated 1783, hangs in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

¹⁷⁰ *Proprietors of Licences for Private Sedan Chairs*, p.57.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., p.61

¹⁷³ George Grenville (1788-1850).

been born at public expense.¹⁷⁴ Compounding Lord Buckingham's anxiety, Lady Buckingham suffered another bout of ill health following the birth and returned to Stowe with their children. Lord Buckingham feared particularly for their daughter, Mary, who was also unwell, a feeling made all the more intense by their earlier loss of her namesake: 'I trust in God that our dear little girl will do well. I cannot describe to you the anxiety I feel for this sweet infant.'¹⁷⁵ Although infant mortality rates were high in all classes in the late eighteenth century, losses were still deeply felt. At the same time Buckingham's workload increased. Upon the death of Robert, Earl Nugent on 14 October 1788 he inherited heavily encumbered estates in Essex and County Westmeath which needed to be managed in addition to those he had inherited from his uncle in 1779. Lady Buckingham inherited a personal fortune estimated to be around £200,000.¹⁷⁶ The responsibility for the portfolio of properties was to prove an immense burden when he was at his lowest ebb politically.¹⁷⁷

Whilst missing Lady Buckingham, the marquess proclaimed his support for George III through the architectural transformation of Dublin Castle.¹⁷⁸ He oversaw the creation of a visual panegyric: the central ceiling painting in St Patrick's Hall, attributed to Vincenzo Valdrè, depicts the monarch flanked by Hibernia and Britannia, signifying the virtues of unity.¹⁷⁹ Buckingham employed Valdrè to decorate the Castle for an event which he hoped would regain the approval of the Irish Parliament, alienated by his refusal to transmit their address to the Prince of Wales during George III's first bout of insanity.¹⁸⁰ A St Patrick's Day Ball was arranged for 17 March 1789, to celebrate the king's recovery, an occurrence which

¹⁷⁴ T. Rowlandson, *The Vice Q's Delivery at the Old Soldiers' Hospital in Dublin*, [uncoloured print], Royal Collection, 1 January 1789 <<https://www.rct.uk/collection/810314/the-vice-q-s-delivery-at-the-old-soldiers-hospital-in-dublin>> [accessed 22 January 2020].

¹⁷⁵ HL STG Box 47(22) George, Marquess of Buckingham to Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham, 6 May 1789.

¹⁷⁶ Even though Beckett suggests that this was a generous estimate, it must have been considerable to have attracted so much contemporary comment. Beckett, *Rise and Fall*, p.67. TNA PROB 11/1171/136: Will of The Right Honorable Robert Craggs Earl Nugent.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.66: 'Sir Nathaniel Wraxall considered him 'a nobleman of very considerable talents and indefatigable application to business.'

¹⁷⁸ M. Campbell, ' "Sketches of their Boundless Mind": The Marquess of Buckingham and the Presence Chamber at Dublin Castle, 1788-1838', in M. Campbell and W. Derham (eds.), *Making Majesty: Building and Borrowing the Regal Image at Dublin Castle* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2017), pp.46-93.

¹⁷⁹ J. Fenlon, *Dublin Castle* (Dublin: Government Publications, 2017), pp.43-4

¹⁸⁰ See for example, N. Robinson, 'Caricature and the Regency Crisis: An Irish Perspective', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, vol.1 (1986), pp.157-76

Buckingham mistakenly felt vindicated his controversial inaction. In a renewed bid for approval, for Queen Charlotte's birthday in May, Buckingham emblazoned the venue with transparencies for an event for 500 guests. Exhausted, he nevertheless wrote a description to his wife, including a drawing of the layout of the room as the preparations were being made:

St Patrick's Hall is the most splendid sight you can imagine. It will hold 500 covers of whom 400 will be seated. ... I have sketched the portrait to amuse you ... Valdre paints transparencies for the two galleries at the ends. One compliments the K. the other the Queen... The columns are lighted by about 800 lamps at each end.¹⁸¹

But it is clear that splendour meant nothing to him while he missed her and was concerned about the health of their infant daughter: 'the glare of magnificence & of rejoicing in the King's recovery can but ill compensate me for your sufferings and mine for that dear little girl.'¹⁸² Letters written during their separation demonstrate their shared preoccupations and aspirations, and his dependence on her.

Buckingham's letters were not just about social and family matters. He took for granted her understanding of his political concerns, boasting about his successes:

We here beat ... Grattan my dearest love upon a most offensive motion which he levelled against my brother ... we are wild with transport for I have carried against the whole aristocracy.¹⁸³

He appreciated her acceptance of his duty as a 'publick man,' a man who serves the public, a responsibility he took seriously.¹⁸⁴ In February 1789, during the Regency Crisis, he lamented their 'cruel separation' and wrote with regret: 'It will be impossible for me from any sense of Publick duty or private honour to quit this wretched kingdom till the Government shall have prorogued.'¹⁸⁵ Just two days later, suggesting that they both felt that duty should come before pleasure, he wrote:

I should indeed be tempted to abandon everything and fly to you, but I know that you are fonder of my good sense and of my conscientious discharge of my duty, than of my society.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹HL STG Box 47 (22) George, Marquess of Buckingham to Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham, 12 May 1789.

¹⁸² Ibid. 8 May 1789.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 4 March 1789.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 26 February 1789.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 28 February 1789.

The following month, in a depressed state, he showed his reliance on her understanding of his need to remain apart from her and fulfil his patriotic duty. He was comforted by ‘her picture’, which is likely to have been the miniature shown below (Figure 1.2).

I know that this statement of it will grieve you, but you feel for my character and duty as much as I do. Your picture is my only comfort and it is my constant companion and relieves many gloomy moments.¹⁸⁷



Figure 1.2. Horace Hone, *The Marchioness of Buckingham*, 1783. © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

Without the moderating company of his wife he subjected himself to a punishing schedule of work in the service of king and country. This may have satisfied his conscience, but a lack of interest in homosocial interaction did nothing for his popularity amongst his peers. As Joseph Robins noted, ‘he found distasteful the long nights of eating and drinking’.¹⁸⁸ His need for reassurance that he had fulfilled his public duty, and for recognition that he had done it well, resulted in a dependence on marks of favour for services rendered. His expectation of a dukedom was, however, out all proportion to the work he had undertaken which was an accepted aristocratic responsibility. It was unfortunate that his demand coincided with George III’s determination to keep to a minimum the number of honours he conferred, confining dukedoms to his family, in order to preserve their exclusivity.¹⁸⁹

While the marquess carried out his viceregal duties in Dublin, the marchioness met familial and local obligations, and oversaw maintenance and repairs at Stowe.¹⁹⁰ Her confidence and capabilities are evident during this period, which she referred to as her ‘regency’.¹⁹¹ Upon the king’s recovery in March she demonstrated patriotism that equalled her husband’s when she organised an event at the mansion for ‘above two thousand people’. In a letter to Buckingham’s brother, William Wyndham Grenville, she jokingly professed herself to be so overjoyed at the recovery of George III that she almost forgot to order an ox roast for the celebration.¹⁹² She provided him with an account of the event, diplomatically thanking him for his instructions:

I obeyed your commands; and flatter myself it was done not only according to the letter but also to the spirit of them. Our ox, accompanied by loaves, was divided *regularly* to above two thousand people; the rest was a scramble as you may imagine, though, considering we were not sparing of our beer, there was very little riot.¹⁹³

Realising that ‘the quality of Buckingham’ would attend, in her husband’s absence, she made arrangements for their entertainment:

¹⁸⁸ Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles*, p.76.

¹⁸⁹ M. Turner, *Pitt the Younger: a Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.101; W. Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (London and New York: Harper Collins, 2004), p.273. The only ducal creations 1784-89 were two of George III’s sons: Prince Fredrick as Duke of York and Albany on 27 February 1784, and Prince William as Duke of Clarence and St Andrews on 19 May 1789.

¹⁹⁰ HL STG Box 47 (22), George, Marquess of Buckingham to Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham, 28 February 1789.

¹⁹¹ *Fortescue*, vol.1, p.434: Marchioness of Buckingham to W.W. Grenville, 15 March 1789.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.431: Marchioness of Buckingham to W.W. Grenville, c.12 March 1789.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.433: Marchioness of Buckingham to W.W. Grenville, 15 March 1789.

As I had had hint that might be the case, I had provided accordingly; we had a supper in the hall, and made a Ranelagh of the saloon, which all ended with an impromptu dance in the dining room.¹⁹⁴

A month later, letters between Lady Buckingham and William Wyndham Grenville show a shared concern for Lord Buckingham. By April 1789 there was a marked deterioration in the marquess's health. He described the discomfort he endured in his weakened state when weighed down by the ceremonial robes he was obliged to wear:

I hardly ever suffered more from the heat of the Royal Robes which I was obliged to wear for five hours together in Church, and although I had put off my underwastecoat [sic] I almost sank under it.¹⁹⁵

By his own admission, Lord Buckingham could not cope with the demands of the job without his wife. In May 1789 he wrote: 'But indeed my dearest Mary I cannot live without you.'¹⁹⁶ In June, when Lady Buckingham was back at her husband's side in Dublin she showed great concern over his wellbeing: 'His health is most dreadfully impaired by all he has gone through; he looks extremely yellow, can bear no exercise'.¹⁹⁷ Her letters to William Wyndham Grenville were written without her husband's knowledge, suggesting that she was more pro-active within the family than previously acknowledged:

I am scribbling this in all haste for fear of him catching me at it; as, in the first place, he is not himself aware of the very bad way he is in; and if he was, would not perhaps wish you to know it; so keep this a most profound secret, and make the best use of it.¹⁹⁸

Referring to his 'lassitude', 'dejection of spirits' and 'want of appetite', she wished her brother-in-law was there to support her: 'Would to God you was with us, for I shall not long support this weight'.¹⁹⁹

When the marquess, in turn, wrote to his brother of his wife's 'affectionate and constant attentions,' he reported that he had been 'fully employed with talking with her on the very many points which were mutually interesting to us',²⁰⁰ a comment

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.433-4

¹⁹⁵ HL STG Box 47 (22), George, Marquess of Buckingham to Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham, 25 April 1789.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 6 May 1789.

¹⁹⁷ *Fortescue*, vol. 1. p.476: Marchioness of Buckingham to W.W. Grenville, 1 June 1789.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.477: Marchioness of Buckingham to W.W. Grenville, 7 June 1789

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.476: Marquess of Buckingham to W.W. Grenville, 5 June 1789.

that suggests a discussion of patronage interests which may in fact have added to, rather than alleviated, his workload. Anxious to regain the king's favour, against medical advice, Lord Buckingham refused to vacate his post until a suitable replacement could be found. The marchioness's response showed her to be aggrieved at the king's apparent lack of understanding. Her concern was personal: she wanted her husband's hard work to be recognised.

Lord Buckingham will not hear of it; he says the king would never forgive such a step. Surely after his own release from a malady brought on by over application to business, he could not have the heart to refuse the only means of restoring a life sacrificed in his service as Lord Buckingham's has been.²⁰¹

Lord Buckingham's position became untenable when government supporters, led by the Duke of Leinster and others, joined the opposition.²⁰² Suffering from ill health, fatigued and disillusioned, his sense of entitlement disappointed, the marquess gave vent to petulant outbursts which lost him support in both England and Ireland; at the age of just thirty-six, he had little choice but to step down.²⁰³ He resigned on 30 September 1789. A contemporary commentator compared the end of his two tours as viceroy: 'the retreat of the Marquis from this kingdom...was neither glorious or honourable, and how widely dissimilar [sic] to the triumphant departure of a Lord Temple.'²⁰⁴ With his intentions of rooting out corruption thwarted Buckingham was accused of the very abuses he had endeavoured to eradicate: 'In his administration a wanton increase of nominal and unnecessary employments and real sinecures took place, and the scandalous barter of places, offices and pensions'.²⁰⁵ The writer regretted the 'credulous cordiality' with which the marquess had been welcomed,²⁰⁶ but showed that whereas he had not lived up to their expectations second time round, admiration for the marchioness remained undiminished:

²⁰¹ Ibid: Marchioness of Buckingham to William Wyndham Grenville, 7 June 1789.

²⁰² N. Robinson, 'Caricature and the Regency Crisis', p.163.

²⁰³ N. Herman, 'Henry Grattan, the Regency Crisis and the Emergence of a Whig Party in Ireland, 1788-9', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol.32, no.128 (2001), pp.478-97.

²⁰⁴ J. Mullala, *Political History of Ireland From the Commencement of Lord Townsend's Administration to the Departure of the Marquis of Buckingham* (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1793), p.238.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.237.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

The Marchioness of Buckingham possesses every virtue that human nature can boast of – affability, politeness, courtesy and charity; she is the perfect pattern of conjugal affection and domestic oeconomy.²⁰⁷

Characteristics and capabilities that were increasingly portrayed as feminine were attributed to Lady Buckingham and she was held up as an example.

Towards the end of his tour of duty, Lord Buckingham undertook a rehabilitating trip to Bath with his wife. The timing of this period of convalescence, the start of his semi-retirement, is significant because it coincided with the arrival in England of the first wave of refugees fleeing revolutionary France. Several members of the French aristocracy chose the familiar and fashionable resort of Bath as their first port of call; two days after the fall of the Bastille, the *Bath Chronicle* recorded the presence of French aristocrats in the city at the same time as the Marquess and Marchioness of Buckingham.²⁰⁸ It is not unreasonable to speculate that they found themselves rubbing shoulders with them and that their sympathy was aroused. The energy that had been for so long deployed in the service of the king was about to find a new outlet.

Conclusion

In the 1780s there were endless discussions on the specific role of women in the bettering of the human condition, which was at the heart of enlightenment thought.²⁰⁹ The moral duty to foster improvement at all levels of society was most strongly instilled into the elite as the legitimization of their position.²¹⁰ At the same time women's involvement within the traditional charitable female spheres of hospitals, maternity care and child welfare and education was evolving; practical roles were increasingly assigned to women, including the elite.²¹¹ However, like Lady Arbella, who was cited by Campbell Orr, Sonnelitter and Raughter as an exceptional case,

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p.236.

²⁰⁸ *Bath Chronicle*, 16 July 1789, 'Marquis and Marchioness of Buckingham, Sir Robert Harris, le Comte and La Comtesse de Neiuville [sic], Mlle de Neiuville...'

²⁰⁹ See S. Knott and B. Taylor, *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (2005; Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) for the diverse range of female engagement. For enlightenment thought, see J. Robertson, *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); R. Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London and New York: Penguin Press, 2000).

²¹⁰ See for example, Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*.

²¹¹ S. Trimmer, *Oeconomy of Charity; or An Address to Ladies Concerning Sunday Schools* (London: T. Longman, 1787); More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*.

Lady Buckingham began to emerge as one of those ‘individuals of sufficient standing and force of personality [who] could circumvent the limitations customarily placed on their sex.’²¹²

The vicerealty provided her with a platform. Acting as vicereine, she served her apprenticeship as a philanthropist in the full glare of publicity. When she found herself vulnerable to attack because she was married to an increasingly unpopular politician in a precarious, prominent position, her religion was a source of personal strength. Her philanthropy was motivated by a strong Catholic faith, but also by marital duty: it was her route to salvation but it also served their joint aristocratic interest. Charitable activity was a means of gaining positive publicity and the temporal recognition Lord Buckingham craved. He was motivated by the classical ideal of public duty – modern-day social responsibility, but his determination to do his utmost for others was heightened by an insecure personality, a need to feel appreciated and a sense of entitlement to praise for good deeds. Viceregal rounds in Dublin provided Lady Buckingham with insights into industry, employment and healthcare which help to explain her subsequent practical involvement in émigré support. Lord Buckingham’s political demise made meaningful activity essential; in time, the émigrés fulfilled that need.

²¹² Raughter, ‘A Natural Tenderness’, p.73.

Chapter Two: Elite Female Responsibility in an Age of Revolution

This chapter contends that the extent of social responsibility assumed by female aristocrats has yet to be sufficiently recognised. It provides evidence of the commitment displayed by Lady Buckingham in instigating, overseeing and patronising local and London-based charities at the same time as being closely involved in the education of her children, especially her daughter, Lady Mary.¹ The diversity of local duties undertaken by elite women, alongside their familial responsibilities, indicates proactive and creative participation in more wide-ranging and meaningful pursuits than their detractors allowed.² With access to funds and influence, those who chose to use them had greater potential than their middle-class contemporaries to determine the nature of philanthropic schemes. In so doing, they helped to perpetuate the ties of obligation and safeguard aristocratic supremacy.

The chapter argues that self-assurance, coupled with insights gained in Dublin, placed the marchioness in a strong position to improve the condition of the local poor. It contends that her philanthropic interventions, the result of religious conviction and marital duty, gave her a foothold in the world of work which would equip her to act effectively on behalf of the émigrés, facilitating their self-sufficiency and reducing the burden placed on the state by a transient population. It then suggests that although it was customary for mothers to be in overall charge of the education of their young, the extent of maternal influence has not yet been fully understood. It argues that the strategies employed by the marchioness to equip her daughter for a life of privilege and responsibility were part of a practical and rational response to the ‘direct and sustained attack’³ to which the aristocracy found itself subjected in the wake of the Revolution in France. It probes elite female agency in preserving the

¹ Lady Buckingham gave birth to four children, three of whom survived: Richard (b.1776); Mary (d.1782); Mary (b.1787); George (b.1788).

² Foremost amongst these was Mary Wollstonecraft who laid out her ideas on how to correct female aristocratic behaviour in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life* (London: J. Johnson, 1787). She further elucidated her view of elite female responsibility in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1792).

³ A. Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s: Pamphlets, Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), p.28.

status quo by exploring the early years' home-schooling of Lady Mary. Spanning the years 1792 to 1799, the young girl's education coincided with the greatest influx of émigrés from France and her parents' involvement in their relief.

In Chapter One, the exploration of charitable practice in Dublin provided evidence of a move towards organised charity which increasingly distanced women from the objects of their concern. The change was a progression from personal charitable giving towards philanthropic enterprise which sought longer term sustainable solutions to the social problems associated with poverty. Needs were to be recognised by the poor themselves so that they could be instrumental in working towards a solution. The preface to *The Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor*⁴ provided one explanation as to why a change was necessary: until the last decade of the eighteenth century, charitable giving had been based on perceived, not real, needs:

For a period of more than two centuries, the attention of the nation has been engaged by a succession of projects, for the management of the poor; almost all of them originating in benevolence ... The good effects however, as to the poor, have been limited and uncertain: the project having originated not in them, but in the projector; not in fact, but in speculation.⁵

Philanthropic activities reinforced the social hierarchy, by perpetuating the reliance of the poor on the rich; by the end of the eighteenth century, as Joanna Innes has argued, support was closely related to need but was also dependent upon moral rectitude, which was defined in terms set by the elite.⁶ To curb the resultant arrogance, sermons that urged the practice of Christian charity cautioned against acting out of selfish motives. Benefactors were warned against projecting a favourable, benevolent image of themselves for political or private ends, and against letting fashion be a driving force in favouring some charities over others. In a sermon typical of the period, preached in March 1788 to the governors of the Benevolent Institution for the Delivering of Poor Married Women at their own

⁴ The society was founded in 1796 by Sir Thomas Bernard, 3rd baronet (1750-1818), an active promoter of vaccination, William Wilberforce (1759-1833), and his widowed, evangelical friend E.J. Eliot (d.1797).

⁵ *The Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor*, (1798; repr. London, 1805), vol.1, p.3.

⁶ See Joanna Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), especially pp.180-215.

Habitations (established 1780), George Horne, Bishop of Norwich (1730-92),⁷ listed ‘wrong and sinister motives’ for charitable acts:

We may perform them merely because there is a decency and propriety in so doing; others perform them and we should be thought meanly of, were we to omit them: we may perform them out of vanity, to acquire the character of benevolent ... we may perform them out of envy, lest a rival bear off the honour from us: we may perform them to become popular, and serve some secular and political interest.⁸

The Practice of Philanthropy

Differing motivations co-existed comfortably within the Buckinghams’ marriage; they each lent their support to charities which chimed with their concerns. The Stowe Papers at the Huntington Library provided evidence of the level of engagement of the marquess and marchioness in benevolent activities from the earliest days of their marriage. The location of the projects they supported was determined by property ownership and its attendant aristocratic responsibility. Their charitable donations, often settled by Mr. Parrot, the Steward, on their behalf, included annual subscriptions to the nationwide Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, local Sunday Schools, the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, and the countywide poor clergy widows’ and orphans’ fund.⁹ Figure 2.1 shows an example. Archival evidence confirms that accountability was becoming a key factor in the distribution of charity at local and national level. For example, a list of the information required for a widows’ and orphans’ claim,¹⁰ and a lengthy request from a clergyman for aid for a ‘worthy widow’ demonstrate the need for a sponsor to plead a claimant’s case according to specific criteria.¹¹ Invoices, receipts and notes to and from the marchioness provide evidence of smaller scale benevolent acts, independent decisions based on immediate need, such as making a payment to a victim of theft.¹² Other individual payments include a carpenter’s bill for ‘making a carriage for a lame boy’ (Figure 2.2). Longer term support included settling bills for meat for the

⁷ N. Aston, ‘Horne, George (1730-92)’ <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 19 September 2019].

⁸ G. Horne, *Charity Recommended on its True Motive; A Sermon Preached...Before the Governors of the Benevolent Institution for the Delivering of Poor Married Women at Their Own Habitations* (Oxford: Prince and Cooler, 1788), p.4. Viscount Bulkeley, travelling companion of the marquess, was a vice-president of the institution.

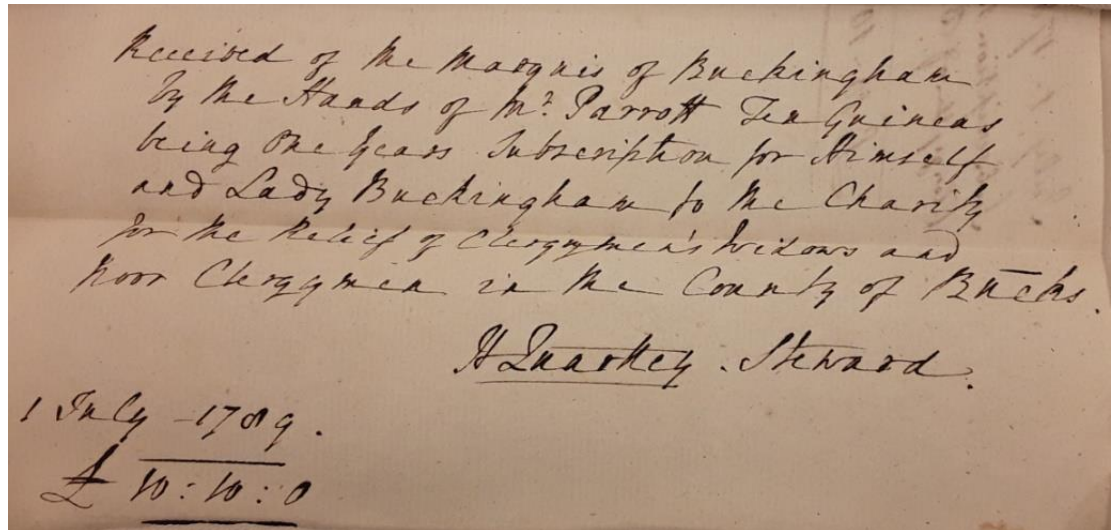
⁹ HL STG Accounts Box 169: Charities.

¹⁰ HL STG Manorial Box 9, Committee Meeting Minutes.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Box 10 (2).

¹² HL STG Accounts, Box 169: Charities, November 15, 1786.

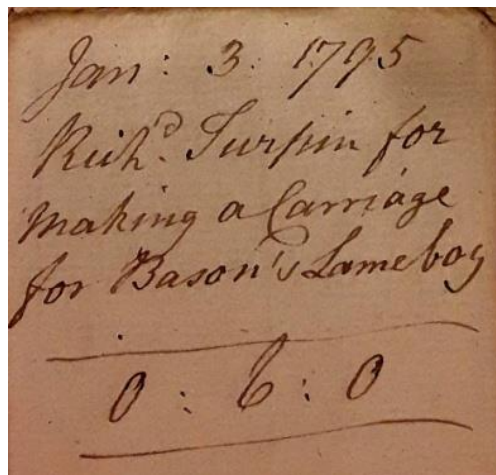
poor, providing for 'Widow Bett's children,'¹³ and paying an allowance to 'sundry poor women' over a period of several years (Figure 2.3).



Received of the Marquis of Buckingham
By the Hands of M^r. Parrott Ten Guineas
being One year Subscription for himself
and Lady Buckingham to the Charity
for the Relief of Clergymen's Widows and
Poor Clergy in the County of Bucks.
J. Quaker. Steward.
1 July 1789.
£ 10: 10: 0

Figure 2.1. 'Subscription to the Charity for the Relief of Clergymen's Widows and Poor Clergy'. STG Accounts Box 169: Charities, 1 July 1789.

The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Digital image by Janice Morris.¹⁴



Jan: 3: 1795
Rich^d. Turpin for
making a Carriage
for Bason's Lame boy
0: 6: 0

Figure 2.2. 'Making a Carriage for Bason's Lame Boy'

STG Accounts Box: Charities, 3 January 1795.

The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

¹³ Ibid., 15 June 1788 - 12 April 1789.

¹⁴ For all subsequent figures: 'Digital image by Janice Morris' unless stated otherwise.

April 21-1794. Paid the Marchioness's Allowance to
Sundry Poor Women as under

To Mary Sasby	0	5	0
Martha Sherley	0	5	0
Eliz Chapman	0	5	0
Martha Cherry	0	5	0
Adams. Lodge	0	5	0
Alic Salmon Chackmore	0	5	0
Ann Lawrence	0	5	0
Jeffery	0	5	0
Whittlebury	0	5	0
	£	2	0
		0	0

Figure 2.3. 'The Marchioness's Allowance to Sundry Poor Women'
STG Accounts Box 169: Charities, 21 April 1794.
The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Archival evidence suggests that the marchioness was personally more actively engaged than the historical record implies in larger scale charities such as the establishment and running of local schools and industries, and that her interest endured. In 1775, alongside her husband, she embarked upon work within the community surrounding their first marital home at Wotton, and the couple maintained an interest there throughout their married life. When Buckingham inherited Stowe in 1779, their portfolio of philanthropic activity expanded, once more in line with good aristocratic practice. Then, upon inheriting Gosfield in 1788,¹⁵ educational and occupational projects were set in motion there. The focus of this section is the extent of Lady Buckingham's local obligations, arguing that her fulfilment of these duties put her in strong position to provide appropriate, well-organised aid to a succession of émigré groups.

Like other eulogistic sources such as the article in *The Hibernian Magazine* cited in Chapter One,¹⁶ the marchioness's obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* effectively downplayed her achievements by relating them to those which accorded with

¹⁵ TNA PROB 11/1171/136: Will of the Right Honorable Robert Craggs Earl Nugent or Robert Earl Nugent of Ireland.

¹⁶ *Hibernian Magazine*, April 1783.

contemporary ideals of feminine behaviour. Praised for her dutifulness as ‘a wife, a mother, the mistress of a family, and as a friend to her neighbours of every rank’, fashionable sentimentality is apparent in the writer’s claim that ‘there would be enough in her acts of beneficence alone to endear her memory to every feeling heart’.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the obituary highlighted in general terms the extent of her philanthropic activity and its three main locations:

But the chief trait in her character was her charity and benevolence, of which the instances are without number, as well as in the Metropolis, as in those parts of Buckinghamshire and Essex where she had the means of discerning the wants of her fellow creatures.¹⁸

Pairing this tribute with other primary sources allows for a more detailed reconstruction of her agency in establishing and overseeing charitable schemes. Together they provide an example of elite female involvement in the practical aspects of social care.

Lying-in Charities

Lady Buckingham’s personal role in the provision of maternity and neonatal care appears to have exceeded that of her contemporaries. Her experience in this field was to prove of use when émigré arrivals included a large percentage of young women and children. Lying-in hospitals such as those established in Dublin in 1745 and in London in 1750 had been criticised for removing expectant mothers from their homes, families and housework for too long. An alternative arrangement had been suggested, whereby medical care could be provided at home to ensure a safe delivery with minimal disruption to working lives. Donna Andrew referred to this as a new approach, ‘[which] found its first concrete manifestation in the formation of the Lying-in Charity for Delivering Poor Married Women in their own Habitations in 1757’.¹⁹ This charity could provide cheaper care, making efficient, widespread use of subscriptions. It funded visiting midwives to deal with a large number of cases, rather than giving more expensive hospital care to a few. It also served those too proud to admit to their poverty as it tended to them discreetly in the privacy of their

¹⁷ ‘Memoirs of the Marchioness of Buckingham’, *Gentleman’s Magazine* (March 1812), pp.292-3 (p.292).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ D. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.105.

homes.²⁰ This model, designed for city dwellers, met with public approval, particularly because of its cost-effectiveness. Its success was a spur to considering a more widespread adoption of the scheme.

Dispensaries were founded to complement the lying-in scheme. Bronwyn Croxson noted that dispensaries for treating the sick poor had existed since the end of the seventeenth century, and listed twenty-one charitable dispensaries and ‘outdoor’ lying-in charities that were founded in London between 1769 and 1792.²¹ An establishment with which the marchioness was associated was not included in Croxson’s list: a dispensary founded in Soho in 1785 for inoculating and providing medicine to the infant poor.²² It was not the only one to be specifically for the treatment of infants,²³ but it differed in that it included inoculation, advice and treatment at home. A report covering the treatment of 2,195 children between 1785 and 1793 referred to it as: ‘The General Dispensary for inoculating and administering advice and medicines gratis to all the infant poor at their own habitations and at the dispensary.’²⁴ A sermon soliciting support for another dispensary for infants recorded that in London half died before the age of five.²⁵ The survival of children was essential to the future prosperity and defence of the country:

The power, wealth and safety of a commercial nation, must in great measure depend upon the number, vigor and activity of its members; he therefore who preserves the life of a citizen, performs the most essential service to the community.²⁶

In urging support for such charities it was noted that ‘motives of policy plead as strongly for them as those of humanity’.²⁷ Compassion may have played a part, but pragmatism dictated the agenda: immunisation against smallpox was at the heart of the patriotic drive to reduce infant mortality and thereby ensure a healthy workforce,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ B. Croxson ‘The Public and Private Faces of Eighteenth-Century London Dispensary Charity’, *Medical History* vol.41 (1997), pp.127-49 (p.127).

²² *The General Dispensary for Inoculating and Administering Advice and Medicines Gratis to All the Infant Poor at Their Own Habitations and at the Dispensary, Wardour Street, Soho* (London, 1794).

²³ Croxson lists a Dispensary for the Infant Poor, founded in 1769, ‘London Dispensary Charity’, p.128.

²⁴ *General Dispensary*, title page.

²⁵ T. Francklin, *A Sermon Preached on Thursday the 12th of May 1774 Before the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Guardians of the Dispensary of the Infant Poor* (London: J. Milledge, 1774), p.8.

²⁶ Ibid., p.7.

²⁷ *General Dispensary*, p.6.

large enough to provide for, and defend, the nation. Sick children of all ranks, whose care had hitherto been entrusted to ‘ignorant women, or still more ignorant empirics’,²⁸ were the object of scientific observation and medical research:

In the science of physic...all the little aid and assistance which human art can afford, to counteract human infirmity, must arise from that experience which accurate observation and extensive practise [sic] alone can procure; that experience and practise, institutions of this nature give us the best opportunities of acquiring.²⁹

In his sermon, the Rev. Thomas Francklin, chaplain to the Royal Academy from 1768,³⁰ observed that ‘this age will hereafter be distinguished as the *Aera* of medical improvement’,³¹ reflecting the linking of science and religion in the enlightenment quest to control the natural world.³² By committing to an annual subscription of five guineas or more to a society which used science to preserve infant life, Lady Buckingham secured the post of ‘governess’³³, giving her a degree of influence within the organisation, including voting rights and the right to recommend more claimants than those making smaller donations.³⁴ Although no evidence has yet come to light of her use of these rights, the position could potentially have given her a privileged insight into the progress of research into immunisation, a topic which was of particular interest to the Rev. Robert Holt, rector of Finmere, vicar of Stowe and tutor to her children from 1790.³⁵ Lady Buckingham was the only female to commit such a large amount of money, and therefore the only female on the governing body.³⁶ The Duchess of Buccleuch (1743-1827),³⁷ who was subsequently linked with

²⁸ Francklin, *Sermon*, p.9

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ M.J. Mercer, ‘Francklin, Thomas (1721-1784)’ < www.oxforddnb.com > [accessed 13 November 2019]

³¹ Francklin, *Sermon*, p.10

³² See D. Hempton, ‘Enlightenment and Faith’, in P. Langford, *The Eighteenth Century 1688-1815* (1976 ; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.75.

³³ Female governor.

³⁴ *General Dispensary*, p.13.

³⁵ Holt conducted a village-wide human trial of the cowpox vaccine in the prevention and treatment of smallpox His unpublished contribution to medical research was recently unearthed by Andy Boddington, local historian and science consultant: ‘Death of a Village Smallpox Pioneer’ <www.dukesofbuckingham.co.uk> [accessed 14 March 2018].

³⁶ *General Dispensary*, p.13.

³⁷ Lady Elizabeth Montagu; described by Sir Walter Scott as ‘a woman of unbounded beneficence to, and even beyond, the extent of her princely fortune’: G.E Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London: St Catherine’s Press, 1910-59), vol. 2, p. 369. Her charitable work included involvement in the founding of Edinburgh’s Royal Blind Asylum and School in 1793. See A. Murdoch, ‘Scott, Henry, third duke of Buccleuch (1746-1812)’ <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 6 January 2019].

the marchioness through support for female émigrés,³⁸ was listed as a subscriber ‘of two guineas or less’.³⁹ Similarly, through the dispensary, Lady Buckingham came into contact with the evangelical economist and philanthropist Henry Thornton (1760-1815) and his brother Robert (1759-1826) whose donations of ten guineas entitled them to be governors for life.⁴⁰ Henry Thornton was later involved in émigré clergy relief. The General Dispensary gives a clear indication of individuals of different religious beliefs working alongside one another, highlighting the increasingly ecumenical, even secular, dimension to eighteenth-century philanthropy, as noted by Paul Langford in *Public Life*.⁴¹

Lady Buckingham’s interest in the preservation of infant life is clear. Building on Andrew’s study which concentrated on London, this section shows that by providing linen for mothers and babies the marchioness enhanced the lying-in scheme and adapted it for use in the rural communities surrounding her country houses. Stuart Basten drew attention to it as a successful project, citing Rev. Robert Holt’s report in *The Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor*.⁴² The volume in which it was described opened with an address to the public by Thomas Bernard, founder of the Society.⁴³ Bernard stressed the dangerous effects of idleness, and advocated a concerted effort by all classes to foster in the lower orders the will to improve through hard work. His summary of the objectives of the society on its foundation emphasised the centrality of personal responsibility.⁴⁴ This was not a new notion, but its dissemination accelerated in the later eighteenth century when print culture helped to spread ‘a welter of didactic literature’ to the masses.⁴⁵

³⁸ See Chapter Five for the shop they established for the sale of émigré crafts.

³⁹ *General Dispensary*, p.13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ P. Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.492.

⁴² S. Basten, ‘Out-Patient Maternity Relief in Late Georgian Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire’, *Local Population Studies*, 77, (2006), 58-65. Rev. Robert Holt, ‘Extract from an account of a charity, for assisting the female poor, at the period of their lying-in’, in *Reports of the Society Bettering the Condition... of the Poor*, vol.1, pp.194-7.

⁴³ T. Bernard, ‘Preliminary Address to the Public’, 24 April 1797 in *Reports*, vol.1, pp.1-14.

⁴⁴ Bernard, Appendix V, 17 December 1796, in *ibid.*, pp.390-8.

⁴⁵ B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.178.

The Lying-in Charity initiated by Lady Buckingham accorded with the mood of the time; she demonstrated a *modus operandi* which cared for mothers and infants but also provided occupation and education, thereby promoting the happiness that was considered to stem from productive industry. In his report, Holt strongly endorsed Lady Buckingham's project by presenting it as a pattern to be replicated elsewhere. He suggested that although this scheme was funded by one individual, a committee of like-minded subscribers could achieve the same results in other parts of the country.⁴⁶ He professed sufficient faith in the charity to consider that subscribers' donations would be put to good use, as was increasingly the expectation of both public and private donors. As he was dependant on the Buckinghams' patronage the wording of his report was no doubt dictated by convention and self-interest, but it has left a significant trace of the marchioness's philanthropic activity.

Holt's 'Extract from an Account of a Charity, for Assisting the Female Poor, at the Period of their Lying-in' listed the locations of the Buckinghamshire scheme as Stowe, Wotton, Buckingham and Aylesbury. He included Gosfield in Essex, showing that the marchioness had a hand in organising relief at each of the Nugent-Grenville properties, in both counties. The charity must have been established circa 1787 as the report by Holt, dated 6 December 1797, stated: 'This charity was instituted by the Marchioness of Buckingham about ten years ago.'⁴⁷ She was the sole elite female to be identified (by her title) in this 409-page volume;⁴⁸ the only other named women who featured there were: Mrs Shore, who provided a recipe for stewed ox-head, Mrs Bernard who ran a village soup kitchen and Mrs Salter, a workhouse manager.⁴⁹ Not even the Matron of the Foundling Hospital was named although she was identified by her professional position when she provided reports

⁴⁶ Evidence of its success and longevity: The system of linen loans introduced by the marchioness circa 1787 was introduced three decades later in York. W. Hargrove, *The History and Description of the Ancient City of York*, 2 vols (York: William Alexander, 1818), ii, p.637: '*A lying in society was instituted on the first of November, 1812, in aid of the more virtuous part of the lower orders of society who may stand in need of the charitable assistance of the humane. It is supported by subscriptions; and the object is to pay a midwife for attendance of the mother and for visiting her once a day and dressing the child for a week after its birth. The society also lends the necessary linen for a month.*'

⁴⁷ *Reports*, vol.1, p.195.

⁴⁸ Female participation soon became commonplace. Appendix XXVI in *Reports*, vol. 4 (1805), pp.190-6, contains a list of 185 female subscribers (of whom 55 were titled).

⁴⁹ *Reports*, vol.1, pp. 100, 166, 279.

on kitchen equipment and the benefits of rice.⁵⁰ An innovative midwife-training scheme in Hertfordshire, reported upon in the same volume, names the midwife simply as ‘a poor widow’.⁵¹

The marchioness’s Lying-in Charity was described thus by Holt: on receipt of an application and following an assessment of the applicants’ characters, in accordance with the requirement that the poor should show themselves to be deserving of support by providing evidence of industry as well as of need, sets of bedlinen and clothes were lent out to expectant mothers at the time of their confinement for two, three or four weeks.⁵² The length of the loan and the provision of broth and medical care were dependent on need. Holt noted that the charity was not abused as it provided the poor with articles they could not otherwise afford. The recipient was rewarded for returning the items in re-usable condition by being given five shillings for laundering them. This emphasis on recompense had the effect of encouraging female neighbourly co-operation as others in turn would benefit from the same loan if the articles were well-cared for.

Schools of Industry

The lying-in scheme had the additional advantage of providing employment for local girls in the manufacture of the items required. Schools established at Wotton, Gosfield and Stowe educated and trained the young female workforce.⁵³ This use of local labour helped to keep costs to a minimum. In 1787 this type of scheme was introduced to female readers by Sarah Trimmer in *Oeconomy of Charity*, dedicated to Queen Charlotte.⁵⁴ A School of Industry, offering education and employment to girls was already in operation at Windsor, at the instigation of the queen.

There is no need, MADAM, to solicit Your MAJESTY in favour of my plans, for your own spontaneous goodness has anticipated them; and it must rejoice everyone,

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.108-17, 221- 5.

⁵¹ Rev. Mr Dolling, ‘Extract from an account of the mode of supplying a country parish with a midwife’, in *Reports*, vol.1, p.28.

⁵² *Reports*, vol.1, pp.194-5: ‘Two sheets, two blankets, one leathern sheet, two bedgowns, two nightcaps, three bedshifts, three children’s caps, three children’s shirts, one cotton wrapper, one flannel wrapper, and a sufficient quantity of small articles.’

⁵³ Schools were established at Wotton by 1779, at Gosfield c.1787, and at Stowe by 1796.

⁵⁴ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or An Address to the Ladies Concerning Sunday Schools; the Establishment of Schools of Industry Under Female Inspection; and the Distribution of Voluntary Benefactions* (London: T. Longman, 1787).

who is truly interested in the improvement and employment of the poor, to know that our gracious QUEEN, has deigned to set an example which, it is to be hoped, every lady will be emulous.⁵⁵

These institutions were intended to complement Houses of Industry already established to compel ‘vagabonds’ to work.⁵⁶ The term ‘School of Industry’ was presented as a new one to describe the nature of the Queen’s school for girls, part of a larger ideal of helping entire families to become self-sufficient. Figures 2.4 to 2.6 show examples of invoices and notes dating from 1779 that provide evidence of a scheme under the auspices of the Buckingham at Wotton, running along the lines promoted eight years later by Trimmer.⁵⁷ It seems that Lady Buckingham deployed rationality and practicality, underpinned by a religious commitment to universal benevolence, exactly as advocated by Trimmer.⁵⁸ She provided, rather than needed, an example of enlightened behaviour. Many invoices are in her name, including spinning wheel repairs (Figure 2.6). The marquess paid for their manufacture (Figure 2.5).

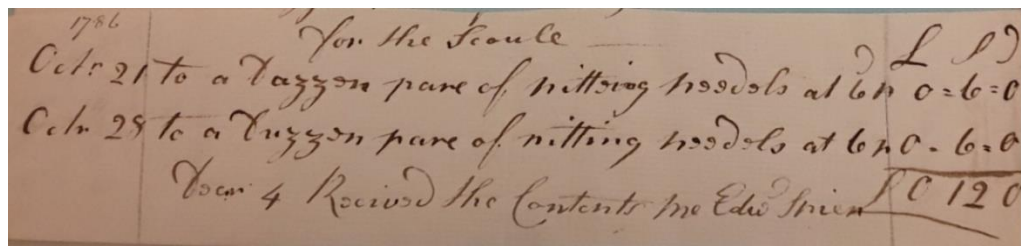


Figure 2.4. ‘For the School - a dozen pair of knitting needles’. STG Sch-Ed/2 (27) 1786. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

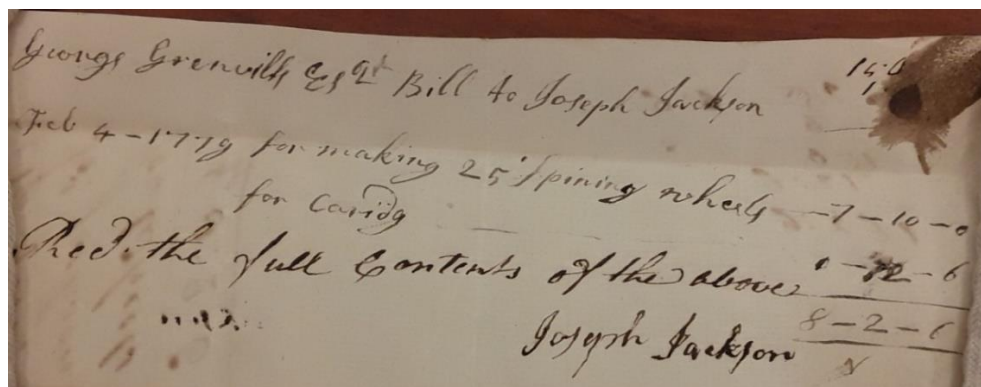


Figure 2.5. ‘For making 25 spinning wheels’ STG Sch-Ed/2 (20) 1779. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.iv.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.69.

⁵⁷ HL STG Schools and Education, Box 2 (hereafter HL STG Sch-Ed/2). See also HL STG Accounts Box 169: Charities.

⁵⁸ Trimmer, *Oeconomy*, p.4.

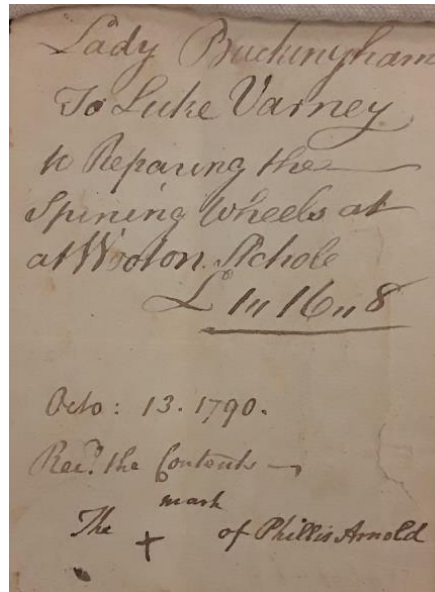


Figure 2.6. 'Repairing the Spinning Wheels'
STG Sch-Ed/2 (20) 1790. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

The School of Industry was established in Gosfield by 1790 to teach sewing and spinning to children. This appears to be the only one of the Buckingham's schools to have attracted scholarly attention. Local historian, A.F.J. Brown, credited the marquess with its foundation:

The most famous and probably the earliest was the Marquis of Buckingham of Gosfield Hall, who by 1790 had initiated a school that was free to all children willing to learn sewing and spinning.⁵⁹

According to Brown, Lord Buckingham provided solutions to the changing needs of an impoverished community by monitoring local economic factors, by supervising the progress of education and industry, and by encouraging endeavour by rewarding hard work. The children's earnings were given to their parents, which gave the poor responsibility for their own destiny, allowed them to preserve a degree of dignity and encouraged them to foster obedience in their offspring.⁶⁰ A rare survival of a rule book and register for a local School of Industry, which appears to have been established at the same time, and run along the same lines as the one at Gosfield, gives an insight into both the humanity and the stringency of their management.⁶¹

⁵⁹ A.F.J. Brown, *Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Essex, 1700-1815* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1996), p.131.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ ERO D/P/ 275/28/2: Industry School (for girls): memorandum of institution at Great Yeldham, founded in May 1789, terms of employment of mistress, rules, 1789 and 1793, list of admissions with memoranda of expulsions.

Brown recorded the existence of twenty-three such schools in rural Essex in 1803, with Gosfield as the largest with fifty pupils.⁶²

By 1795 the local textile industry had collapsed, rendering home-based and school-taught wool-spinning unviable as a source of income for women and girls. They found themselves doubly disadvantaged by their poverty and their gender when, as a result of the economic downturn, the reduced number of available agricultural jobs went to men and boys.⁶³ Attention was transferred to instruction in straw-plaiting for the thriving hat trade industry in Luton and Bedford. The historical importance of the training scheme lies in its inventiveness and legacy:

This was perhaps the earliest case of a major landowner personally directing a welfare scheme over a number of years and it proved to be a boon to the whole upper Colne valley where straw plaiting in many of the villages was to provide employment for women and girls for some eighty years.⁶⁴

Omitted from Brown's account, Lady Buckingham's role in establishing the new industry had nevertheless been noted by the agriculturist Arthur Young (1741-1820) who recorded the introduction of straw-plaiting as a joint venture which had radically improved the lives of the villagers:

The introduction of the straw-plat manufactory at Gosfield, by the Marquis and Marchioness of Buckingham, has been one of the greatest temporal blessings to that place.⁶⁵

Travelling widely, but living locally, Young had first-hand, long-term sight of the consequences of its introduction.⁶⁶ He recognised the complementary roles of Lord and Lady Buckingham and praised their determination and good humour in the face of local resistance to the scheme. He noted that: 'it was no easy matter to introduce the fashion amongst farmers' daughters and others.'⁶⁷ This was likely to have been because, as Brown pointed out, wives and daughters of the newly-rich gentleman farmers in the neighbourhood were careful about their mode of dress, not wishing to

⁶² Brown, *Rural Essex*, p.131.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ A. Young, *General View of Agriculture in the Country of Essex* (London: [n.pub.], 1807), p.395.

⁶⁶ In 1792 he was living at Bradfield Hall (Suffolk), nineteen miles from Halstead (Essex). Diary entry: Friday 5 October 1792 in Charlotte Barrett (ed.), *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, vol.3, 1788-1796 (London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1892), p.440.

⁶⁷ Young, *Agriculture in Essex*, p.395.

be confused with the poorer village women by wearing roughly made items.⁶⁸ Young specifically credited both the marquess and the marchioness with marketing the merchandise by wearing the imperfect hats made by inexperienced workers to encourage the locals to do likewise. This brought to a rural context the same deliberate use of status to promote a struggling industry as they had practised in Dublin to aid the silk-workers:

To make the first miserably coarse bungled hats was a great effort, and as nobody would wear them, Lady Buckingham decorated one with ribbons, and wore it in the sight of the whole village: the Marquis went to Church in another, and laid it during the service in the full sight of the congregation⁶⁹

In time, the success of the enterprise was such that girls from elsewhere (Wethersfield and Halstead) were brought to Gosfield for instruction by a specialist who had been brought in from Dunstable for the purpose:

Gradually however by extraordinary efforts, and by bringing an instructor from Dunstable, and everything necessary the fabric was improved, and the business well established. It spread all over the vicinity, girls were brought from Wethersfield and Halstead for instruction, but not without difficulty.⁷⁰

The growth and success of the industry was helped by the interruption to trade caused by the war with France from 1793.⁷¹ The involvement of the marchioness was recognised and reported at the time, as a return to the primary sources testifies. It was of sufficient importance to be noted by Ivy Pinchbeck, Pamela Sharpe and Judy Lown, each looking at the bigger picture of women's place in the industrialisation of England.⁷²

Whatever the interpretation placed on the division of roles of the marquess and marchioness in the establishment of the straw-plait industry at Gosfield, this scheme, in conjunction with her earlier lying-in charity, was a defining element in the formation of Lady Buckingham as a philanthropist. As in Dublin, the experience

⁶⁸ Brown, *Rural Essex*, p.45.

⁶⁹ Young, *Agriculture in Essex*, p.395

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ L. Gróf, *Children of Straw: The Story of a Vanished Craft and Industry* (Buckingham: Barracuda Books Ltd, 1988), p.21.

⁷² I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (1930; repr. 1977; digital 2005), p.217; P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp.56-7; J. Lown, *Women and Industrialization: Gender at Work in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p.25.

brought her into close contact with the reality of poverty and gave her insights into local industry as a means of recovery. Childhood familiarity with Gosfield families would have added to her sense of responsibility for their welfare; her practical involvement in helping them maintain a degree of self-sufficiency served as an apprenticeship in the skills she would later deploy for the benefit of émigrés of all ages.

Invoices and notes provide evidence of a similar establishment at Stowe from 1795. Figure 2.7 shows an unadorned functional building: the School of Industry.⁷³ In the foreground sit a woman and a girl, lace-making. Many of the invoices for the school were settled by the marchioness, including teachers' wages and schoolchildren's shoes. Each child was named, as shown in Figure 2.8.



Figure 2.7. J.C. Nattes, *School and Offices, Stowe*, 1809 © Bucks County Museum, Aylesbury.

⁷³ This image shows that the school for village children was not located in the village, but close to the South Front of the mansion. According to the sales catalogue, local children were later educated in the 'Orangery'. M. Christie, *Stowe Catalogue, Priced and Annotated by Henry Rumsey Forster* (1848; Memphis: General Books, 2010), p.32.

The Marchioness of Buckingham
 1795 To Her Grace the Marchioness of
 London

Mar 6. 1/2 doz. shurly pr of shoes -	3.10
16 Ann Johnson D ^o	5.0
Apr 22. School shoes men & pr	2.10
May 19. 1/2 doz. mend	1.9
July 18. Ann Johnson pr of shoes	5.0
Ann Eaton - D ^o	5.0
19 Ann Johnson pr of shoes men	2.2
Sept 23 Ann Eaton pr shoes mend	2.3
Oct 25 2 pr of school shoes mend	3.6
Nov 29. Ann Johnson pr of shoes	5.0
Ann Eaton shoes mend	2.0
E. Huddle. pr of shoes	5.9
Dec 14 1/2 of mens shoes	7.9
	<u>2 16 11</u>

School Shoes -

Elij Quainton shoes	4.10
Tho Quainton D ^o	4.6
Eliz Quainton D ^o	3.6
Charlott Johnson D ^o	4.10
Hannah Johnson D ^o	4.6
Mary Johnson D ^o	3.9
Ann Meades D ^o	4.6
John Meades D ^o	4.9
Elij Saxby D ^o	4.0
Mary Saxby D ^o	3.10
Tho Holton D ^o	3.10
Ki ^o Holton D ^o	3.10
Ann Kern D ^o	4.6
Ben Adams D ^o	4.10
Dan ^t Humphris D ^o	3.6
Mary Prason D ^o	4.6
Martha Withins D ^o	3.0
Ben Orsborn D ^o	3.10
Ann Hawkins D ^o	4.6
Martha Hawkins D ^o	3.0

Continued

Eato Hawkins pr of shoes	2.10
Jane Woodward D ^o	3.10
Susannah Woodward D ^o	5.0
Tho Newman D ^o	3.9
Wm Newman D ^o	3.9
Ann Johnson D ^o	5.0
Ann Eaton D ^o	5.0
John Parker D ^o	4.9
Tr ^o Parker D ^o	3.6
Mary Parker D ^o	3.6
Jane ^t Hillman D ^o	3.6
Martha Woodward D ^o	4.6
J ^o Orsborn D ^o	4.6
Tho George D ^o	3.10
Rob ^t George D ^o	5.0
Hutchings D ^o	3.9
Martha Welch D ^o	4.6
Ki ^o Welch D ^o	4.6
Tho Welch D ^o	4.6
Elij Pipkin D ^o	4.6
Tho Watson D ^o	4.6
	<u>£ 11 5 11</u>
41 Pairs of Laces	0 3 6
	<u>11 9 15</u>

Set out By Rich^d Seaton
 Jan 21 1796
 J. W. Paratt

Figure 2.8. Invoice to the Marchioness of Buckingham for school shoes and laces. STG Sch-Ed/ 2 (12) 1795. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

An invoice for shoes, slippers, repairs and laces indicates thrift and sustainability.⁷⁴ Stationery for the schools was also invoiced to the marchioness.⁷⁵ These sources combine to demonstrate her direct involvement in the education and employment of local poor women and girls. Figure 2.9, transcribed below, shows a brief message to be transmitted to Lady Buckingham about arrangements for a lying-in, suggesting that she was involved in the minutiae of the scheme which linked education with family welfare:

The wash-house – To enquire...about the Lying-in cloath [sic] – To tell Lady Buckingham you have let the School mistress have the sheets out of the sick bag and the girl is to weave some more.⁷⁶

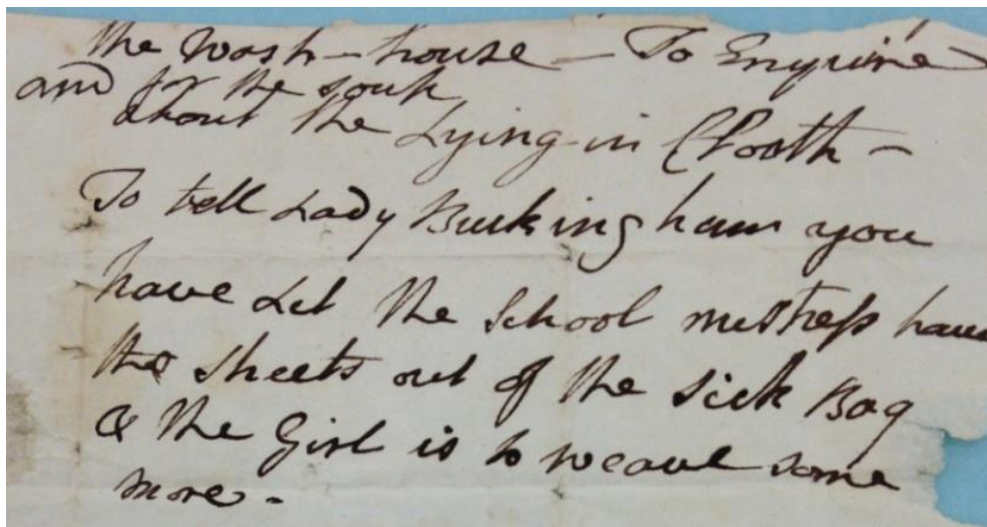


Figure 2.9. Note to Lady Buckingham
STG Sch-Ed/2 (23) undated. The Huntington Library, San Marino California.

Purchases of linen for lying-in, and other materials and equipment necessary for sewing provide evidence that lying-in garments and baby clothes were manufactured at the schools she established. See Figure 2.10, on p.90.

⁷⁴ HL STG Accounts Box 12 (4), 1794

⁷⁵ Ibid., (1794-95).

⁷⁶ HL STG Sch-Ed/2 (23), undated.

The most Noble Marchioness of Buckingham

To Philip Cox D^r

School account

1795	2 Feb ^y	1 Hundred of needles	£	1	0	2
		1/2 to 2 white thread	"	"	10	
	28	1/2 to 3 ^d do	"	"	1	
		1/2 to 4 ^d do	"	"	1	
	15 Apl	6 yds Baize flannele	12 ^s	6	4	
	9 June	1/2 to w. 2 thread	"	1		
	14 Aug ^t	1/2 to 4 ^d thread	3/	1	6	
		1/2 to 2 thread	"	1	4	
		1/2 to 6 ^d do	"	2		
	25 Sept	1 to 3 ^d do	"	4		
		1 Hundred of needles	"	"	10	
	21 Oct ^r	45 yds Dowlas	15 ^s	2	16	3
	4 Nov ^r	6 yds Baize	12 ^s	6		
		6 yds do	14 ^s	7		
	29 Oct ^r	2 yds flaxen filiting	18 ^s	3		
		1 Hundred of needles	"	"	10	
		1 to blue 3 ^d thread	"	3	6	
		1 to white 3 ^d do	"	4		
		6 yds drab Cloak ^s	5/6	13		
		6 do do	6/	16		
		7 do do	7/	9		
		1 Large do (for school Mistress)	"	8		
		60 yds Baize	12 ^s	3		
		2 1/2 yds flaxen	12 ^s	2	3	
	5 Nov ^r	47 yds Baize	14 ^s	2	14	10
		Wrapper	"	1	6	
	30	103 thread - 8 ^d 12 ^s	12.15	11		
			"	1	8	
	7 Dec ^r	1/2 to 4 ^d thread	"	1	4	
		2 yds filiting	18 ^s	3		
	22	1/2 Hundred of needles	10 ^s	2		
		Thread 4 tape 18	"	1	10	
		Settled 2 April 1796	5	5		
		Howe	4	18	1	
		X Wotton	12	15	11	
		Phil Cox	17	14	0	2

12.15:11

Figure 2.10. Marchioness of Buckingham, invoice for needles, thread and fabric. STG Sch-Ed/2 (11) 1795. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

London-based Charities

In addition to taking an interest in local charities and individual cases of need, Lord and Lady Buckingham followed the elite tradition of supporting London-based charities. The marchioness's role in the London dispensary for infants has already been noted. Their individual contributions to a variety of good causes as subscribers, patrons and governors reveal their specific interests and agendas and presage the course of their subsequent support for the émigrés. In 1788, before his second tour of duty as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the marquess was elected as president of the Benevolent Society of St Patrick, formed in 1783 to relieve the Irish poor in the capital, whatever their age, gender, religious belief or political persuasion.⁷⁷ Within the society, a close working relationship between a Protestant majority and a Catholic minority demonstrated the forging of links between Britain and Ireland, emphasised by sociability.⁷⁸ Having been instrumental in establishing the Order of St Patrick in 1783 as a means of ensuring the loyalty of Irish peers to George III, in 1788 Lord Buckingham would have considered himself well-placed to gain royal approval for a new plan devised by the Benevolent Society. By this time its objectives were more limited than at the outset, when adult healthcare, financial support and transport back to Ireland for those who requested it had been included.⁷⁹ The revised focus was on the young and the aims were interrelated: 'to educate, clothe, maintain and apprentice poor Irish children.'⁸⁰

Emulating the Welsh Ancient Order of the Britons and London charity schools, the Benevolent Society of St Patrick gained support through anniversary dinners during which children were paraded before their benefactors, demonstrating their gratitude and subservience and highlighting the success of the scheme.⁸¹ During the presidency of Lord Buckingham evenings of entertainment and conviviality marked a change in the way support was elicited, with the inclusion of drinking songs to

⁷⁷ C. Bailey, 'From Innovation to Emulation: London's Benevolent Society of St Patrick, 1783-1800', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, vol.27 (2012), pp.162-84 (p.162); J. Bergin, 'Irish Catholics and their Networks in Eighteenth-Century London', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol.39, no.1 (2015), pp.66-102.

⁷⁸ Bergin, 'Irish Catholics' p.92.

⁷⁹ *The Rules and Regulations on the Institution of the Benevolent Society of St Patrick* (London, 1785), cited in Bergin, 'Irish Catholics', p.163.

⁸⁰ Bergin, 'Irish Catholics', p.171.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.167.

create ‘a festive atmosphere that stimulated the emotions’.⁸² Affirming Irish solidarity with the British state after Irish legislative independence, the songs advocated universal benevolence.⁸³ Occupying a defined, prestigious role within a society with specific objectives, the associated raucous sociability is likely to have been more to the taste of the marquess than in Paris, where he had found it overwhelming,⁸⁴ and in Dublin, where it detracted from his heavy workload.⁸⁵ It was justifiable as a necessary part of the fundraising process.

In 1786, the Marchioness of Buckingham showed her support for a different group of immigrants: the black poor, including East Indians (lascars), and later, natives of America and the West Indies. Simon Braidwood noted that she was named in *The Morning Herald* as one of four titled female subscribers to a fund for their relief.⁸⁶ In accordance with standard practice in dealing with social problems, there was initially no official government intervention, although the Prime Minister, William Pitt, sent a donation.⁸⁷ According to Braidwood, it was an appeal for which there was a good response from all classes, without the prejudice sometimes shown towards other immigrant groups.⁸⁸ This was partly because many of the black poor were loyalists.⁸⁹ Some were, however, former slaves so it attracted support from individuals who were also abolitionists. For example, William Wilberforce was a subscriber, and Henry Thornton and his brother Samuel Thornton (1754-1838) were committee members, all evangelicals who promoted practical Christianity.⁹⁰ The format of the relief provided followed a well-established pattern. Newspapers recounted in March 1786 that over 200 blacks were given broth, meat and bread daily at a centre set up

⁸² Ibid., pp.176-9. See also S. Lloyd, ‘Conviviality, Benevolence, and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Journal of British Studies*, vol.41, no.1 (2002), pp.23-57.

⁸³ Bailey, ‘Innovation’, p. 177, citing *The Times*, 20 March 1786.

⁸⁴ See Chapter One of this thesis.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.30.

⁸⁶ S. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London’s Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786-1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), p.67. The Duchess of Devonshire and the Countesses of Salisbury and Essex were also named as subscribers. *The Morning Herald* noted in addition ‘a variety of titled characters’.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.63, 67; *Public Advertiser*, 11 February 1786.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.64.

⁸⁹ Ibid., See M. Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary War* (London: HarperPress, 2011) for an analysis of the exodus.

⁹⁰ See W. Wilberforce, *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country* (London: T. Caddell, Jun. & W. Davis, 1797), which stressed the inadequacy of good works without divine grace and conversion.

for the purpose; those who were sick received the same provision at home.⁹¹ A large number were provided with clothing, shoes, blankets and a place to stay; up to 50 were treated in hospital where the costs of bedding and medicine were met by the fund.⁹² Numbers rose as the news spread and the committee worked towards a longer term solution to the problem of black poverty: employment, and the government intervened to support voluntary resettlement in Sierra Leone, West Africa, where prospects were seen to be better.⁹³

These two examples provide evidence of the interest of the marquess and marchioness in charities relating to immigration and the associated problems of poverty, sickness and lack of occupation. At this stage, their roles in these London-based charities for the displaced poor were essentially passive: Lord Buckingham, as president, was a figurehead, giving credibility and visibility to the organisation, and in eliciting support from similarly placed individuals. His father-in law, Earl Nugent, was treasurer during his presidency, evidence of them working together in support of an Irish cause.⁹⁴ Buckingham's highly visible role opened up a new route to royal approbation; a boost to his precarious political standing, 'a wrong and sinister motive' according to the criteria of George Horne, Bishop of Norwich, noted earlier.⁹⁵ Lady Buckingham had a less important part to play in her chosen charity, but by giving financial support, her well-publicised example encouraged others to do the same. The charity's objectives and actions, however, provided examples of larger scale, metropolitan initiatives that would prove useful when the émigrés arrived, and immediate and longer term solutions to sickness and poverty were needed. The charity in support of the black poor provides an example of her name being linked to Henry Thornton for the second time, and to William Wilberforce for the first time. They would later jointly seek her assistance in support of the émigrés.

In partnership with her husband, Lady Buckingham demonstrated a holistic approach to care for families and the local community. She took into account physical and

⁹¹ Braidwood, *Black Poor*, p.69.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.83-107.

⁹⁴ Bailey, 'Innovation to Emulation', p.184.

⁹⁵ Horne, *Charity*, p.4.

social needs by implementing maternity and neonatal care at home, and by providing education and industry to the female poor. Her strategy was in accordance with the contemporary discouragement of dependency, rewarding only the efforts of the deserving, industrious poor. Combining her philanthropic activity with the education of her children she contrasted with the frivolous and idle aristocratic women criticised by Mary Wollstonecraft, whose experience as a governess of an ascendancy family, the Kingsboroughs, in Ireland coloured her judgement of elite female behaviour.⁹⁶

Educating a Daughter to be a Socially Responsible Adult

Although a governess and tutors were employed at Stowe, Lady Buckingham was closely involved in the education of her offspring, especially that of Lady Mary. In 1799, Hannah More ramped up the call for middle- and upper-class women to educate their daughters for the future good of society in her widely circulated *Strictures*.⁹⁷ Seven years before its publication Lady Buckingham had initiated a programme of education for her infant daughter which sought to deal with the very concerns expressed by More.⁹⁸ A unique source provides an insight into the marchioness's attempts to engender in her daughter responsible aristocratic values during her most intense period of activity on behalf of the émigrés, which included opening a school for émigré girls in Hammersmith.⁹⁹ A single volume school record containing timetables, daily comments and annual reports from June 1792 to April 1799 covered Lady Mary's education from four to eleven years old.¹⁰⁰ Charting the

⁹⁶ Wollstonecraft taught the three daughters of Caroline, née Fitzgerald (1754-1823), Lady Kingsborough, later Countess of Kingston, from October 1786 until the summer of 1787. She accompanied her employer to viceregal events at the Rotunda, Dublin. Upon her dismissal from service she wrote *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*.

⁹⁷ H. More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education: With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune* (London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davis, 1799).

⁹⁸ See also Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts*.

⁹⁹ The school opened in 1795. See K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London 1789-1802* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), pp.104-5.

¹⁰⁰ HL STG Schools and Education Box 1/Previously L769 (henceforth HL STG Sch-Ed/1): school report for George and Mary Anne Grenville. Unnumbered pages, so date references will be given. The difference in learning modes for boys and girls was noted in M. Cohen, 'To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise': Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain', in S. Knott and B. Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (2005; Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 224-242, but there appeared to be little difference in the early years' education of these siblings, even though they were usually taught separately. Differences in content emerge around the age of nine. Time constraints prevented a closer analysis of George's timetable.

interaction between a governess, an elite female, and her young daughter,¹⁰¹ it provides evidence of the mother's knowledgeable and strong-minded involvement in the delivery of an educational programme which served to bolster elite female status through a demonstration of diligence, knowledge, responsibility. The school record reveals much about Lady Buckingham's ideals and aspirations. Written during the most turbulent phase of the French Revolution, it shows her to be a reforming aristocrat, determined to avert condemnation by influential radicals who criticised those who lived 'in idleness at the expence of the public'.¹⁰²

The book bears the imprint of an improving agenda. With a system of counters in place, good work was rewarded and poor results were penalized by the giving and taking away from a total of thirty-four. Small prizes were occasionally awarded.¹⁰³ This provides evidence of an elite girl being encouraged to act in an exemplary way: to display obedience and industriousness, and to produce good academic results. Frequent references to impertinence, unruliness and idleness show the importance attached to quashing disruptive behaviour; a few records of punishments, such as 'hands tied for being unquiet' hint at how this was achieved.¹⁰⁴ Lady Buckingham took her parental duty seriously, attempting to inculcate in her daughter the fundamental ethic of hard work. British aristocratic privilege could thus be made to seem deserved as well as natural, in contrast to the abuse of status by the 'idle' French.

Lady Mary's birth in 1787 coincided with George III's Royal Proclamation 'For the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for the Preventing and Punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality'. The proclamation reflected a renewed interest in 'the

¹⁰¹ HL STG Sch-Ed/1: The name of the governess is not given, always being referred to as 'me', with no signature provided. An assistant called simply 'Molly' helped with 'business'. In October 1794, a new tutor, possibly Miss Mcnamara arrived: HL STG Sch-Ed/1. In a letter to the marchioness, dated 12 December 1793, Maria Mcnamara (dates unknown) had declared that she would be 'eternally indebted' to Lord Buckingham and 'ever ready to acknowledge [her] gratitude to Lady Buckingham if she would urge him to intercede in the release of her brother, held captive 'by the Algerines'. See TNA HO 42/27/165 fos. 584-5. Assuming this intercession took place, ties of obligation could have been sufficient to secure her services as governess.

¹⁰² E.J. Sieyès, *An Essay on Privileges, and Particularly on Hereditary Nobility* (1788; trans. London: J. Ridgeway 1791), p.62, cited in Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy*, p.73.

¹⁰³ HL STG Sch-Ed/1; usually unspecified, but examples given include: 1 May 1793 the award of 'a French pin [case?]' following a test in English history and geography.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 September 1793. There may have been others that were not recorded.

reformation of manners' which had its roots in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵ In *Inferior Politics* Joanna Innes emphasised the 'patriotic, improving, moralizing'¹⁰⁶ nature of the drive to combat social problems when national confidence needed to be reinvigorated after the dispiriting impact of the American War of Independence (1775-1783).¹⁰⁷ The strategies employed to rekindle self-worth, a necessary component of national pride, were threefold, as illustrated by the king's proclamation: encouragement, prevention and punishment. The early years of the Buckingham's marriage were played out during this 'decade of crisis and hope,'¹⁰⁸ and their philanthropic ventures bore witness to their optimistic contribution to the improvement of society through a personal demonstration of hard work, and an expectation of the same from their social dependents.¹⁰⁹ The industriousness of all classes was promoted as the route to happiness and prosperity.¹¹⁰ Education was an important strand of the Georgian notion of perfectibility, an encouraging and preventative process, which would eventually obviate the need for punishment.¹¹¹ It was expected to instil habits of industriousness, moral rectitude and public spiritedness to safeguard the health of the nation. Women - particularly middle-class women - were charged with the task of implementing a system of education that would give them a useful and socially responsible occupation and inspire the young to imitate good behaviour. They were urged to 'come forward and contribute their full and fair proportion towards the saving of their country' by improving their own morals and manners and by setting an example for the next generation to follow.¹¹²

Unlike institutions, which served mainly the middle and lower classes and were subject to inspection, education within elite households was unregulated. A Rousseauesque lack of discipline in some cases of elite home-schooling led to criticism: James Boswell (1740-1795) complained when a dinner party hosted by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1777 was ruined by the children of Mary, Countess of Rothes

¹⁰⁵ The Society for the Reformation of Manners had been founded in 1691. It was revived in 1757 and recognised by George II.

¹⁰⁶ J. Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.186

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.181.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.179.

¹⁰⁹ See 'The Nugent-Grenville Marriage' in Chapter One of this thesis.

¹¹⁰ Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy*, p.108.

¹¹¹ See Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*.

¹¹² More, *Strictures*, vol.1, p.4.

(1750-1810) ‘who played and prattled and suffered nobody to be heard but themselves’.¹¹³ Lady Buckingham had experienced similarly indulgent parenting,¹¹⁴ yet entries in Lady Mary’s school record suggest that, however haphazard her own upbringing may have been, when the marchioness became responsible for overseeing that of her daughter, she was both intellectually well-equipped and an advocate of firm discipline. There is every indication that Lady Buckingham maintained a grip on her role as guardian of her daughter’s physical, moral and intellectual welfare as a means of preparing the young girl for her station in life. The marchioness’s involvement in her daughter’s education was direct and regular, so much so that her illnesses and absences were noted by the governess, even if only for a weekend, for example: ‘Mama absent from Friday 26 to Monday 29 April.’¹¹⁵ As there were 595 French priests at the King’s House by 21 April 1793,¹¹⁶ it is likely that the marchioness, who is known to have been involved in their support, was visiting them in their new surroundings, while Lady Mary stayed in London with her governess. Two duties, one charitable, the other familial, can be seen to be competing for the marchioness’s attention. Comments on work set during her absence were also recorded, indicating the spectre of persistent maternal presence in the classroom. In April 1795:

Mama was absent from Monday 15 till Saturday and found at her return translations from Italian and French most extremely ill done – and no plain work done¹¹⁷

A list of instructions in the record book illustrates Lady Buckingham’s interpretation of fashionable experiments in child-rearing, following ‘expert’ advice on the benefits of fresh air and exercise to physical well-being: Lady Mary was to rise at six o’clock in the morning, have a cold bath, and go for a ride on her horse.¹¹⁸ A walk with her mother was timetabled for the evening. On rising, Lady Mary was to drink ass’s milk, commonly prescribed as protection against a variety of ailments in young

¹¹³ L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (1977; London: Pelican, 1979), p.276.

¹¹⁴ See Chapter One of this thesis.

¹¹⁵ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1793. The entry recorded that Lady Buckingham was in Winchester; Mary was in London.

¹¹⁶ Bellenger, ‘French Priests at the Kings House’, p.99.

¹¹⁷ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1793.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1792. Cold bathing had been recommended by Locke and Rousseau to build a strong constitution: A. O’Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child: Children’s Literature in the Late Eighteenth Century* (London, Taylor and Francis, 2003) p.76.

infants. After her horse ride, she routinely breakfasted with her parents at nine o'clock, giving both father and mother an opportunity to monitor her health and judge her behavioural and social progress.

Lady Buckingham's early attempts to regulate her daughter's social and moral compass can be seen in her daily contribution to the educational programme: she combined religious instruction with language teaching: from the age of four years eleven months, Lady Mary's lessons in translation were timetabled as: 'At 11 with Mama read and construe in English Madame Bonne's bible history'.¹¹⁹ This exercise fulfilled both a Catholic and a polite agenda: instruction in French was an intrinsic part of genteel British Catholic female education in the eighteenth century. At the time of Lady Mary's early years' education, Catholic girls whose education in convent schools in France was interrupted by the Revolution, returned to their families in England when religious institutions were forced to disband. The sudden increase in young female Catholic presence in polite society may have raised the desirability of French-speaking as a fashionable accomplishment. Lady Mary's good progress was noted in Winchester in 1793: 'Speaks French so as to be understood ... Reads French for her own amusement ... Translates offhand English into French'.¹²⁰ By 1797 she could read and speak French 'with almost as much ease as English',¹²¹ a skill which aligned her with returning convent girls and was an asset in family contact with the French elite émigrés, which later included the Bourbon court.

In addition to academic studies, which included Italian, Latin, history, geography and arithmetic, Lady Mary 'took drawing lessons from Mr Medland'¹²² and had twice-weekly music lessons, showing that from an early age she was steered towards polite female accomplishments. It is within the third traditional feminine skill of needlework, that Lady Buckingham's 'social awareness' agenda can be glimpsed: Lady Mary's programme of work included the same practical skills as were taught to poor girls in the local schools. She had timetabled sessions of 'work', listed as 'plain

¹¹⁹ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1792.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 1793.

¹²¹ Ibid., September 1797, Wotton.

¹²² Thomas Medland (1765-1833), who provided drawings and engravings for *Stowe: A Description of the House and Gardens* (Buckingham: B. Seeley, 1797). At other times, Lady Buckingham gave each child a daily drawing lesson.

work, knitting, and lace making alternately’, to which was later added ‘spinning with a long wheel’.¹²³ This shows that rather than simply polishing the outward appearance of rank,¹²⁴ ‘polite accomplishments’ were accompanied by practical skills, which would have served the dual purpose of encouraging humility and of preparing for her aristocratic supervisory responsibilities. Accompanying her mother from an early age, Lady Mary witnessed elite benevolence and working-class productivity in the schools she would later be called upon to inspect. Her place within the hierarchy was clear. Reading was also taught to the local children and, from at least the age of ten, Lady Mary sat at the head of the table during her brother George’s annual birthday party at which the diligence of the poor in the classroom was rewarded:

30 December 1797. He gave a supper to 60 poor children that can read, as no others are admitted to the feast. It was pretty sight, he sat at the bottom of the table, his sister at the head, and gave them a shilling a piece before they went away.¹²⁵

By the 1790s elite female educational capability was assumed and ladies were increasingly expected, not only to serve as models of moral rectitude, but also to act as inspectors at a growing number of local charity schools.¹²⁶ Traditional benevolent roles thus became more visible, raising awareness of female agency within their dependent communities.¹²⁷ This demonstration of status in the guise of benevolence served to shore up the loyalist view that the elite deserved the positions they held.¹²⁸ Tutelary self-congratulation and maternal pride may have inflated Lady Mary’s achievements, but the governess’s comments illustrate the yardstick by which a

¹²³ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1792 and 1795.

¹²⁴ In A. Fletcher, ‘Polite Accomplishments’, *History Today* vol.58, no.4, (2008), pp.43-9, Anthony Fletcher observed that social competitiveness, particularly among the professional classes, led to an over-emphasis on ‘feminine accomplishments’ at the expense of academic subjects.

¹²⁵ A. Fremantle, (ed.) *The Wynne Diaries, 1789-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935-40), vol.2, p.197.

¹²⁶ Inspecting schools was considered by Trimmer to be ‘a very agreeable employment for ladies, and very easy too, if the task was divided among a number of visitors’: Trimmer, *Oeconomy*, p.71. M.G. Jones noted: ‘Thousands of schools were set up and hundreds of thousands of children for whom no other means of education existed, were instructed by its means [Charity School Movement] during the eighteenth century.’ M.G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), pp.3-4.

¹²⁷ This made it easier for aspiring middle-class women to recognise and emulate ‘good practice’ thereby increasing their own ability to instigate change. The growth of subscription charities also encouraged aspirational women to follow suit. Middle-class women found themselves working alongside their social superiors in fundraising ventures.

¹²⁸ See Goodrich, *Debating England’s Aristocracy*, pp.48, 73, 100-3 for a discussion of opposing radical and loyalist views on the role of education in elite male supremacy, and p.163 for Sunday Schools as ‘representations of aristocratic benevolence’.

successful elite female education was measured. For example, retrospective comments claimed that at three years old she ‘was perfect’ at reciting ‘Adams chronology [of the history of England]’.¹²⁹ At the age of five it was noted: ‘She now reads the chapters of the day, and on Sundays the selection of old and new testament showing the fall of Adam and our redemption’.¹³⁰ The demanding curriculum took its toll; with no opportunity for personal choices that might have resulted in more co-operative behaviour, in September 1796, at the age of nine, Lady Mary was clearly overstretched, failing even to dance satisfactorily. A list of shortcomings recorded by her governess ends with:

Arithmetic does every sum wrong - Geography from inattention quite forgot what she knew last year - Plain work she cannot work as well as she did at 3 years old - Dancing though she has a very good master the whole of last winter from not chusing [sic] to attend him she can now only hop.¹³¹

Reports show that the children travelled with their parents between their homes at Stowe, Wotton, Gosfield and London, and also accompanied them on visits of a week or so to Oxford, Winchester, Weymouth, Lulworth, Portsmouth and Anglesey. These frequent changes of location had the advantage of keeping mother and child together, indicating familial closeness based on firm parental control. However, superintending an itinerant early years’ education presented a challenge to the marchioness as she was duty-bound to fulfil her marital and patriotic duty at the same time. During the family’s visit to Dorset in 1794, when Lord Buckingham was anxious to impress George III with his military manoeuvres,¹³² Lady Mary was very unsettled; she was described as ‘most exceedingly impertinent ...making faces the whole time’.¹³³ This was particularly ill-timed bad behaviour as visits with and by Queen Charlotte feature several times in the diary of events covering September and October 1794.¹³⁴ For Lady Buckingham, the visit to Weymouth, where convention

¹²⁹ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1792.

¹³⁰ Ibid. The claim of this ability was not uncommon: on 23 July 1776 the diarist and author Hester Thrale wrote of her daughter, Sophie: ‘five years old today. She has read three Epistles and three Gospels. I do not make her get much by heart’. See C. Tomalin, *Parents and Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.30.

¹³¹ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, September 1796. Cohen noted that social skills (which included co-ordinated movement) ‘were fundamental to the education of the time and interwoven with it’. Cohen, ‘Familiar Conversation’, p.100.

¹³² See Chapter Three.

¹³³ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1794.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

demanded that she act as consort to the marquess as he paraded his troops and as hostess to Queen Charlotte as she observed the spectacle, this was also the period of her most active involvement in projects in support of the clergy at Winchester. However, although disruption to routine may have been one of the causes of her daughter's behavioural problems, such a lifestyle would have given Lady Mary an awareness of her parents' role in émigré support, if only through a decrease in the time her mother was able to devote to her.¹³⁵

According to the school record, Mary and her brother George spent several months in Dublin from 1798 to 1799 without their mother, which suggests that Lady Buckingham was unwell, or at least in need of respite. An insight into how she balanced the demands of her lifestyle with periods of inactivity and reflection can be gleaned from a description by Melesina Chevenix St. George Trench (1768-1827), a young widowed mother of Anglo-Irish descent, whom the marchioness befriended. Lady Buckingham engaged her 'for a month's *tête-à-tête*', during which the guest commented on the seclusion in which the marchioness was living at the time:

La Trappe itself could not be more solitary than her habitation. The house is convenient, the walks retired and shady. She does not encourage visits, which pleases me, as solitude is preferable to the casual uninteresting society to be obtained in a villa near London.¹³⁶

At the end of her visit, Melesina Trench recorded in her diary: 'The retirement we lived in was complete, and rather raised than lowered my spirits', and described Lady Buckingham as 'sensible, friendly and pleasant', a friend to whom she was attached 'both by gratitude and choice'. She benefited from her company, but the allowances she was obliged to make for Lady Buckingham's intransigent views are a clear indication of the force of the marchioness's personality and help to explain the tension within her relationship with her daughter:

Lady Buckingham last Sunday even here. I love her better than ever, but she has an insupportable pertinacity in her opinions, which prevents all freedom of discussion, as she will not understand your objections. I have never converse [sic] with her but on subjects where I know we agree, which limits one's sphere of conversation¹³⁷

¹³⁵ In later life her brother, Richard, showed resentment towards the 'ungrateful French'.

¹³⁶ Diary of Melesina Chevenix St. George Trench, October 1798, in Dean of Westminster (ed.), *Remains of the Late Mrs Richard Trench* (London: Parker, Son and Bourn, 1862), p. 26.

¹³⁷ HRO 23M93/42/33/26 Melesina Trench to Sarah [Sal Tuite] 28 March 1798.

Before going to Ireland, Lady Mary had been introduced to household management, as preparation for her station in life: every day she went to see the poultry being fed, butter being made, or bread being baked; every Wednesday she looked over ‘house bills’ with her mother and copied them out. ‘One hours business sums’ with Mr. Holt would have given her training in understanding household accounts.¹³⁸ In Dublin she also made and embroidered gloves and handicrafts for the Repository where goods could be sold to make money for charity, showing that her training in awareness of the wider community continued.¹³⁹ However, when not supervised by her mother, Lady Mary’s behaviour deteriorated: upon her return from Ireland, she was criticised for her unladylike speech and slovenly appearance. Her report for 1799, when she was nearly twelve years old, stated that she had acquired in Dublin ‘a vulgar manner of speaking a great brogue and a custom of walking with her shoes down at the heel.’¹⁴⁰ In Earl Nugent, the Irish accent ‘that never forsook him’ had enhanced ‘a coarse and often licentious, but natural, strong and ready wit.’¹⁴¹ A characteristic that had been endearing in Lady Buckingham’s father was not to be encouraged in her daughter.

As aristocratic bearing and refined speech were important signifiers of status, the marchioness took immediate action to reverse the decline in the standard of her daughter’s manner and appearance by limiting her leisure time. She restricted her dressing time to fifteen minutes to prevent an unfocused and leisurely start to the day. This allowed time for praying, and for ‘reading a good book’,¹⁴² a solitary practice advocated by Mary Wollstonecraft to encourage the development of independent judgement.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, during an illness which confined the marchioness to her bed for six weeks later that year, her daughter’s behaviour deteriorated once more. On her recovery she found Mary ‘grown extremely conceited and sneering at everybody’.¹⁴⁴ This demonstration of adolescent insolence and aristocratic arrogance turned out to be a passing phase, but as it was the reverse

¹³⁸ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, April 1798, Stowe.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 1798-1799, Dublin.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ N. Wraxall, *Historical Memoirs of His Own Time* (London: Kegan Paul, 1904), p.79.

¹⁴² HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1799.

¹⁴³ Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, pp.48-56.

¹⁴⁴ HL STG Sch-Ed/1, 1799.

of the female responsibility that Lady Buckingham was trying to instil, it caused her considerable frustration and anxiety.

Conclusion

Lady Buckingham, acting as guardian of her daughter's intellectual and moral welfare, trained her to fulfil the same obligations as herself, thereby preserving the familial and social hierarchy and ensuring the continuity of female aristocratic charitable traditions. Her philanthropic capabilities were strengthened by what she had observed as vicereine in Dublin which had chimed in with her own concerns over poverty and female welfare. She justified her wealth and status through support for local and metropolitan charities which focused in particular on educating the poor to work and improving their health to enable them to do so. The employment of children at Schools of Industry as a route out of poverty was in line with middle-class recommendation and royal practice. With discipline and hard work at its core, the education of her daughter demonstrated the importance she attached to the formation of the next generation of aristocratic women as upholders of elite tradition.

Chapter Three: Lady Buckingham: 'A Powerful Benefactress'

This chapter contends that it was the fortuitous co-location of the Buckinghams with a large number of recently-arrived refractory clergy in need of support that set in motion a programme of relief for clerical and lay émigrés that occupied them both until the marchioness's death in 1812. The relief initiative illustrates an acceleration in the change in aristocratic practice from charitable giving to organised philanthropy in which women played a significant role.¹ The chapter argues that the presence of more than 700 clerical refugees in Winchester from 1792 to 1796 provided Lady Buckingham with an opportunity to use the organisational skills she had observed in Dublin and practised in local schools of industry, and the experience she had gained from sitting on charitable committees relating to healthcare and refugee reception in London. The presence of the French clergy provided her with a new means of demonstrating her aristocratic influence and gave her a platform for the display of both her philanthropy and her Catholicism. Ongoing support for the clergy was swiftly accompanied by Lady Buckingham's practical intervention on behalf lay émigrés in Jersey in 1793. This first contact with female refugees of her own class is likely to have touched her directly and led to the larger schemes of support for women in which she subsequently became actively involved. The reception of a small community of English émigré nuns at Gosfield from 1795 was a lesser commitment. Nevertheless, it was part of her growing portfolio of care for Catholic refugees in partnership with her Protestant husband.

When the marquess and marchioness embarked on projects of relief for the émigrés, they committed themselves, however unwittingly, to a long term obligation. This chapter argues that it is the longevity of their active involvement that distinguishes their contribution to refugee support from that of other aristocrats.² Evidence demonstrates that their benevolence was part of a broader endeavour to preserve the

¹ See F. Prochaska 'Women in English Philanthropy, 1790-1830', *International Review of Social History*, vol.19, no.3 (1974), pp. 426-45. Donna Andrew situated the change in practice in the 1770s: D. Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige: Female Charity in an Age of Sentiment' in J. Brewer and S. Stave (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.275-94 (p.292).

² With the exception of those bound by familial obligation such as the Jerninghams and the Dillons.

hierarchy in which they showed unquestioning belief; they perceived its stability to be for the good of all. Lady Buckingham, like other elite women, either single or within satisfactory marriages, worked effectively within the parameters of familial hierarchy to preserve the status quo of her country. The arrival in England of refugees from revolutionary France strengthened aristocratic resolve and allowed for a display of moral superiority over the stricken French nation.

When Prochaska listed the societies founded between 1699 and 1900, of which only four out of sixty-five were managed solely by women, the Ladies Society for the Relief of the Emigrant Clergy did not feature.³ The later Ladies Society for the Relief of French Emigrant Ladies and Female Children similarly escaped notice.⁴ This is understandable as both met relatively short-term needs and were dismantled when no longer required. Nevertheless, despite a scant presence in official records, they shed light on the proactive engagement of an elite female in delivering refugee support. To probe Lady Buckingham's contribution to organising émigré relief, her philanthropic activity is viewed through a variety of sources which includes Bernard Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, Charles-François de Lubersac, *Journal Historique et Religieux de l'Émigration et Déportation du Clergé de France en Angleterre*, written in praise of British generosity towards the French clergy, and quasi-hagiographic accounts such as Joseph Hirst, *Memoir*, used in Chapter One.⁵ These are considered in conjunction with sermons, newspaper reports and the correspondence of Edmund Burke (1730-1797) and Frances Burney (1752-1840) among others. Subscription lists and unpublished letters, including several from the Marchioness of Buckingham and from émigré nuns, have been used to validate evidence from other sources.

³ F. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (1980; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003). pp.231-45.

⁴ See Chapter Four of this thesis.

⁵ B. Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival in England, 1781-1803*, (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1909), vol. 2; L'Abbé de Lubersac, Vicaire-Général de Narbonne, *Journal Historique et Religieux de l'Émigration et Déportation du Clergé de France en Angleterre* (London: Cox, Fils et Bayliss, 1802) ; J. Hirst, *Memoir and Letters of Lady Mary Arundell* (Leicester: [n.pub.], 1894).

The Émigré Clergy

Clergy who refused to sign the Oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy on 27 November 1790 were forced to leave France. Clerical émigrés began to arrive in significant numbers from 1791 onwards, coinciding with Lord Buckingham's continued search for a means of gaining visibility to promote his worth as a dutiful servant of the crown. He was politically and dynastically disappointed, still nursing a strong feeling of resentment at the apparent lack of recognition for his service to king and country as Viceroy of Ireland. His position as Lord Lieutenant of Buckingham and his possession of parliamentary seats in Aylesbury and Buckingham made him a significant and influential figure within the local community but, although this met his need for occupation, it was not enough to satisfy his ambition. At this stage, the Grenville fortune was secure, evidenced by lavish hospitality and continued building projects at Stowe, and the employment in 1790 of Sir John Soane at Buckingham's London residence, Buckingham House, Pall Mall.⁶ A strong financial position was enhanced by the ownership of surplus property: the partially demolished Eastbury Hall in Dorset, inherited in 1779, and Gosfield Hall in Essex, inherited in 1788. Wealth, lack of a political function on the national stage, and a desire for recognition by the king, primed Buckingham for action. Able to adopt a more relaxed approach to his wife's Catholicism since the passing of a second Relief Act in 1791, he was well placed to make an immediate offer of support to large numbers of émigrés - clergy in the first instance - without fear of compromising his chances of gaining popular and royal approval.

The marquess's role in émigré relief began in earnest in autumn 1792. He was a founding member of the Wilmot Committee which was formed at the initiative of John Eardley Wilmot (bap.1749, d.1815), following the plea of Edmund Burke in the 'Case of the Suffering Clergy of France'.⁷ The first meeting of the committee was held on 20 September 1792; there was an immediate public response to the call for subscriptions.⁸ Thomas Brindle, and subsequently Agnes Stewart and Joseph Hirst,

⁶ J. Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles, Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710 -1921* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp.77-8.

⁷ E. Burke, 'Case of the Suffering Clergy of France', *The Evening Mail*, 17-19 September 1792.

⁸ The first meeting was held at the Freemasons Tavern. Thirty-one people attended. For a list of committee members, see Ward, *Catholic Revival*, pp.19-20, 301.

claimed that the marchioness superintended the distribution of the relief fund in the first instance, a claim which has not been substantiated, but showed their belief in her active involvement.⁹ Other sources credited entirely Jean-François de la Marche, Bishop of St Pol de Léon (1729-1806), who had emigrated in 1791. Upon the expulsion of non-juring clergy from France in 1792 he travelled to London to oversee the distribution of funds collected by the Wilmot Committee.¹⁰ His status and networks are clear: he had been staying at Wardour, family seat of the Arundells and had been due to be presented to George III at Lulworth, family seat of the Welds.¹¹

La Marche was subsequently appointed by the government to play a key administrative role in the distribution of funds when it took over the work of the relief committee in December 1793.¹² His role has been well-recorded. The scale of his task was indicated in a portrait painted in 1793 by the émigré artist, Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753-1809) which depicted the bishop in his lodgings in London, surrounded by appeals for help and subscription lists.¹³ On an easel beside him a picture of the King's House in Winchester evoked the site of royal and British generosity to the émigré clergy which would have gratified subscribers to the painting. Lady Buckingham was one of them - a continuation of her patronage of struggling artists first noted when she was instrumental in establishing a studio for the miniaturist Horace Hone in Dublin. This small but significant act of charity placed her close to the bishop from the earliest days of the emigration.

⁹ T. Brindle, 'A Conversion under the Old Penal Laws', *The Rambler: a Catholic Journal and Review*, new ser., vol.3 (1855), pp.44-59, 117-25 (p.120); A.M. Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter; or, The Last Days of the Penal Laws. A True Story* (London: Burns and Oates, 1883), p.40; Hirst, *Memoir*, p.4.

¹⁰ Ward, *Catholic Revival*, p. 20, citing Abbé Barruel, *History of the Clergy during the French Revolution* (London: J.P. Coghlan, 1794), vol.3, p.220.

¹¹ WHSC 2667/25/3: Interleaved in a notebook of 'English Catholic Papers' a copy of a list of French exiles 'who have been at Wardour since the French Revolution', made c.1825. Eighty-six names, headed by La Marche. See also Ward, *Catholic Revival*, p.20, and L. Kerbiriou, *Jean-François de la Marche, Evêque-Comte de Léon* (Quimper; Paris: Le Goaziuo, 1924), p.351.

¹² K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Emigres in London, 1789-1802* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), p.59. The work was undertaken with the support of his landlady, Mrs Dorothy Silburn (d.1820).

¹³ Kerbiriou, *Jean-François de la Marche*, p.387. The original painting is in the Musée du Louvre, reproduced in A. Freud, *Portraiture and Politics in Revolutionary France* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), p.119. It was subsequently engraved to raise money for the artist and the relief fund.

According to Dominic Bellenger, it was probably at the suggestion of Lord Buckingham, acting on behalf of the Wilmot Committee, that the government permitted the use of the unoccupied King's House by large numbers of refractory clergy.¹⁴ By early 1793, over 200 French priests were housed there, the largest number of the estimated 7,000 to 10,000 who arrived in England from 1791 onwards to be accommodated in a single location.¹⁵ The marquess's position as Lord Lieutenant of Buckingham provided an opportunity for a display of benevolence guaranteed to attract the attention of the king who had expressed sympathy for the clerical victims of the Revolution: stationed in Winchester with the Buckinghamshire militia, he found himself in the right location to act on their behalf.¹⁶ The King's House, which had been designed for Charles II by Sir Christopher Wren, had subsequently been used to house French prisoners of war and was empty and in a state of disrepair when offered for use by the clergy.¹⁷ The Wilmot Committee arranged for the beds, bedding and provisions necessary to make the building habitable;¹⁸ Buckingham was conveniently on site to oversee the process. In November 1793 he became concerned at the plan to move the clergy to 'ruined Inns and Alehouses in the neighbourhood'¹⁹ when the King's House was proposed as barracks for 3,000 British troops. Giving a clear indication of his perception of national and personal responsibility, he told Burke that he had written to Evan Nepean, under secretary of the Home Department, about the matter:

in much detail and with a very strong reprobation of the measure in every view in which it can be considered, whether of oeconomy, expediency, humanity, or propriety with respect to the national character, or the credit of the King²⁰

¹⁴ D. Bellenger, 'The French Priests at the King's House, Winchester, 1792-1796', *Hampshire Field Club Archaeological Society*, vol. 40 (1984), pp.99-105 (p.99).

¹⁵ See D. Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789: An Historical Introduction and Working List* (Bath: Downside Abbey, 1986); Bellenger, 'French Priests at the King's House', p.100.

¹⁶ A position he had occupied since March 1782. I.F.W. Beckett (ed.), 'The Buckinghamshire Comitatus, 1798', *Buckinghamshire Record Society*, vol.22 (1985) p. xi. See also L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico,1992), pp.283-319.

¹⁷ J. Milner, *The History and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester* (Winchester: James Roberts, 1839), p.199.

¹⁸ Weiner, *French Exiles*, pp.59-60.

¹⁹ P.J. Marshall and J.A. Woods (eds.), *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), vol.7, p.492: Marquess of Buckingham to Edmund Burke, 27 November 1793.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

He explained to Burke his reasons for not offering accommodation at his own properties: he felt the responsibility lay with the government:

I may say to you in confidence that while I have two houses I will not suffer this scene of national infamy and disgrace to be exhibited; but I am at present so anxious to keep them where they ought to be under the wing of the Government... I will venture therefore to suggest immediate and unceasing representations from the committee²¹

In the event the majority were accommodated at the King's House until 1796, by which time they had been joined by those who had first sought refuge in the Channel Isles; the numbers grew to more than 1,000. Bellenger highlighted the way in which husband and wife acted with one accord: Lord Buckingham had been instrumental in arranging for the building to be made available, and habitable, for the émigrés' use; Lady Buckingham organised their employment:

In August 1793 manual labour was organised on a grand scale and eventually 200 were employed in the manufacture of tapestry under the direction of the Marchioness of Buckingham who, with her husband, was the chief benefactor of the establishment.²²

Over time, despite evidence of the marchioness's contribution to émigré relief, her input has generally been subsumed into that of her husband or marginalised by historians of the emigration whose focus was elsewhere. A faint trace shows that in French Catholic circles her practical intervention was still a matter of interest at the end of the nineteenth century: her direct involvement in the establishment of a tapestry factory had been recognised in François-Xavier Plasse, *Le Clergé Français Réfugié en Angleterre*, picked up as significant by his reviewer, Thomas Bridgett, and reiterated as praiseworthy in Hirst, *Memoir*.²³ However a contemporary French history of the emigration had placed a greater emphasis on the marchioness's active role than these later versions of events, and it is by returning to this source that the impact of her intervention can be better appreciated.

The clearest evidence of the combined efforts of the marquess and marchioness on behalf of the émigrés is in Lubersac, *Journal Historique*. Lubersac, Archdeacon of

²¹ Ibid.

²² Bellenger, 'French Priests at the King's House', p.101.

²³ Hirst, *Memoir*, p. 3; T.E. Bridgett C.S.S.R, 'The Story of the French Exiles'. *Le Clergé Français Réfugié en Angleterre*. Par F.X. Plasse. Paris: Victor Palmé. 1886', *Dublin Review*, (Jan. 1887), vol.17, no.1, pp.140-57.

Narbonne, refused to sign the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and fled to England in 1792 where he remained until his death in 1804.²⁴ Written soon after the events it describes, the *Journal Historique* contained a wealth of detail, still fresh in the writer's mind. Repetitive, with grammatical errors, it was evidently written at speed, a trait of the plethora of works in English and French published during the 1790s and early 1800s, as they debated the pros and cons of monarchy, aristocracy and revolution.²⁵ Dedicated to George III, its principal aim was to express gratitude to the British monarch, his government and the British nation for helping the émigré priests in their hour of need. There are several specific references to Lady Buckingham. No other individual, male or female, was thanked at such length, not even her husband, in this or any other work consulted for this study. In a letter dated 30 December 1792, Bishop de La Marche had directed the émigré clergy to broadcast their gratitude to British benefactors both in words and through respect,²⁶ yet even allowing for the exaggeration implicit in conventions of praise and thanks to benefactors, the *Journal Historique* bore witness to active elite female involvement in a major philanthropic venture which crossed a confessional and national divide. This source, and others to be examined in due course, provides evidence of Lady Buckingham not just *being* good, but more importantly, of *doing* good, a distinction of charitable practice alluded to by Burke: There are 'two ways by which people may be charitable – the one by their money, the other by their exertions.'²⁷

Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, included an expression of thanks to Lord Buckingham for financing, at the émigrés' request, the inscription of a marble plaque recording for posterity their gratitude to George III. It was placed in the King's House chapel on 22 May 1793, during the early days of their three and a half year residence at

²⁴ F.X. de Feller, *Biographie Universelle ou Dictionnaire Historique* (Paris: Chez Gauthier Frères, 1834), p.604. Charles-François de Lubersac de Livron (1730-1804) was a writer of political, historical and aesthetic works. Not to be confused with Charles-François, Abbé de Lubersac (c.1720-1792), ordinary chaplain to Madame Victoire, or Jean-Baptiste- Joseph de Lubersac (1740-1822), Bishop of Chartres, confessor to Madame Sophie.

²⁵ See A. Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s: Pamphlets Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005); S. Burrows, *French Exile Journalism and European Politics* (Woodridge: Royal Historical Society, 2000).

²⁶ It was translated by Bishop Milner: J. Milner, *Letter of the Right Reverend John Francis de la Marche, Bishop of Leon, Addressed to the French Clergymen Refugees in England* (London: J.P. Coghlan, 1793).

²⁷ C. Barrett (ed.), *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, vol. 3, 1788-96 (London, Swann Sonnenschein 1892), p.527, Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814), quoting Edmund Burke.

Winchester,²⁸ evidence that, from the outset, the marquess busied himself on their behalf in full view of the king. In an act of apparent modesty, Lord Buckingham declined the offer of having his name and coat of arms inscribed on the plaque: ‘[il] se refusa à ce que son Nom et ses Armes fussent gravés dans cette Inscription’.²⁹ His modesty was, however, lauded in a poem dedicated to him by a priest from Bayeux.³⁰ Verses by the grateful clergy in praise of the Buckingham family were published at the time, so news of their good deeds was circulated despite the marquess’s protestations: ‘Toutes ces intéressantes pièces en vers ont été dans leurs temps imprimées et publiées’.³¹

The marchioness was the object of effusive praise in her own right. Firstly, admiring her for the standard, contemporary virtues of being a good wife and mother, blessed with talent, beauty and grace,³² the writer then noted her sensitivity and ability to identify with the plight of the French clergy, many of whom were elderly and infirm. He admired the way in which she was drawn to those in pain and distress, rather than shying away from them:

Loin de fuir l’objet affligeant / Dont le spectacle te déchire/Tes regards cherchent l’indigent³³

Far from fleeing from the afflicting object/ the sight of which affects you greatly/You seek out the destitute

He praised Lord Buckingham as a protector of virtue and innocence and an able defender of his country, faithful to his king, working alongside his wife: Lady Buckingham was ‘supported [in her good works] by a worthy husband’ (‘par un digne époux secondée’).³⁴ Although the poems expressed in flattering but general terms the gratitude of clergy, the text of the *Journal Historique* provided specific examples of the marchioness’s role. In addition to establishing the tapestry factory, she paid visits to the sick and brought them food and wine to aid their recovery. According to Lubersac, this was all undertaken with a disregard for her own health:

²⁸ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, p.3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., pp.8-9.

³¹ Ibid., p.12.

³² Ibid., p.9.

³³ Ibid., p.10.

³⁴ Ibid.

Il ne passa pas de jour ... qu'elle ne prodigua argent, soins de toute espèce, visites fréquentes et sans jamais craindre pour sa santé, en allant voir les malades dans leurs cellules et infirmerie, ou elle portoit [sic] des secours de tout genre, soit en vin, soit en alimens [sic] de tout espèce, sains et agréables dans leur état de convalescence.³⁵

Not a day passed that she didn't lavish [upon them] money, care of all descriptions, frequent visits without ever fearing for her health, in going to see the sick in their cells and in hospital, where she brought all manner of help, either wine, or all kinds of healthy and pleasant food for them as they convalesced.

The dangers were real: the death in 1793 of Abigail Way, Lady Sheffield, was attributed in part to an illness contracted while visiting émigré clergy in hospital.³⁶ Lubersac recorded that 'une infinité de dames charitables' comforted the sick in Middlesex hospital, where two wards had been set aside for their use, but Lady Buckingham was the only 'charitable woman' he named as a visitor there.³⁷ Lubersac also recorded her gifts of money but it was La Marche's biographer, Louis Kerbiriou, who noted the practical nature of her gifts. She arranged for the provision of benches in the garden, and wheelchairs for the infirm: '[elle] fit disposé des bancs dans le jardin ... des fauteuils à roulettes pour les infirmes.'³⁸

Insights into Lady Buckingham's direct involvement in émigré support at this early stage in the emigration can be found in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*.³⁹ The Irish born Rev. Thomas Hussey (1746-1803), later Roman Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore,⁴⁰ whose support for the émigré clergy was practical as well as spiritual,⁴¹ admired in a letter to Burke on 15 August 1793, the marchioness's commitment, practicality and generosity: she provided items which enabled the clergy to make use of their skills and continue with their trades. She was unusual in

³⁵ Ibid., pp.3-4. Her care for the sick was acknowledged in 'Biographical Sketches of Illustrious Ladies: The Most Noble the Marchioness of Buckingham', *La Belle Assemblée* vol.5, no.28 (January 1812), pp.3-5 and in 'Historical Sketches. English Generosity', *The Saturday Magazine*, July-Dec. 1840, vol.17, (1841), pp.189-96 (p.190).

³⁶ J.H. Adeane (ed.), *The Girlhood of Maria Josepha Holroyd (Lady Stanley of Alderley). Recorded in Letters of Hundred Years Ago from 1776 to 1796* (London and New York: Longman, Green and co., 1896), pp.218-21.

³⁷ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, p.25.

³⁸ Kerbiriou, *Jean-François de la Marche*, pp.407-8.

³⁹ Marshall and Woods (eds), *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*.

⁴⁰ J.T. Gilbert, revised by D. Keogh, 'Hussey, Thomas (1746-1803)' <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 7 March 2019]

⁴¹ Hussey arranged for the clergy to have haircuts to restore their priestly appearance: 'Dr Hussey ... was obliged, at his Chappel [sic] to have the cues cut from the hair of above and hundred and fifty of them, otherwise the Catholicicks, at his service, would never recognize them as Priests': Marshall and Woods (eds.), *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, vol.7, 1794, p.231.

being singled out for comment; no other aristocratic females were alluded to in a similar way:

I accompanied Lady Buckingham thro'out the whole establishment. Her indefatigable zeal in doing good, is above my praise, or that of any human being. We have even found Watchmakers and Embroiderers among them, and she has purchased working implements for them.⁴²

The gift of tools provided occupation to those not suited to tapestry work, encouraged self-sufficiency, and helped to prevent boredom. The same letter reveals her sense of humour, an aspect of her personality that was not apparent in the respectful words of thanks from the émigré clergy. The example that follows shows that by the 1790s her Catholicism was unproblematic, at least to her, within the Grenville family. In fact, she delighted in having created an amusing scenario which would have been unthinkable a few years earlier when the Penal Laws were still in force and sensitivities had to be carefully managed:

One circumstance will amuse you, and diverted her very much; she gave the tambour frame which had belonged to Mrs Grenville, Lord Buckingham's mother, to one of the french Priests, who embroiders very well. Mrs Grenville will not rise from her grave to see a popish priest working at her frame - will she?⁴³

The marchioness had reason to be cheerful. Her involvement in émigré clergy relief at the King's House facilitated the practice of her faith. Crucially, it coincided with a softening of royal attitude to Catholics: permission was granted to construct a Catholic chapel in the city to replace the makeshift structure which had been used for the 'secret' celebration of Mass until then.⁴⁴ St Peter's was consecrated on 5 December 1792, the first since the Reformation. Brindle and Stewart wove a romanticised tale of visits to the new church by the marchioness, implying a secrecy that, even if it had been a means of calming her husband's concerns before the second Relief Act, was no longer necessary.⁴⁵ Following the guillotining of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793, a service was conducted there by the incumbent, the Rev. Dr. John Milner (1752-1826).⁴⁶ Then, on France's declaration of war against Britain in February, George III made plain that irreligion, not Catholicism, was the threat to

⁴² Ibid., p.395.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ The Gothic structure was described J. Milner, *The History and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester* (Winchester: James Roberts, 1839), pp.251-66.

⁴⁵ Brindle, 'Conversion', pp.120-1; Stewart, *Earl Nugent's Daughter*, pp.40, 47-48, 70.

⁴⁶ Ward, *Catholic Revival*, p.28.

the stability of civilised nations. In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on 17 April, he endorsed the work of Wilmot Committee and requested that sermons be preached and collections made in all Anglican churches to help them continue their support for the French clergy.⁴⁷

George III pledged himself to be ‘ready to give the best Encouragement and Countenance to this Work of Christian Charity’.⁴⁸ This was a robust endorsement of a charity which ignored the confessional divide: it was conducted ‘in the Sight of that Being who is the common Father of Mankind’.⁴⁹ Lord Buckingham could now rest assured of the king’s strong approbation of the philanthropic activity of himself and his Catholic wife. Following the guillotining of Marie-Antoinette on 16 October 1793, the names of the Marquess and Marchioness of Buckingham were publicly linked with support for the royalist, Catholic cause. Milner recorded:

We had a service for the French Queen last Saturday, helped by the regimental band, and attended by the Marquis and all the officers, most of the clergy, and the principal people of the city and neighbourhood. The Cenotaph was graced with a bust as large as life in chiaroscuro of the deceased from the elegant pen of Lady Buckingham.⁵⁰

Lady Buckingham’s artistic talent enabled her to make a public display of support for royalty, which reflected well on her husband.

The Ladies Society for the Relief of the Emigrant Clergy

A sermon preached by Thomas Rennell (1754-1840) in Winchester Cathedral ten days after the execution of the French queen showed the level of outrage and fear which had been growing since the execution of her husband, Louis XVI, ten months earlier.⁵¹ To Rennell, elected as inspector of the King’s House,⁵² Lady Buckingham epitomised the ideal elite female: enlightened and compassionate, making

⁴⁷ C. Shaw, *Britannia’s Embrace and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.32.

⁴⁸ The Royal command was published in W.R. Wake, *Two Sermons Preached in the Parish Church of St Michael, One on the Fast Day, April 19; the Other on Occasion of Soliciting Relief for the Emigrant French Clergy, etc* (Bath: W. Gye, 1793), p.17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Ward, *Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, vol.2, p.28.

⁵¹ T. Rennell, *Principles of French Republicanism Essentially Founded on Violence and Blood-Guiltiness. A Sermon Preached on Sunday the 26th of October, 1793, in the Cathedral Church of Winchester, Occasioned by the Murder of her Most Christian Majesty* (2nd edition; London: F. and C. Rivington, 1793).

⁵² R. Hole, ‘Rennell, Thomas, dean of Winchester [from 1805]’, <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 11 December 2018].

appropriate use of her rank, bearing the responsibility of averting a similar catastrophe in England. He paid tribute to her as an example of ‘virtue and piety’ who displayed the ‘systematic benevolence’ that was conducive to happiness.⁵³ Her aristocratic status gave her both the responsibility and the means to make a difference:

These poor Sufferers ... have experienced the softening hand, assiduous care and maternal tenderness of a powerful benefactress ... her whole conduct and every action of her life demonstrates to those of high rank and great opulence what awful talents are committed to their charge⁵⁴

Her activity on behalf of the émigré priests was just one of her aristocratic duties. She needed to make an impact in a short space of time: her residence in Winchester was ‘but occasional and temporary’.⁵⁵

Rennell recognised the burden of rank and wealth borne by the marchioness. She was a firm advocate of the preservation of the social hierarchy and set an example of Christian responsibility as demanded by the middle-class moralist, Hannah More (1745-1833).⁵⁶ Status dictated the way in which the two women approached the worsening refugee crisis. The marchioness realised the power of aristocratic endorsement and lent her support when, in October 1793, at the suggestion of Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814),⁵⁷ a Ladies’ Society was formed by Mrs Frances Crewe (1748-1818), for the relief of the émigré clergy.⁵⁸ Anne Stott relates that when a delegation from the Ladies’ Society approached More to invite her to become chairwoman, she gave her approval to the ladies’ plan but excused herself on the grounds of ill-health.⁵⁹ Accepting the post would have made effective use of her good name to promote the society to middle-class women, but she declined to play such a prominent role.⁶⁰ She confided to a friend that ‘she could not countenance the

⁵³ Rennell, *Principles*, p.25

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ H. More, *Thoughts on the Importance of Manners of the Great to General Society* (London: T. Cadell, 1788).

⁵⁷ Charles Burney, father of Frances d’Arblay (née Burney), 1752-1840.

⁵⁸ Frances Anne Crewe, Lady Crewe (née Greville). For a list of members of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Emigrant Clergy see: ‘Dr. Burney to Fanny d’Arblay, 4 October, 1793’ in Barrett (ed.) *Diary and Letters of Madame d’Arblay*, p.526. They were largely the wives or associates of Whig politicians. TNA T 93/8 lists Relief Fund subscriptions from 8 August 1792 to 29 July 1795.

⁵⁹ Barrett (ed.), *Madame d’Arblay*, pp.526-7. It is also possible, in view of her local educational commitments and writing projects, that time constraints played a part.

⁶⁰ Stott, *Hannah More*, p.150.

ostensibleness and publicity attached to such an office'.⁶¹ According to Stott, More 'had helped to open up a new opportunity for women's participation in the public sphere, only to shrink from the consequences of her action.'⁶²

More did not court publicity for herself, but she did recognise it as a means of eliciting donations. She publicised her support for the cause by donating to the French emigrant clergy the profits of her pamphlet, *Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont*,⁶³ which opened with an address 'to the Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland', expressing the hope that the high price - 'Two Shillings and Sixpence' - would be excused, 'in consideration of the Object to which it is dedicated'.⁶⁴ Of particular significance is her reassurance to potential donors that she was not attempting to divert funds from national charities: 'Let it not be said that this is an *interfering* claim'.⁶⁵ High priority should still be afforded to 'the just and natural claims of the widows and children of our brave seamen and soldiers'.⁶⁶ As Adriana Craciun noted, 'Throughout the émigré crisis, More's ecumenical spirit co-existed with an absolute faith in British national superiority.'⁶⁷

More's reticence shows the extent to which even the most committed middle-class reformers allowed gendered norms to determine how their philanthropy might be appropriately displayed. Similarly, up to that point, aristocratic female philanthropists had continued to exhibit deference to a patriarchal family and social structure so that their role remained hidden from view. Donna Andrew situated a change in practice in the 1770s when, for reasons unknown, a more formal organisation came into being for the more efficient gathering of 'knowledge'.⁶⁸ Countess Spencer's Ladies' Charitable Society was 'one of the first philanthropic

⁶¹ Ibid., citing More to Ann Kennicott, 18 November 1793.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ H. More, *Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont Made in the National Convention of France on the Subject of Religion and Public Education* (London: T. Cadell, 1793). This work was an attack on French anti-clericalism. Donations listed in TNA T 93/8: Subscription Record Book: £100 on 2 May 1793; £20 6s on 22 November 1793.

⁶⁴ More, *Remarks*, p.2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ A. Craciun, *British Women Writers and the French Revolution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.147.

⁶⁸ D. Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige: Female Charity in an Age of Sentiment', in J. Brewer and S. Staves (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London and New York, 1995), pp.275-300 (p.292).

organisations systematically to investigate the characters and circumstances of those who appealed to them for assistance.⁶⁹ Applicants who were considered deserving were provided with blankets and, in 1774, 160 women were employed in clothing manufacture to encourage self-sufficiency. Problems arose when clothes were made, but not sold, an issue faced by other charities of this nature: ‘For the Subcommittee works up cloaths without selling them.’⁷⁰ It is possible that Countess Spencer, who was a subscriber to the fund for émigré clergy, gave the committee the benefit of her experience in this field.

Profit from the sale of items made by the émigré clergy at the King’s House supplemented the government allowance and funds raised by the Ladies’ Committee. Whether learning through personal experience, or through discussion with other elite women such as Countess Spencer, Lady Buckingham was evidently aware that producing goods was only part of the process: employment in manufacturing could only lead to self-sufficiency if it brought in a profit; potential consumers needed to be persuaded to buy the products. It seems likely that, empowered by her elevated social status, she marketed the handicrafts with the same determination as when she encouraged the purchase of imperfect straw hats made in Gosfield. Lubersac recorded that the marchioness spared no effort in selling the products at the best possible prices: ‘sans cesse elle s’occupoit [sic] du débit de leur travail, en les vendant le plus avantageusement possible.’⁷¹ The Hampshire Record Office holds evidence of a local purchaser of the handiwork: the young Catherine Harris visited the King’s House in 1794 and spent her pocket money there, noting: ‘they work in tapistry [sic] very beautifully & make all kind of little things very neatly. Miss Cozens gave us each half a guinea to spend there.’⁷² This provides an early example

⁶⁹ D. Andrew, ‘Spencer [née Poyntz], (Margaret) Georgiana, Countess Spencer (1737–1814)’ <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 25 October 2018].

⁷⁰ Andrew, ‘Noblesse Oblige’, p.293.

⁷¹ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, p.4. This will be examined in Chapter Five, by referring to Forneron, *Histoire Générale*, p.49.

⁷² HRO 9M73/298/31, 8 December 1794, Catherine Harris (d.1855) to her father, James, Lord Malmesbury (1746-1820). She also made small items as prizes for a raffle in aid of the émigré clergy: HRO 9M73/298/6, 23 February 1794, Catherine Harris to her father.

of the sale of fancy goods for charity for which records are scant. As Prochaska observed, such sales were not usually reported in the press until the 1820s.⁷³

Lady Buckingham, financially and socially secure, did not share More's reluctance to hold a high profile position within the charity. Occupying a public position of responsibility contravened what More understood as gender norms of behaviour, based on a middle-class aversion to display. Lady Buckingham was not unaware of More's sensitivities, but her status demanded a different approach. The philanthropic activity of the Marchioness of Buckingham, in common with others of a similarly privileged background, indicates strongly that, as has been demonstrated by Elaine Chalus and Judith Lewis in their studies of female political engagement, public duty was not confined to men. Display, within contested limits, was actively encouraged.⁷⁴ Despite being accustomed to deferring to the male members of a complex family network, the marchioness benefited from experience in her early married life which had placed her in the limelight in Dublin; this equipped her to put herself forward in a public role when the situation warranted it. Equally, having been brought into close contact with cases of need, with her religion dictating her intervention, she did not shy away from being actively involved in work behind the scenes. It is precisely because of the discreet nature of much of her activity that its extent has escaped notice.

It required as much acumen and determination for an elite female to instigate change through acts of philanthropy as it did to present the right image as a political hostess or campaigner. Attempts were made by some to belittle, even ridicule, their activities. Dr. Burney, writing to his daughter about the newly-formed Ladies' Society for the Relief of Emigrant Clergy in 1793, said that the members went about their charitable work 'cheerfully and with so much zeal', noting that they did this despite being 'hoaxed and scouted by the men' who called it 'ladies' nonsense'.⁷⁵ In addition to being teased and spied upon, their contribution, though elicited, was not

⁷³ See F. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (1980; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp.49-50.

⁷⁴ E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-90* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); J.S. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in Late Georgian Britain* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

⁷⁵ Barrett (ed.), *Madame d'Arblay*, p.527.

considered significant enough at the time to be recorded in the same way as men's. This has consequences for current perceptions of their activity: unlike male-run charitable institutions which, as Langford noted, 'kept elaborate records and devised complicated procedures' to safeguard the interest of their patrons and subscribers,⁷⁶ the Ladies' Society records were perhaps more concise, less informative and not subjected to the same scrutiny.

A scarcity of evidence has made it difficult to isolate the impact of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Emigrant Clergy from the relief effort as a whole. Dr. Burney acted as secretary to the Ladies' society which he admired to such an extent that he encouraged his daughter, Fanny, to write in praise of female benevolence: '...if you feel any impulse to use your pen, it should be in an *éloge* on female benevolence.'⁷⁷ In the event she did something more practical: she helped to muster support for the cause by addressing to all ladies her *Brief Reflections* on the plight of the émigré clergy.⁷⁸ The appropriateness of the cause for female attention was highlighted in a review of her pamphlet: unlike the 'gentleman-like' Mary Wollstonecraft she 'gives up the claim to public exertions in general' but should feel free to express her benevolent nature through support of such a deserving cause.⁷⁹ In response to *Brief Reflections* and other pleas, most notably from the Anglican clergy in sermons which condemned republican violence and promoted established religion, donations to the fund for the relief of émigré clergy received between 17 April and 1 November 1793 amounted to £41,314 2s 7½d, far exceeding the anticipated £10,000.⁸⁰ Apart from donations by individual men and women of all classes, '£600 from Ladies Subscriptions' was recorded on 10 December 1793 in the Subscription Record Book.⁸¹

⁷⁶ P. Langford, *Public Life*, p.499.

⁷⁷ Barrett (ed.), *Madame d'Arblay*, p.527.

⁷⁸ F. Burney, *Brief Reflections Relative to the Emigrant French Clergy Earnestly Submitted to the Humane Consideration of the Ladies of Great Britain* (London: Thomas Cadell, 1793).

⁷⁹ 'Miscellanies, Art 27. *Brief Reflections*', *The British Critic, 1793-1826*, December 1793, *British Periodicals*, p.450

⁸⁰ See D. Bellenger, 'The Émigré Clergy and the English Church, 1789-1815', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.34, no 3 (1983), pp.392-410 for a discussion of the political agenda of many of these sermons. For the total amount collected, see p.398. For instances of sermons not bringing in contributions in places where the congregation was more concerned about the poor of their own parish, see p.399.

⁸¹ TNA T 93/8

‘Sa Prévoyante Sollicitude’: Support for Lay Émigrés in Jersey

Appeals by émigrés to the British elite for financial help were commonplace at this time and individuals needed to assess the validity of the claim and the difference their support could make. In August 1793, when René-Jean, Comte de Botherel (1745-1805), formerly administrator of charitable government funds in Jersey,⁸² made a personal appeal to Lord Buckingham for financial help for lay émigrés who had sought refuge on the Channel Islands from 1791 onwards, the response he received was in line with aristocratic practice - the marquess sent a donation of £100. The letter that accompanied the marquess’s donation has much to tell about the pressure the British elite came under to support their French counterparts. It also reveals the marquess’s awareness in the early stages of the emigration of the plight of families, children and the elderly.

en vous annoncant combien je suis touche des malheurs que vous avez si vivement depeint, j’ose vous prier de vouloir bien passer chez Monsieur Coutts mon banquier dans la rue The Strand, pour recevoir Cent Livres Stg sur le billet que j’ai l’honneur de vous adresser; & pour les distribuer a votre discretion parmi ces Viellards ces Enfans et ces dames respectables, pour lesquels vous vous etes interessé, avec une affection & humanité qui honore tant votre nom & caractère.⁸³

in announcing to you how touched I am by the misfortunes that you have described so vividly, I presume to request you to go to Mr Coutts, my banker in the Strand, to receive one hundred pounds sterling against the note that I have the honour of addressing to you; & to distribute it at your discretion among these Old People, these Children and these Respectable Ladies, in whom you have shown a concern, with affection and humanity which does justice to your name and character.

The marquess’s donation and similar ones from other individuals approached for aid to supplement inadequate government funding would no doubt have eased their conscience and provided some relief to the refugees. However, presumably alerted to the severity of the problem by her husband, and enabled by her status to act, Lady Buckingham provided support of a more practical nature which serves to demonstrate the different but complementary ways in which they approached the issue. The marchioness’s solution to the plight of refugee families in Jersey was to

⁸² P. Levot, *Biographie Bretonne* (Vannes et Paris: Cauderon, 1852), p.142. See Chapter Five of this thesis for his reappearance conducting a staged oral test at a school for émigrés in London: Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, pp.115-141.

⁸³ HL STG Box 367 (57) George, Marquess of Buckingham to Mr. de Botherel, Wotton, 24 August 1793.

employ the women to make clothes for the exiled priests.⁸⁴ One of the ‘respectable ladies’, Anne-Charlotte-Marie de Cornulier (1769-1844),⁸⁵ described the process, which provides an example of the marchioness’s creative approach. With her ‘far-sighted solicitude’ she helped two separate groups of refugees in one fell swoop:

Nous, levées des l’aurore, nous travaillons aux gilets, habits et culottes que la charité anglaise fournissait aux ecclésiastiques déportés ou fugitifs à Jersey. Le nombre des prêtres excédait quatre milles; et la prévoyante sollicitude de la Marquise de Buckingham, qui avait eu l’idée d’établir nos ateliers, avait mis pour condition que ces vêtements seraient confectionnés par les dames françaises pour leur assurer les moyens d’existence.⁸⁶

Having risen at dawn, we worked on the waistcoats, suits and breeches that English charity provided for the deported or fugitive clergy in Jersey. The number of priests exceeded four thousand; and the far-sighted solicitude of the Marchioness of Buckingham, who had had the idea of establishing our workshops, stipulated that these clothes should be made by French ladies to assure them a means of subsistence.

‘Far-sighted solicitude’ (la prévoyante sollicitude’) was to be the hallmark of Lady Buckingham’s philanthropic acts on behalf of the émigrés and shows her to be at the forefront of changes to charitable traditions. Her prompt intervention staved off the immediate problem and set in motion a practical scheme which helped all parties, including the clergy, who continued to be her primary focus.

‘His Thought Not Mine’: The Poor Clares of Gravelines at Gosfield

The formation of separate female charitable societies to care for clergy émigrés coincided with a smaller, though still significant, wave of female religious refugees. Two years after the arrival of the refractory clergy in the British Isles, English and French female religious communities were forced to flee from France and the Netherlands; many of their number were similarly elderly and infirm. Although they had not been subjected to the same punitive measures as the clergy, legislation demanded the emptying of the convents to make their buildings available to the state.⁸⁷ The deciding moment for English nuns in France was the declaration by

⁸⁴H. Herluison (ed.), *Généalogie Historique de la Maison de Cornulier* (Orléans, 1889), p.252. See also *Vie de l’Abbé Carron Par un Bénédictin de la Congrégation de France*, (Paris : Charles Douniol, 1866), p.338

⁸⁵ Also known as Mademoiselle de Cornuillier-Lucinière. She was later employed at the school established by the Abbé Carron in London. See Chapter Five of this thesis.

⁸⁶ Herluison, *Généalogie Historique*, p.253.

⁸⁷ C. Mangion (ed.), ‘The French Revolution, the French Revolutionary Wars and the Return to England’, in C. Bowden (ed.) *English Convents in Exile*, part 2, vol.6, section 3, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), pp.288-391 (p.292).

France of war on Britain on 1 February 1793. In October 1793, all British subjects, including nuns, were imprisoned.⁸⁸

English and French nuns fleeing the continent presented women in England with another opportunity to display their philanthropic credentials. They arrived at a time when there was a growing awareness of the risk inherent in charitable activity: that the temporary vulnerability of the recipient of aid could be exploited by the donor, who had voluntarily adopted a position of power.⁸⁹ This was seen as a particularly sensitive issue when the recipient was female and the donor male: Dorice Williams Elliot noted that Hannah More viewed ‘upper- or middle-class men’s charity as sexually threatening to victimized women’ which made ‘direct philanthropic efforts by men dangerous’.⁹⁰ Women stepping forward to support female cases of need protected men from temptation, and their charitable acts from misrepresentation. A need to safeguard male reputations would soon lead to the suggestion that the women involved in émigré relief should restrict themselves to caring for their own sex. In Lady Buckingham’s case, the shift towards gender-specific support did not necessarily result from her acceptance of those restrictions, but from a change in the émigré demographic from 1795, which will be the focus of Chapter Four.

The decision to provide support to refugee nuns was partly the result of Lord Buckingham’s continued quest to gain royal approval and, as in Winchester, it was his role as Lord Lieutenant that put him in the right place at the right time. In 1794, when troops rallied in Weymouth for inspection by George III, the Bucks Militia, of which Lord Buckingham was Colonel, was selected king to form the king’s personal guard.⁹¹ The marquess would have been, as ever, anxious to impress. He would have been gratified to see his success reported:

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.293.

⁸⁹ See D. Williams Elliot, ‘“The Care of the Poor is her Profession”: Hannah More and Women’s Philanthropic Work’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, vol.19, no.2 (1995), pp.179-204 (p.192).

⁹⁰ Ibid; referring to the characterisation in H. More, *Coeleb’s Search for a Wife* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1809).

⁹¹ <www.lightbobs.com/royal-bucks-kings-own-militia.html> [accessed 12 November 2019].

In the evening the Royal family went to view the Camp... and saw the men go through their exercise. His majesty paid the Marquis of Buckingham many compliments on the different manoeuvres⁹²

It was potentially at this time that Lord Buckingham witnessed firsthand the concern of George III over the fate of English Catholic communities on the continent.⁹³ George III's personal friendship with a number of prominent Catholics, including Thomas Weld (1750-1810) owner of Lulworth Castle, was well known.⁹⁴ Whether he observed the king's solicitude, or was made aware of it by a third party, such knowledge would have fuelled his enthusiasm for the highly visible act of charity, already underway, of caring for and occupying hundreds of émigré clergy at the King's House, Winchester. On a visit to Lulworth, the Buckinghams could also have observed the newly arrived Cistercian monks, housed in the grounds.⁹⁵ In anticipation of royal approbation, he may well have felt encouraged to suggest to his wife a similar scheme of rescue, using Gosfield as a base for the Poor Clares of Gravelines.⁹⁶ The small scale plan for the nuns provided the ideal opportunity for another display of benevolence. If the king was in sympathy with Thomas Weld's support for Trappist monks at Lulworth and had arranged for nuns from the Convent of the Glorious Assumption to be accommodated in the Abbey House at Winchester,⁹⁷ a similar scheme for nuns at Gosfield was likely to be met with royal approval. Unoccupied buildings on the estate could provide shelter without inconveniencing the family during their visits to Gosfield Hall, which, in any case, was more of an encumbrance than an asset.⁹⁸

⁹² 'Diary of the Royal Excursion to Weymouth', *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.64, Iss.5, (November 1794), pp.1048-1050 (p.1048).

⁹³ 'George III and Weymouth' <[http://dorset-ancestors.com/?p=2325 2/2](http://dorset-ancestors.com/?p=2325%202/2)> [accessed 2 December 2017]: When George III met Thomas Weld 'in the 1790s' he learnt that nuns at the [Franciscan] convent where Mr. Weld's daughter was a novice had nowhere to flee from the advancing French army. He invited them to England and accommodation was provided in the Abbey House, Winchester.

⁹⁴ Jeremy Black in *George III: America's Last King* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p.196. See also 'Diary of the Royal Excursion', p.1048, for evidence that Queen Charlotte supported the king in this display of tolerance towards Catholics: '16th [August] Her Majesty honoured Mr Weld of Lulworth Castle, and his family, with a great share of the conversation.'

⁹⁵ D. Bellenger, 'La Trappe at Lulworth', *Studies in Church History*, vol.22 (1985), pp.343-50.

⁹⁶ It is also possible that the plight of the nuns featured in a conversation at Weymouth between Lady Buckingham and Queen Charlotte; philanthropy was high on the female royal agenda: 'Diary of the Royal Excursion', p.1048: '21st [August]. The Queen and five princesses paid a morning visit to the Marchioness of Buckingham'. For royal charitable interests see J. Marschner (ed.), *Enlightened Princesses: Caroline, Augusta and Charlotte and the Shaping of the Modern World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017) pp.407-49.

⁹⁷ 'George III and Weymouth' <<http://dorset-ancestors.com>>

⁹⁸ Beckett, *Rise and Fall*, p.83.

At this juncture, the challenges faced by Lady Buckingham as wife and mother emerge with greater clarity.⁹⁹ Caring for refugees might not have been so high on her list of priorities had it not been for her husband's desire to be recognised for good works, and her desire to please him. Through her joint philanthropic ventures with Lord Buckingham, she had become increasingly recognised within émigré circles as a powerful benefactress. As a result, Milner tried to shield her from excessive demands: in 1794, in a letter about local cases of need, he informed her that he had prevented a group of émigré Benedictine nuns from soliciting her aid:

The above mentioned Benedictine Ladies having been informed whilst in London that your Ladyship had a house in Winchester, had prepared a letter to solicit your protection, which coming to my knowledge, for obvious reasons, I prevented them sending it.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, despite Milner's attempt to protect her, the following year she did become involved in support for émigré nuns.

The Poor Clares of Gravelines was the next group of Catholic refugees to benefit from Lord Buckingham's philanthropic overtures. It was one of several English convents that re-migrated from France to England in 1795.¹⁰¹ In *The Convents of Great Britain*, Francesca Steele recorded that out of a total of twenty-two English convents abroad just two others were communities of Poor Clares, at Dunkirk and Aire.¹⁰² According to the 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines', from 15 October 1793 the resident nuns had been joined by the Poor Clares of Dunkirk and forty-two Benedictines, making a total of seventy seven.¹⁰³ For eighteen months they were imprisoned together in their convent at Gravelines where the revolutionary forces 'effaced all pictures and tokens of religion, royalty or nobility... and likewise secured all sacred vessels, ornaments and vestments.'¹⁰⁴ Stripped of the symbols of

⁹⁹ Lady Mary Arundell's school record, HL STG Sch-Ed Box 1/L769 explored in Chapter Three, provided evidence that she was in Dorset in 1793 with her parents and was proving to be a bright but difficult child.

¹⁰⁰ HL STG Box 48 (6) John Milner to Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham, 3 August 1794, Winchester.

¹⁰¹ For full list see Bowden (ed.) *English Convents*, vol.6, p.xvii. The Poor Clares had fled to France circa 1609.

¹⁰² F. Steele *The Convents of Great Britain* (St Louis: B. Herder, 1902), p.xiv.

¹⁰³ W.M. Hunnybun, 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines, with notes on the foundations at Aire, Dunkirk and Rouen, 1608-1837', *Publications of the Catholic Record Society*, vol.14, *Miscellanea* 9 (London, 1914), pp.25-173 (p.29).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

their faith, they were made to suffer further degradation by being deprived of their most basic needs, including fuel: ‘they were reduced to the necessity of cutting up the cardboards and wainscoting of the house ... to obtain firing.’¹⁰⁵ Their survival resulted in large part from their being accustomed to physical hardship. As Franciscans, they were members of the most ascetic, contemplative order for women.¹⁰⁶ Entrusting the management of their property to Robert Powell ‘a merchant at Dunkirk’ and claiming ‘the value of the furniture that had been sold’, the refugee Poor Clares of Gravelines sailed from Calais on 30 April 1795 and arrived in London on 3 May 1795.¹⁰⁷ In 1795, according to Bernard Ward, when the Poor Clares arrived, ‘[Lady Buckingham’s] Protestant chaplain [Rev. Holt] visited them on their arrival in London and did much to conduce their comfort’.¹⁰⁸ Whether this was at the marchioness’s request or her husband’s remains open to conjecture; her correspondence suggests the latter.¹⁰⁹

The accommodation offered to fourteen English nuns in cottages at Gosfield accorded with the strict rules of their order:¹¹⁰

their original Rule, which was drawn up for them by St Francis ... was to observe absolute poverty, to possess no property, and to be entirely dependent on the alms of the faithful. Their beds, their food, and their clothing, were all to be of the poorest and simplest description except in times of illness.¹¹¹

Steele recorded that the nuns observed the strictest abstinence, having only one full meal a day, and slept on an inclined board, not a bed.¹¹² With contemplation as their route to salvation, their days and nights were punctuated by prayer.¹¹³ Strictly enclosed, they communicated with visitors through a grille, neither party able to see the other. They walked barefoot in the house, but were permitted to wear sandals in the garden; lay sisters, responsible for begging in the community, were also

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Steele, *Convents*, p.49.

¹⁰⁷ Hunnybun, ‘Registers’, p.28.

¹⁰⁸ Ward, *Catholic Revival*, p.129.

¹⁰⁹ HL STG Box 202 (29) Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham to Mrs Silburn 13 June 1808.

¹¹⁰ Names listed in WDA Diary of Bishop Douglass, 12 October 1795. The nuns renewed their vows, received communion and celebrated Mass three days later: Ibid, 15 October 1795.

¹¹¹ Steele, *Convents*, p.49

¹¹² Herbert Thurston cautioned in ‘Preface’ in *Convents*, p. xx: ‘In a book compiled from data supplied largely by the convents themselves, there is bound perhaps to be some lack of due perspective.’

¹¹³ Steele, *Convents*, p.50.

permitted to wear sandals, but had to cover their indoor white veil with a black one.¹¹⁴

They had been, like other religious orders abroad, an object of curiosity to tourists throughout the eighteenth century. Male and female visitors with an appetite for new and interesting experiences off the beaten track imagined in the Poor Clares questionable practices at sites which afforded a measure of gothic mystery because of their seclusion. As Tonya Moutray has recently pointed out, during Hester Thrale's tour of France in 1775, which had focused almost exclusively on convent-visiting, she had expressed an unfavourable opinion of the English Poor Clares of Gravelines, in comparison with other more worldly and communicative orders.¹¹⁵ She had commented upon their unsavoury appearance: 'coarse habits, bare legs and feet, lack of cleanliness and thin figures.'¹¹⁶ This matched with popular fantasies of convents incarcerating unmarried females, rather than the alternative imagined scenario of beautiful, delicate young women in need of rescue. The deliberate poverty demanded by their faith must have seemed incomprehensible to the struggling rural poor of Gosfield where they were accommodated by the Buckinghams for eighteen years.

Lady Buckingham gave the reason for accommodating them at Gosfield in a letter to Mrs Silburn, landlady of Bishop de la Marche.¹¹⁷ She stated categorically that the idea for housing the nuns had come from the marquess: 'for it was his thought not mine'.¹¹⁸ In the same way that many of her actions were dictated by a desire to please him, his actions stemmed from a desire to secure her happiness whilst simultaneously raising his profile as a philanthropist. The marquess's solicitude had led him to recommend an activity to lift her spirits following the death the preceding November

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.51.

¹¹⁵ T.J. Moutray, *Refugee Nuns, the French Revolution, and British Literature and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp.40-41. The closed nature of the Franciscan community contrasted greatly with the Benedictines of Paris, for example, who were accustomed to dealing with the outside world as educators of the daughters of wealthy English Catholic families such as the Jerninghams.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ HL STG Box 202 (29) Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham to Mrs Silburn 13 June 1808.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Underlining as in the original letter.

of her Aunt Margaret, who had played a key role in her upbringing.¹¹⁹ Looking after the nuns would provide an occupation to distract her from her grief.

I was at that time absolutely heartbroken, Lord B's thought of settling these good Nuns at Gosfield had been a most timely comfort to me, and the best cure that his never ceasing anxious attention to me could have hit upon, for that stupor which heavy affliction produces. It gave me an interesting motive for bestirring myself, and opened to me a new scene at Gosfield.¹²⁰

Letters from the abbess, Emilia Keith, provide a glimpse of the dire straits of this aged community.¹²¹ They show that, contrary to popular belief, although the nuns were accommodated by the Buckingham, they were expected to support themselves by their own endeavour:

our situation renders it impossible for us to help ourselves as others may have an opportunity of doing and find it is of the opinion of many that we are maintained by the Family, which is far from being the case, we have now a bill of £15 to pay for coal which is very heavy article, very dear in these parts as we have several miles to send for it, independent of the price of the coal we pay fourteen shillings for the carriage of every chaldron [sic]¹²²

Following advice from the abbess's correspondent in London, requests were sent to known Catholic sympathisers, the Welds and the Earl of Shrewsbury:¹²³

I should be glad to know if you think it would be advisable for me to write to Mr and Mrs Weld and present to them our present necessities or if it would be more advisable to wait a while in hope they may remember of their own accord. It is now near a year since they have sent us any charity which is very unusual for them¹²⁴

It with great satisfaction that I set down to tell you that your kind advice in regard to my writing to Lord Shrewsbury, has succeeded beyond my expectation, about three posts after I wrote to him I received a letter from Mr and Mrs Talbot wherein he informed me that his Lordship had ordered fifty pounds from his account for our use. ... I shall now please God be able to pay off the apothecary's Bill, our debt for coal¹²⁵

The Buckingham's accommodation of the nuns gave the appearance of aristocratic largesse while costing little and demanding minimal personal involvement: Gosfield and its outbuildings were unfashionable and surplus to requirement. The modesty of

¹¹⁹ See Chapter One of this thesis.

¹²⁰ HL STG Box 202 (29) Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham to Mrs Silburn, 13 June 1808.

¹²¹ DHC D/WLC/C/361: Thirteen letters from Emilia Keith, to Mrs Isabelle Clifton, 22 Duke Street, Manchester Square, London, 1796-1797.

¹²² Ibid, 15 June 1797.

¹²³ The Catholic Charles Talbot (1753-1827), Earl of Shrewsbury, was also an Irish peer: 15th Earl of Waterford.

¹²⁴ DHC D/WLC/C/361, 1796.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

the group of estate cottages in which the nuns were housed conveniently accorded with the ruling of their Order that ‘their monasteries are not to be handsome buildings, but no larger than necessity requires.’¹²⁶ The Franciscan requirement for absolute poverty and dependence on alms absolved the Buckingham of further obligation. They managed to discharge their aristocratic philanthropic duty in a way which appeared unpretentious, yet it ensured sufficient visibility by the unusual nature of the recipients. In 1777 the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan had satirised the emerging fashion for benevolence when Joseph Surface, in *School for Scandal*, observed: ‘There needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense.’¹²⁷ In this, Lord Buckingham succeeded, and at the same time, couching his suggestion in terms of husbandly concern, provided his grieving wife with companions of her own faith.

Gosfield was not the only property belonging to the Buckinghams where surplus accommodation was placed at the disposal of a religious community. Lord Buckingham had been unable to sell or rent Eastbury Park, the Vanburgh-designed mansion in Dorset which he had inherited in 1779. Bellenger noted that the marquess had had most of it demolished in 1782 to reduce costs.¹²⁸ As it lay unoccupied a generous gesture could be made at no personal cost or inconvenience. According to Kerbiriou, when the clergy were obliged to leave Winchester in 1796, the marchioness took the initiative of offering shelter to a large number of them: ‘the marchioness let it be known that ... her husband would give his property in Eastbury to provide accommodation for 200 émigré priests.’¹²⁹

The offer was confirmed by Ward, citing a letter from Milner to Bishop Douglass, 21 Sept 1796.¹³⁰ Ward added that the marquess’s initial reaction had been to give £100 to La Marche to defray removal expenses, after which he had written to the Duke of Portland ‘to suspend the blow if possible, if not for large pecuniary assistance’.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Steele, *Convents*, p.51.

¹²⁷ R.B. Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), p.6. First performed in 1777.

¹²⁸ D. Bellenger, ‘The French Priests at Eastbury’, *South Western Catholic History*, vol.1 (1983), pp.36-8.

¹²⁹ Kerbiriou, *Jean-François de la Marche*, p.415.

¹³⁰ Ward, *Catholic Revival*, pp.163-5.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

Thus, once again, Lord Buckingham made a charitable gesture but showed his belief in collective responsibility. In the event, only eighteen priests lived at Eastbury as the majority moved to Reading and Thame,¹³² but the example shows the marquess and marchioness working as ever in unison.

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested multiple motives for elite support of the émigrés, some of which could readily be classed as ‘sinister’, as defined by George Horne in his sermon of 1788.¹³³ George III’s endorsement of support for the émigré clergy, which emphasised the increasingly ecumenical dimension to charity under his rule, gave Lord Buckingham the encouragement he needed and played into Lady Buckingham’s hand. In Lord Buckingham’s case, personal ambition played a part: gaining visibility through philanthropic gestures served an agenda of political advancement.

Following the second Relief Act in 1791 Lady Buckingham’s Catholicism was no longer problematic and with the arrival of the émigré clergy, her religion became an asset in her husband’s quest for royal recognition. The marchioness had the satisfaction of serving persecuted co-religionists whose behaviour in exile, under the supervision of Bishop de La Marche, was considered exemplary. Her philanthropic activity on their behalf made use of her skills as well as her status and gave her the opportunity to promote her faith from a position of strength.

At the same time as their support for the clergy, the Buckinghams’ recognition of the nature of the problems faced by lay refugees in Jersey displayed an empathy shown by few others. Lord Buckingham’s charitable response was to send money, which helped deal with the immediate problem of poverty, but when sufficient financial support for the longer term did not materialise, Lady Buckingham responded in a practical way: she organised a sustainable scheme. As with the clergy at Winchester, she sought to empower émigrés in Jersey to be responsible for their own survival and that of their dependents by giving them the opportunity to work and expecting them to rise to the challenge. The majority were women of Lady Buckingham’s class, but

¹³² Bellenger, *French Exiled Clergy*, p.78.

¹³³ G. Horne, *Charity Recommended on its True Motive; A Sermon Preached...Before the Governors of the Benevolent Institution for the Delivering of Poor Married Women at Their own Habitations* (Oxford: Prince and Cooler, 1788). See Chapter Two of this thesis.

the motive of aristocratic self-preservation, which looms large in interpretations of British philanthropy during the emigration, needs here to be viewed afresh. The women were all natives of France who may not otherwise have survived; amongst them were those whose life in exile and return to their homeland were marked by a significant change in ideology which had more to do with responsibility than privilege, as the next chapter will show.

Chapter Four: Lay Émigré Needs and Support, 1795-1802

This chapter argues that Lady Buckingham's sustained, proactive commitment to émigré relief, and more especially her response to changes in need, distinguished her from her peers, many of whom were guided principally by kinship obligation.¹ Upon the departure from Winchester of the refractory clergy, the object of her most concentrated philanthropic activity until then, the marchioness increasingly turned her attention to lay émigrés who had been arriving in London from the Channel Isles and the Continent in significant numbers from 1792 onwards. In order to identify how she was responding sensitively to specific needs, a single case study - the Comtesse de Saisseval - is used to illustrate the kind of challenges faced by elite female émigrés and to consider the marchioness's initiatives in the light of the needs discussed. This demonstrates how her charitable response differed from others in its immediacy, practicality, duration and sensitivity to aristocratic pride.

The Comtesse de Saisseval, who was amongst arrivals in London from Holland in January 1795, was the head of a refugee family of the type that philanthropists such as the marchioness stepped in to support. Her personal story throws light on the experience of a noble woman divorced from social and familial contexts facing in straitened circumstances the challenges of fulfilling a function in society. When the loss of wealth and the support of male relatives forced her out of the gendered role to which she was accustomed, she used the remnants of aristocratic privilege and the comforts of religious faith to devise means of survival in exile. At the same time, the necessary links with the outside world as carer and breadwinner obliged her to negotiate the boundaries of acceptable female behaviour while ensuring an appropriate education for her daughters. There is no record of Lady Buckingham and Madame de Saisseval meeting one another but, representing opposite sides of the refugee equation, the two elite women are a telling example of Anglo-French complementarity at a time when the two countries were at war. Mirroring one another, they shared a religious ideology which manifested itself in support for the émigré clergy.

¹ For example, the Harcourts; see L. Mitchell, 'Anglo-French Relations in a Time of Revolution', in E. Chalus and P. Gauci (eds.), *Revisiting the Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp.207-221.

The limited historiography of elite female emigration has tended to focus upon a few major figures, some of whom found their experience in exile inconvenient and worrying rather than devastating. Those with longstanding links with the British gentry and aristocracy could reasonably expect reciprocal hospitality;² any without dependants and with sufficient funds to sustain themselves, at least in the short-term, were at an obvious advantage; individuals with a talent for painting, teaching, writing, singing or, quite simply, sociability, were able to earn a decent living and pass the time agreeably in the company of likeminded exiles, mainly in and around London.³ All these groups have featured in writing on the emigration, most notably in studies by Kirsty Carpenter.⁴ Those who did not conform to the stereotype, individuals whose behaviour was not marked by political and personal intrigues or light-hearted pursuits, are less well represented.

Madame de Saisseval appeared briefly in Carpenter, *Refugees*, as one of a number of aristocratic émigrés living in the select parish of Marylebone between 1795 and 1801. Carpenter noted that some of those residing at this smart London address were able to sustain an existence ‘characterized ... by an elegant sufficiency’.⁵ Indeed, their living conditions may even have been more comfortable than the overcrowded accommodation to which they had been accustomed at the palace and in the city of Versailles, as described by Tony Spawforth and William Newton.⁶ However, as Carpenter pointed out, those whose funds were confiscated, exhausted or inaccessible lived in poverty.⁷ This chapter determines the Comtesse de Saisseval’s

² For example, the Devonshires, the Bessboroughs and the Spencers had all been entertained by the royal family at Versailles and Paris. The Jerningham family was connected to the French nobility through marriage.

³ For example, the court painter Élisabeth Vigée Lebrun (1755-1842) continued to work as an artist in London; Madame de Flahaut (1761-1836) supported herself and her son by writing novels following the execution of her husband; in 1792 Germaine de Staël (1766-1817) entertained political allies at Juniper Hall, Mickleham in Surrey.

⁴ See especially K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London, 1789-1802* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.62.

⁶ See J. Morris, ‘“La Noble Hospitalité”: The Marquess of Buckingham and the Bourbon Court in Exile in the English Country House, 1807-1814’ (unpublished MA thesis, University of Leicester, 2011), p.27; T. Spawforth, *Versailles: Biography of a Palace* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2008), p.145; See W.R. Newton, *L’Espace du Roi: La Cour de France au Château de Versailles, 1682-1789* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), for the configuration of the court and the allocation of rooms and apartments.

⁷ ‘Twenty-nine percent of émigrés who received relief registered themselves as having Marylebone addresses’: Carpenter, *Refugees*, p.65. Marquis de Lastic, *Chronique de la Maison de Lastic d’après les Archives du Château de Parentignat et Quelques Autres Documents*, 3 vols (Montpellier: Firmin et

place within this group and the part played by Lady Buckingham in the support of such women. It differs from extant interpretations based on personal recollections by examining the afterlife of the comtesse's story as an example of practical elite piety.

There is enough evidence to suggest that the Saisseval family was not an isolated or exaggerated example of the type of family group arriving in England in urgent need of support. The three-generational unit included the comtesse's mother, Anne-Charron de Menars, Comtesse de Lastic (1733-1819), lady-in-waiting to Mesdames Tantes, aunts of Louis XVI;⁸ her husband, Claude-Jean-Henri, Comte de Saisseval (1755-1799), a young officer, who suffered a head injury in battle; and finally, their five children, two of whom were born and died in exile. All under the age of ten when they arrived in England, the youngest child was just thirteen days old.⁹ A wet nurse accompanied the group.¹⁰

By the time of their arrival in England in January 1795 government and voluntary resources for refugee aid were already overstretched. The demand on charitable funds intensified still further when the émigré army was defeated at the battle of Quiberon on 21 July 1795: in addition to the casualties of war, an unknown number of war widows and their children needed additional support, especially in London where most families had settled. This marks an important turning point in the allocation of relief: it resulted in the formation of a female charity specifically for the support of women and children. The Marchioness of Buckingham played a central role in the establishment of the Committee of Ladies for the Relief of French Female Emigrants and was an active participant in its schemes. The Comtesse de Saisseval initially did not claim help from the Ladies Committee but when her funds ran out she qualified for an allowance from this source.¹¹ Meanwhile she continued to

Montaigne, 1919-1921), vol.3, p.346, gave the comtesse's address as 1 Portland Street, Marylebone. An undated letter, SRO D641/3/P/3/10/176, Madame de Saisseval to Lady Jerningham gave a different address: 'Little Mary le bone Street no. 31 Scotland [?] Place'.

⁸ Principally Marie-Adélaïde (1732-1800) and Marie-Louise-Thérèse-Victoire (1733-1799).

⁹ <Gw.geneanet.org> [accessed 16 January 2017]: Aline (1784-1824); Félicité (1785-1814); Séraphine (1790-1834); a boy, name unknown (1793-1795); a boy, name unknown (1794-1795).

¹⁰ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.340.

¹¹ M. Weiner, *The French Exiles, 1789-1815* (London: John Murray, 1960), p.111.

attempt to support her family by making items to sell, an endeavour in which, like many other émigrés, she was helped by the marchioness who arranged for their sale.

The recreation of this facet of emigration history has relied on a collection of partial sources, including scant references to Madame de Saisseval in *The Jerningham Letters*, the correspondence between the Norfolk Catholic, Frances, Lady Jerningham, née Dillon (1747-1809), and her daughter Charlotte Georgiana, Lady Bedingfeld, née Jerningham (1770-1854). The editor, Egerton Castle, dismissed the Saisseval family as insignificant;¹² nevertheless, brief mentions provide an insight into issues faced by the comtesse in exile and the support she was offered.

Unpublished letters from Madame de Saisseval and one of her daughters reveal a far greater dependence on Lady Jerningham than Castle implied.¹³ In contrast to Castle's dismissive treatment, Cecilia Caddell based a fanciful, moralizing tale on Madame de Saisseval's 'biography'.¹⁴ Serialised in *Irish Monthly* in 1875, it extolled the comtesse's religious faith as a source of strength in the same way that Catholic didactic writing had elevated Lady Buckingham's 'conversion'.¹⁵ The strongest claim that Madame de Saisseval's faith equipped her with fortitude in the face of hardship is found in *L'Héritière du Vœu*, by the hagiographer Claire Auberive, which links the comtesse with Madame Élisabeth, sister of Louis XVI.¹⁶ Whilst it does not stand up to academic scrutiny, it provides evidence of the afterlife of her story and contains elements of verifiable fact. For example, Auberive referred to the Lastic dossier held at the Archives Nationales, Paris.¹⁷ She claimed to have had access to original Lastic family papers, yet her narrative was based on the family history, *Chronique de la Maison de Lastic*, which had been published over twenty years earlier.¹⁸

¹² E. Castle (ed.), *The Jerningham Letters, 1780-1843*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1896), vol.1, p.118, editorial note.

¹³ SRO D641/3/P/3/10/168-180: Letters from Félicité de Saisseval and her mother to Lady Jerningham, 7 October 1799 to 8 February 1801.

¹⁴ C. Caddell, 'Madame de Saisseval', *The Irish Monthly*, 3 (1875), pp.287-291, 357-361, 386-89, 466-470 and 561-570 (p. 290). Caddell did not name the biographer.

¹⁵ See Chapter One.

¹⁶ On microfiche at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. The Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire Sainte Geneviève, Paris, allowed access to its hard copy in 2016.

¹⁷ Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.152; AN, Papiers d'Origine Privée, vol.3, Séquestrés des Particuliers. T//414 (2), Accounts and Receipts of the Comtesse de Lastic.

¹⁸ Lastic, *Chronique*.

The Marquis de Lastic's *Chronique*, a reactionary early twentieth-century account which idealises female Catholic piety, spans six centuries and seventeen generations of the Lastic family, ending with the death and legacy of Charlotte-Hélène de Sieujac de Lastic, Comtesse de Saisseval. The priority given to her story testifies to the esteem in which she was held by the writer, her great-great-nephew: the fifth chapter of the third volume provides a full account of her life.¹⁹ In addition to the family archive, Lastic relied on the notebooks of Adèle, Comtesse de Falaiseau (1796-1879) to complement the version of events presented by Madame de Saisseval's biographer, le R.P. de Pontlevoy.²⁰ He also drew attention to a published account of the life in exile of Adélaïde de Kerjean, Marquise de Falaiseau (1760-1812), mother of the writer of the notebooks.²¹ Émigré memoirs such as this supply background information through anecdotes touching on episodes in the comtesse's life. In addition, insights into her financial plight can be found in the memoirs of her cousin, Stephanie-Béatrix d'Amblimont, Marquise de Lage de Volude (1764-1842), former lady-in-waiting to the Princesse de Lamballe.²²

The charitable response of Lady Buckingham to lay émigré need is pieced together from references in contemporary French histories of the emigration, such as Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, émigré memoirs including Walsh, *Souvenirs*, and isolated comments in published correspondence of, among others, William Wyndham Grenville.²³ Two versions of a Ladies Committee report corroborate much of the evidence.²⁴

¹⁹ Ibid., vol.3, especially pp.317-369.

²⁰ Ibid., p.318, footnote: the marquis referred to three notebooks (copies) written when the Comtesse de Falaiseau was in her eighties; Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*.

²¹ H. Vicomte de Broc, *Dix Ans de la Vie d'une Femme Pendant l'Émigration, Adélaïde de Kerjean, Marquise de Falaiseau* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1894).

²² B.S. de Lage de Volude, *Souvenirs d'Émigration de Madame la Marquise de Lage de Volude* (Évreux: Auguste Hérissey, 1869).

²³ L'Abbé de Lubersac, *Journal Historique et Religieuse de l'Émigration et Déportation du Clergé de France en Angleterre* (London: Cox, Fils et Bayliss, 1802); Vicomte de Walsh, *Souvenirs de Cinquante Ans* (Paris: Bureau de la Mode, 1845); Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue Esq., Preserved at Dropmore*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1892-1899).

²⁴ SCA WWM/P/16/3: *Committee of Ladies for the Relief of French Female Emigrants* (report) (London: E. Lloyd, 1796); *A Short Account of the Charity Established for the Relief of Female Emigrants, Under the Patronage of her Royal Highness the Duchess of York* (London, E. Lloyd, 1797).

French Aristocratic Piety: Religion as an Emotional Resource

A study of the Comtesse de Saisseval's pre-revolutionary life allows for a fuller understanding of her circumstances and ideals. Born into a wealthy family whose country seat was at Parentignat in the Auvergne, her formative years were spent at the court of Mesdames Tantes at the Château de Bellevue, Meudon, shadowing her mother by whom she was educated.²⁵ Accounts of her adult life emphasised her high status: Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette and other members of the royal family, including the Comte d'Artois (the future Charles X), were signatories at her marriage to the Comte de Saisseval at the palace of Versailles on 12 May 1782.²⁶ The record in Lastic's *Chronique* of her trousseau and dowry allow us to gauge the extent of her subsequent loss.²⁷ Upon marriage she was appointed to the court of Mesdames Tantes, alongside her mother.²⁸ Her father, Francois IV, Comte de Lastic (1729-1794), a veteran general estranged from his wife, disapproved of his daughter's marriage and had refused to attend the ceremony.²⁹ This was the first in a series of losses of male familial support which would make her increasingly dependent on her female network.

Recent scholarship on Madame Élisabeth's all female court at Montreuil is suggestive of a revival of interest in the cultivated, accomplished, and deeply religious princess and her circle.³⁰ According to Jean de Viguerie, *Sacrifice du Soir*, a recent biography of the princess, the Comtesse de Saisseval's short but crucial interaction with Madame Élisabeth began with a brief meeting as children on a visit to the Carmelite convent of St Denis.³¹ They met again at the Château de Bellevue, where the comtesse was serving as lady-in-waiting to Madame Victoire.³² At

²⁵ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, pp.5-7; Auberive, *L'Héritière du Voeu*, pp.17-32.

²⁶ For the cost of ceremony at Saint Sulpice, see Lastic, *Chronique*, p.326. For undated miniatures of the couple, see 'Miniatures of the Comtesse and Comte de Saisseval' <gazette-drouot.com/lots/9427811> [accessed 19 January 2020].

²⁷ For the comtesse's dowry and trousseau, see Lastic, *Chronique*, pp.323, 326.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.328.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.322-3.

³⁰ M. de Huertas, *Madame Élisabeth, Sœur Martyr de Louis XVI* (1985; Paris: Pygmalion, 2009); J. de Viguerie, *Le Sacrifice du Soir: Vie et Mort de Madame Élisabeth, Sœur de Louis XVI* (2010; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012); A. Bernet, *Madame Élisabeth, Sœur de Louis XVI* (Paris: Tallandier, 2013); Exhibition catalogue: J. Trey (ed.), *Madame Élisabeth : Une Princesse au Destin Tragique, 1764-1794* (Versailles: SilvanaEditoriale, 2013).

³¹ Viguerie, *Sacrifice*, p.53.

³² *Ibid.*

Madame Élisabeth's request, the comtesse was appointed as a supernumerary to her newly formed court in the spring of 1785.³³ Evidence suggests that her experience at Montreuil helped her to cope with the hardship of exile by strengthening her religious faith and exposing her to solutions to problems of sickness and poverty, albeit within the restricted parameters of court life. The charitable, practical application of religious duty was central to the daily routine at Montreuil which was managed in deliberate contrast to the Petit Trianon where the perceived excesses of Marie-Antoinette had fuelled public discontent.³⁴ With her courtiers' assistance, Madame Élisabeth provided the village poor with daily milk and vegetables from the farm she ran for their benefit.³⁵ A dispensary for the poor was also established in a room in her mansion.³⁶

Just as with Lady Buckingham, whose adolescent affirmation of her Catholic faith in large part determined her future self, accounts of Madame de Saisseval's religious life suggest that there was a specific moment at which her Catholic faith crystallised. Religious conviction as a source of strength became the leitmotif of her life-story. Basing her version on Pontlevoy, Auberive linked the profound spiritual efflorescence that pervaded the comtesse's adult life directly to her association with the 'angelic' princess Élisabeth.³⁷ Accepting Auberive's account, Viguerie recorded that the comtesse 'converted' following a novena which Madame Élisabeth had encouraged her to undertake in February 1789.³⁸ Then, on 1 May 1789 she had dedicated her life to God 'avec un abandon total'.³⁹ Viguerie asserted that Madame de Saisseval was 'probably' the first member of the 'association' of likeminded courtiers formed by Madame Élisabeth in July 1789.⁴⁰

³³ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.10; Lastic, *Chronique*, p. 330; Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.64; Bernet, *Madame Élisabeth*, p.125.

³⁴ A. Chery, 'La Vertu de Madame Élisabeth: Montreuil, un Anti-Trianon?', in Trey (ed.), *Madame Élisabeth*, pp.27-31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.27; Viguerie, *Sacrifice*, p.56. See Richard Fleury (1777-1852), *Madame Élisabeth Assistant à la Distribution de Lait* (1816), [oil on canvas], depicting Madame Élisabeth providing orphans with milk at Montreuil in Trey (ed.), *Madame Élisabeth*, pp.80-1.

³⁶ Viguerie, *Sacrifice*, p.56.

³⁷ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.10. Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.64.

³⁸ Viguerie, *Sacrifice*, p.90.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The following year, Madame de Saisseval was present with the royal family at a service in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame on 10 February,⁴¹ during which Louis XVI ‘consecrate[d] himself, his family, and his kingdom to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.’⁴² Madame Élisabeth sent to her friend, the Marquise de Bombelles (who had already emigrated) a copy of a pledge of dedication to France which the King, the Queen and the whole congregation repeated.⁴³ For Raymond Jonas, this was one of several ‘stories’ about the spiritual life of Louis XVI that ‘fit well with the known facts’.⁴⁴ The service of dedication has been accepted as the origin of the princess’s vow which was formalised in July 1790, the month of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.⁴⁵ An ex-voto, an iconographic coupling of two gold-plated hearts, deposited in Chartres Cathedral on 29 September 1790, provides material evidence of the courtiers’ oath of allegiance to king and country.⁴⁶

The text of the princess’s vow has disappeared (‘le texte a malheureusement disparu’),⁴⁷ so its exact nature cannot be substantiated, but the terms provided by Pontlevoy, Lastic and Auberive have been reiterated by present day historians.⁴⁸

Auberive’s version stated:

Elles promettent de consacrer une somme aussi considérable que la position de chacune le permettra pour être employé à la bonne œuvre qui paraîtra le plus agréable à Dieu... Elles promettent aussi d’ériger un autel dédié au Cœur Immaculé de Marie et de fonder un salut le premier samedi de chaque mois en reconnaissance de la grâce obtenu... Enfin l’on s’engage à procurer l’éducation chrétienne d’un garçon et d’une fille pauvres.⁴⁹

[The signatories] promise to devote as considerable a sum of money as each one’s rank allows to whichever good cause would seem most pleasing to God... They promise to erect an altar to the Sacred Heart of Mary and to give thanks the first Saturday of every month in recognition of the grace obtained... Finally they commit to ensuring the Christian education of a poor boy and girl.

⁴¹ Date obtained from ‘Les Œuvres’ in Trey (ed.), *Madame Élisabeth*, pp.32-83 (p. 60): ‘The service was recorded in the chapter house register at Notre-Dame.’ The presence of Madame de Saisseval was noted in R. Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2000), p.92.

⁴² Jonas, *Sacred Heart*, p.92.

⁴³ ‘Les Œuvres’, p.60: Madame Élisabeth à Madame de Bombelles, 12 February 1790. Angélique-Charlotte de Mackau, Marquise de Bombelles (1762-1800) was the daughter of Madame Élisabeth’s governess.

⁴⁴ Jonas, *Sacred Heart*, p.93.

⁴⁵ Viguerie, *Sacrifice*, p.91.

⁴⁶ ‘Les Œuvres’, p.60.

⁴⁷ Auberive, *L’Héritière du Vœu*, p.135.

⁴⁸ Lastic, *Chronique*, pp.333-4; Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, pp.15-16 ; Viguerie, *Sacrifice*, p.91; Bernet, *Madame Élisabeth*, p.250.

⁴⁹ Auberive, *L’Héritière du Vœu*, pp.136-7.

As Madame Élisabeth had encouraged her courtiers to leave the country for their own safety, most, including Madame de Saisseval, had already left when the vow was formalised.⁵⁰ With her three infant daughters, the comtesse joined her husband, who was serving with his regiment in Normandy.⁵¹ By July 1790 she was living in Valognes where she received a copy of the vow from her friend, Madame de Carcado (1755-1808), former lady-in-waiting to Marie-Antoinette.⁵² The vow, to which the Comtesse de Saisseval committed, shaped her activity in exile and on her return to France. In 1791, ‘the good cause pleasing to God’ that she and Madame de Carcado decided upon, was providing financial support to those clergy who had refused to sign the Oath of the Clergy on 27 November 1790.⁵³ Pontlevoy’s version stated:

Les sommes partielles réunis à l’époque indiquée montèrent à 60,000 francs. Madame de Saisseval, alors émigrée, ne manqua pas de faire parvenir à son amie demeurée en France la contribution promise... la bonne œuvre fut bientôt trouvée: cette somme, distribuée à des prêtres fidèles en péril de mort, permit à un grand nombre de se réfugier sur une terre étrangère moins ingrate que la patrie.⁵⁴

The partial sums collected by the time agreed came to 60,000 francs. Madame de Saisseval, who had emigrated, did not fail to send to her friend who had remained in France the contribution she had promised ... the good cause was soon found: this sum, distributed to faithful priests whose lives were in danger, enabled a large number to seek refuge in a foreign country that was more humane than their homeland.

This introduction of a lay figure whose ideology related specifically to the preservation of the religion of France through active support of the refractory clergy diversifies accounts of the emigration and links her to Lady Buckingham in the chain of support.

The Comtesse de Saisseval helped to finance émigré clergy journeys despite her own difficult circumstances. Sources relating to the period of the Saisseval family’s exile in the Low Countries provide fragmentary, sometimes contradictory information,

⁵⁰ Diane Louise Augustine, Comtesse de Polignac (1746 -1818), principal lady-in-waiting to Madame Élisabeth since 7 May 1778, left on 16 July 1789; the Marquise de Bombelles left for Germany in July 1789. See J. Trey, ‘Une Place Chez Moi’: La Maison de Madame Élisabeth’, in Trey (ed.), *Madame Élisabeth*, pp.153-157 (p.157).

⁵¹ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.15.

⁵² Madame de Carcado (1755-1808) was subsequently imprisoned for eight months. Upon her release in 1794 she retired to the Château de Faures where she devoted herself to the care of children orphaned during the Revolution. See M-L Bathélemy (ed.), *Pierre-J de Clorivière, Adelaïde de Cicé, Lettres de Prison, 1804-1806* (Paris: Beauchesne Éditeur, 1997), fn. p.18.

⁵³ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, pp.16-17. See also: Lastic, *Chronique*, p.334; Auberive, *L’Héritière du Vœu*, p.140.

⁵⁴ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, pp.16-17.

which serves to highlight the fallibility of memory but also evokes the chaos and confusion of family groups on the move under the threat of attack by the advancing republican army.⁵⁵ It is possible to outline the family's movements by piecing these together. In December 1791, the Comte de Saisseval, who had served as a Colonel in the 'gendarmes anglais' and in the cavalry,⁵⁶ resigned his post with his entire cohort of officers ('donna sa démission avec tout son corps d'officiers'),⁵⁷ and travelled with his family via Valenciennes to present-day Belgium.⁵⁸ A letter to Charles Alexandre Calonne (1734-1802) confirms Saisseval's presence in the émigré army in Brussels in April 1792,⁵⁹ by which time the family group in exile included the Comtesse de Lastic, mother of the Comtesse de Saisseval.⁶⁰ The Comte de Lastic, who had never willingly supported his wife at home or in exile, died a disillusioned man at Parentignat in 1794.⁶¹

Lastic admitted to confusion over the Saisseval family's movements at this time,⁶² but it is probable that the advance of the republican army forced them to flee towards Holland in 1792. It is possible that the Comte de Saisseval was injured in battle that year, as Auberive suggested, but this has not been substantiated.⁶³ She then recorded that in Maastricht, the capital of Limbourg, in the winter of 1793, Madame de Saisseval's first son was born, and that in February the following year the city was under attack by republican forces.⁶⁴ Lastic suggested that the Comte de Saisseval was seriously wounded ('grièvement blessé') during the Siege of Maastricht (19 September to 14 November 1794).⁶⁵ Whichever date is correct, when the young officer suffered a life-changing head injury ('cette blessure à la tête porta à ses

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.18-19; Lastic, *Chronique*, pp.335-339; Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, pp.153-169; For examples of routes to England via the continent see K. Carpenter and P. Mansel, *The French Émigrés in Europe and the Struggle against the Revolution* (New York, St Martin's Press, 1999).

⁵⁶ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.323.

⁵⁷ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.18.

⁵⁸ Ibid.; Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.150. According to Lastic, *Chronique*, p.335, the Saisseval family hoped that Louis XVI would join them.

⁵⁹ TNA PC 1/126/58: Le Comte de Saisseval, Colonel commandant du Régiment de L'Isle de France, commandant en Second du Cantonnement de Stavelot, à Calonne. Bruxelles, 9 avril 1792.

⁶⁰ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.18.

⁶¹ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.266.

⁶² Ibid., p.338

⁶³ Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.160.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.162.

⁶⁵ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.338.

facultés mentales une atteinte dont il ne releva jamais')⁶⁶ while serving with the *Armée des Princes*, the deeply religious former courtier found herself at the head of the displaced family.

A second son, her fifth child, was born in Holland on 31 December 1794,⁶⁷ when temperatures were recorded as sub-zero, descending to minus 11° C at the beginning of January.⁶⁸ The comtesse did not leave an account of her confinement,⁶⁹ but it can reasonably be assumed that she suffered the same ordeal as that recorded by the Marquise de Falaiseau in Broc, *Dix Ans*: both women gave birth in lodgings in Holland immediately prior to fleeing to England.⁷⁰ Madame de Ménéville described in her *Souvenirs*, the experience of similarly situated female aristocrats, providing glimpses of the impact of military action on women and children and on the mental and physical state of refugee families on the move.⁷¹ Whatever the actual circumstances of the birth of Madame de Saisseval's fifth child, it is clear that the citizens of Holland hesitated to help the émigrés for fear of reprisals, and the family was not safe. To finance their escape to England, according to Broc, *Dix Ans*, Madame Victoire sent a pearl necklace, an indication of the continuation of female courtly networks.⁷² The account of the Saissevals' hazardous journey was one of many similar accounts recording sickness, hunger and cold, but no others have been recycled to the same extent, evidence of the significance attached to her story by later generations of Catholics.

By the time the Comtesse de Saisseval arrived in England with her family, the imperative of adhering to the pledge she had made was even stronger than at the

⁶⁶ Ibid. His 'madness' ('folie') manifested itself as an inability to recognize his family, a belief that everyone wanted to assassinate him, and a desire to be armed at all times. Lastic described his behaviour as 'dangerous and menacing'.

⁶⁷ Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.168.

⁶⁸ Amsterdam. Data from KNMI (Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut).

⁶⁹ Her 'Souvenirs' were referred to several times in Lastic, *Chronique*, but not directly quoted or referenced.

⁷⁰ Broc, *Dix Ans*, pp.206-208 and p.217. The Marquise de Falaiseau's departure for England was delayed because of the late stage of her pregnancy. Her child was Adèle de Falaiseau (1795-1879) who subsequently devoted herself to acts of charity, in particular in support of abandoned children. Through this work she became an associate and friend of the Comtesse de Saisseval. See Lastic, *Chronique*, pp.318-19, fn.2.

⁷¹ Madame de Ménéville, *Souvenirs d'Émigration (1791-1797)* (Paris: [n.pub.], 1934), p.165.

⁷² Broc, *Dix Ans*, p.263.

outset since the princess who had inspired it had been executed. The guillotining of the devout Madame Élisabeth on 10 May 1794 provoked a horrified response in England: ‘The detestation such an action deserves, it is not in the power of language to express.’⁷³ Vicomte de Walsh copied an account that Madame de Saisseval received in a letter and circulated it amongst émigrés in London.⁷⁴ The profound impact of the princess’s execution on émigré ideology can be gauged from Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, in which appeared a full account of the event.⁷⁵ It is fitting that Lubersac should have published news of the manner of her death: he had reason to be personally grateful to her as she had warned him in 1792 that his name was on the list of proscribed clergy and he was able to escape to Luxembourg, then to England.⁷⁶ Some consequences of the princess’s death were political: she had been a courageous and inventive accomplice for the royalist cause, smuggling letters in and out of the Temple;⁷⁷ others were personal: it had a devastating effect on members of the royal family, particularly on the Comtes de Provence and d’Artois, her brothers.⁷⁸ Her loss affected royalist morale and led to a strengthening of military resolve to restore the monarchy.

The Coping Strategies of French Military Wives in Exile

Royalist resolve was backed by the Prime Minister, William Pitt, who had hopes of ‘a humiliated France coming to terms under pressure of revolt and invasion’.⁷⁹ As a result, when the Comtesse de Saisseval arrived in England with other families fleeing from Holland, plans by the *Armée des Princes* to encourage revolt in Brittany were already underway. Within months she found herself caring for her sick husband and their five children amidst an increasing number of émigré women coping alone with displaced families: dependents were left behind when many émigrés who had been living in London for up to five years set off for the Quiberon Peninsula in June

⁷³ *St James Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 17-20 May 1794, issue 5679.

⁷⁴ Walsh, *Souvenirs*, pp.197-9, in Auberive, *L’Héritière du Voeu* (fn. pp.163-5).

⁷⁵ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, pp.252-8.

⁷⁶ Weiner, *French Exiles*, p.116.

⁷⁷ HL STO Box 3 (301): Henry Essex, Abbé Edgeworth de Firmont (1745-1807) to Ussher Edgeworth, 1 September 1796 (copy).

⁷⁸ Bernet, *Madame Élisabeth*, p.465: ‘Provence was so distressed that he was unable to speak for three days and the grief of the Comte d’Artois was even worse.’

⁷⁹ W. Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (London and New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), p.371.

1795.⁸⁰ The aim was to restore the monarchy but divisions and confusion in the royalist command led to the failure of the invasion, despite the support of several thousand *chouans*, disillusioned peasants of western France.⁸¹ The battle commenced on 27 June 1795; by 22 July the combined émigré and *chouan* forces had been defeated by republican troops.⁸² The impact of the defeat on the émigré demographic was noted by Carpenter;⁸³ its effect on British attitudes towards refugee aid was flagged up by Shaw.⁸⁴ A close look at the numbers involved allows for an appreciation of the intensity of the impact. On 27 June, 3,600 émigré soldiers had disembarked near the promontory of Quiberon. Under attack, 1,800 managed to escape on the boats of the British fleet. However, 5,000 *chouans* and 1,000 émigrés were captured by the republicans. 690 émigrés were tried by court martial and sentenced to death; others died in prison.⁸⁵

Elite female reaction to male absence, then injury or death, was as dependent on their temperament, health and contacts as it was on ideology. In contrast to the Comtesse de Saisseval, Pauline, Duchesse de Lévis, made the most of opportunities for socialising and travel when her husband was serving with the *Armée des Princes*.⁸⁶ On the eve of Quiberon, Gaston, Duc de Lévis expressed concern that if he died in battle, his children would be deprived of a good father, an essential anchor of the status quo.⁸⁷ When he returned relatively unscathed, he resumed his place at the head of the family and issued a warning to safeguard the interests of their two children:

⁸⁰ Families who followed the émigré army perished during the retreat: Walsh, *Cinquante Ans*, pp.77-8.

⁸¹ This was the last time the British government supported the counter-revolutionary army. See also W. Doyle *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 308-14. The Comte de Provence had proclaimed himself titulaire King of France upon the death in captivity of the ten year old Louis XVII on 8 June 1795.

⁸² F. Furet and M. Ouzof (eds.), *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1989), pp.1-10.

⁸³ Carpenter, *Refugees*, pp.90-3.

⁸⁴ Shaw, *Britannia's Embrace*, pp.38-9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.38 citing A. Ward, G. Prothero and S. Leathes (eds.), *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 8, *The French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), pp.391-2. Doyle, *French Revolution* gave a figure of 640 émigrés and 108 *chouans* being shot.

⁸⁶ Pierre-Marc-Gaston, 2nd Duc de Lévis (1755-1830); Pauline-Louise-Françoise de Paule d'Ennery, Duchesse de Lévis (1771-1829). Letters were addressed to her in London, Bath, Chesterfield and Bowood, country seat of William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne, 1st Marquess of Lansdowne (1737-1805), Prime Minister 1782-1783.

⁸⁷ C. Pailhès (ed.), *Gaston de Lévis, Écrire la Révolution 1784-1795: Lettres à Pauline* (Cahors: La Louve, 2011), p.516: 17 June 1795.

J'imagine que si vous ne tenez guère à moi, vous tenez beaucoup à vos enfants et comme je serais infiniment fâché pour eux qu'ils soient privés de leur mère qui a tous les moyens de les bien élever, un jour surtout, lorsque l'âge et l'expérience auront mûri ses qualités et augmenté sa raison, je ne vous en séparerais qu'autant que mon devoir m'obligerait, et c'est ce qui, j'espère n'arrivera jamais.⁸⁸

I imagine that even if you don't much care for me, you care a lot about your children and as I would be extremely cross if they were deprived of their mother who is well-equipped to bring them up well, especially one day, when age and experience will have matured her qualities and improved her reason, I will not separate you from them more than my duty demands, which I hope will never happen.

However, many women, including Madame de Saisseval, remained bound to husbands who were no longer able to support them causing a reversal of roles to which they had to adapt. Absence, injury and loss in war were nothing new, but in this context it was much harder, as the women were uprooted, alone and without support.

Heads of family who did not recover, and their dependents, became reliant on limited aid which they had to demonstrate they deserved. Shaw observed in *Britannia's Embrace*: 'the provision of relief to French exiles drew upon the precedent of compensation for Loyalists'; each case was 'ranked on a finely calibrated scale of sacrifice and devotion to the British cause.'⁸⁹ In this way, she noted: 'the British state rewarded those who might assist in the fight against the revolutionary threat.'⁹⁰ To this end a much-contested Enlistment Act was passed in 1794, 'to enable subjects of France to enlist as soldiers'.⁹¹ The 'offer' was accepted, with the disastrous results at Quiberon recounted above. Obliging male émigrés to enlist in return for financial support backfired: it dramatically increased the number of relief claimants without restoring order to France. Apart from the disruption to relationships, suffering was inflicted on refugee families whether their menfolk survived or not. As a result of physical injury, mental damage and loss of life during this campaign, increased

⁸⁸ Pailhès, *Lettres à Pauline*, p.549, undated.

⁸⁹ Shaw, *Britannia's Embrace*, p.35.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ R.B. Sheridan, *Speeches of the Late Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (London: Patrick Martin, 1816), vol.3, pp.321-7.

support was urgently needed for émigré widows and their children as well as wives and their wounded husbands, many of whom were left unable to work.⁹²

To make sense of the Comtesse de Saisseval's activity in exile, Pontlevoy, Lastic and Auberive perpetuated the belief that her steadfast royalist views and deep-seated religious faith, sealed by the Vow of Madame Élisabeth, gave her a resilience that others lacked. The vow was an affirmation of the responsibility that was an intrinsic part of both her rank and her Catholicism and led her to continue the support she had pledged to the refractory clergy. Her royalist allegiance to the Church of France dictated the way she spent her time. For example, a room in her lodgings at 1 Portland Street, Marylebone served as a chapel and as a meeting place for émigré clergy, some of whose journeys to England she had helped to finance.⁹³ Lastic and Broc noted that even bishops came there to celebrate Mass, an indication of the preservation of her status in exile.⁹⁴ She later undertook the small but symbolic task of laundering altar cloths and dressing the émigré church, the Chapel of the Annunciation.⁹⁵ Alongside the fulfilment of her religious duty, like many other impoverished aristocratic émigrés, she had to devise ways of managing without her familiar network of support.⁹⁶

Appeals for financial assistance suggest elite self-help in exile through a continuation of female courtly networks, albeit reconfigured as a result of geographic dispersal and multiple executions. Relying on a kinship link, the Comtesse de Lastic wrote to her niece, the Marquise de Lage de Volude, in April 1798 when the Comtesse de Saisseval, who had given birth to a full-term stillborn child on 20 December 1797, was unable to pay her rent.⁹⁷ Reluctant appeals by the Comtesse de Lastic to the marquise between 1798 and 1800 indicate that she had made similar requests before. At her niece's suggestion she approached Madame de Polastron, mistress of the

⁹² Carpenter, *Refugees*, pp.90-3. DHC D/WLC/R/6 Committee for the Relief of the French Refugee Clergy and Laity (Report) (8 March 1796) recorded 'more than 80 lying-in women' and their children in need of support.

⁹³ Lastic, *Chronique*, pp.345-346.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; Broc, *Dix Ans*, p.264.

⁹⁵ Walsh, *Souvenirs*, p.62. The church was consecrated in 1799.

⁹⁶ The fortunes of the Comtesses de Saisseval and de Lastic were shared with the nation: Lage de Volude, *Souvenirs*, p.cxlvi: Madame de Lastic to the Marquise de Lage de Volude, 9 May 1800.

⁹⁷ Lage de Volude, *Souvenirs*, p.cxlii: Mme de Lastic to Mme de Lage de Volude, 9 April 1798.

Comte d'Artois, 'who immediately sent fifteen louis' ('[qui] a envoyé sur le champ quinze louis').⁹⁸ Such support was recorded as characteristic of elite (French) generosity.⁹⁹ Similar handouts are likely to have helped the Comtesse de Saisseval pay for her war-wounded husband's care, 'free of charge in a nursing home' ('dans une maison de santé, et cela gratuitement') according to Lastic;¹⁰⁰ 'with the help of a few devoted friends' ('par l'entremise de quelques amis dévoués'), according to Auberive.¹⁰¹

Many English Catholic families provided support to their French co-religionists, however slight their acquaintance. Enjoying new rights following the Relief Acts, they were not necessarily as discreet in their generosity as their French counterparts and, in the case of Lady Jerningham, charitable intervention suggests an element of self-aggrandisement. Her kindness towards the Saisseval family was remarked upon briefly by Castle in *The Jerningham Letters*.¹⁰² She was one of number of women who helped individual refugees, some of whom were her relatives. Having met the Comtesse de Saisseval during a pre-revolutionary visit to Paris,¹⁰³ notions of genteel politeness dictated her support: on several occasions she offered the Saisseval family periods of respite at Costessey, her country seat in Norfolk.¹⁰⁴

Lady Jerningham, popularly known as 'her Catholic Majesty', frequently hosted at her London home a circle of aristocratic and gentry 'agitators in favour of Catholic emancipation'.¹⁰⁵ The circle was considerably enlarged at low cost by the arrival of impoverished émigrés in the capital. Lady Jerningham wrote to her daughter shortly after the arrival of the Comtesse de Saisseval in England: 'Our *Société* goes on very well, I like to have several People in the House, and a multitude cannot be had Cheaper than with the unfortunate French: no Servants, no Horses, no Drinkings.'¹⁰⁶ In the same letter she noted: 'Mde de Saisseval belongs to my neighbourhood and we

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.cxli. Louise d'Esparbès, Comtesse de Polastron (1764-1804).

⁹⁹ Vicomte de Reiset, *Louise d'Esparbès, Comtesse de Polastron* (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1907), p.262.

¹⁰⁰ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.341.

¹⁰¹ Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.171.

¹⁰² Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.118, editorial note.

¹⁰³ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.23.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.23-4; Lastic, *Chronique*, p.342; Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.179.

¹⁰⁵ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.88, editorial note.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.95: Lady Jerningham to Lady Bedingfield, Summer 1795.

Commune together occasionally,¹⁰⁷ showing that from the outset they were in contact with one another. During these early days, she provided the comtesse with an opportunity to make money from her talent for reading aloud.¹⁰⁸ Unbeknown to the performer, guests invited to Lady Jerningham's salon were charged a guinea to hear a recital by the comtesse who, to her chagrin, was then given the money donated.¹⁰⁹

Madame de Saisseval's discomfort is one example among many. In émigré memoirs there are frequent references to embarrassment at accepting support. Madame de Gontaut-Biron, referred to the obstacle of their 'discreet pride' ('discrète fierté') and Madame de Ménerville wrote that it 'pained her to owe so much to strangers' ('mon cœur ... souffrait de devoir tant de gratitude à des étrangers').¹¹⁰ Unlike Madame de Polastron, whose private gift of money to the Comtesse de Lastic was a mark of 'refined benevolence' and 'delicate generosity',¹¹¹ Lady Jerningham, while fulfilling her charitable obligations, did not heed the sensibilities of the object of her concern. Catholics in England were enjoying an increasingly open sociability and she saw associating with aristocratic émigrés such as the comtesse as adding to her social consequence and éclat. Although feminine modesty may have played a part in Madame de Saisseval's reluctance to perform, aristocratic pride was the more probable obstacle. The high-born comtesse is unlikely to have wanted to advertise her poverty so openly, nor be placed in the same category as individuals of a significantly lower social standing: when Walsh listed the occupations of impoverished émigrés, he cited a former tax-collector ('ancien fermier-général') who read aloud to an English audience as a means of making money.¹¹²

Lastic placed a different interpretation on the comtesse's embarrassment. Retrofitting her to an ideal of aristocratic womanhood, he observed that at that time reserve was expected in an elite female.¹¹³ Moreover, he recorded that reading aloud for payment conflicted with the ideal life of a Christian mother which should be

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Broc, *Dix Ans*, pp.265-6.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Gontaut-Biron, *Mémoires*, p. 40; Ménerville, *Souvenirs*, p.160.

¹¹¹ Reiset, *Comtesse de Polastron*, p.262.

¹¹² Walsh, *Souvenirs*, p.123.

¹¹³ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.343.

‘hidden from view (‘une vie cachée’), focusing on her home (‘dans l’accomplissement des devoirs de son intérieur’).¹¹⁴ These words, which he attributed to the Comtesse de Falaiseau, were in turn used by Auberive to promote female submission to the will of God and to the duties of motherhood:

Non, non... le plus bel héritage qu’une mère puisse laisser à ses filles est de leur apprendre que la vie d’une femme doit être cachée en Dieu et dans l’accomplissement des devoirs de son état.¹¹⁵

No, no, the best legacy that a mother can leave to her daughters is to teach them that a woman’s life should be hidden in God and in the fulfilment of the duties of her position.

These versions of the incident obscured evidence that the comtesse could afford to decline further invitations to display her talent; there were other options open to her. She used her status openly when she could see no alternative, an advantage she had over her lower class compatriots. For example, ‘forgetting her shyness and discretion’ (‘oubliant toute timidité et discrétion’), she sought and accepted medical help for her mother from ‘the king’s best doctor’ (‘le premier médecin du roi d’Angleterre’).¹¹⁶ A spacious and respectable address provided alternative means of making money, including taking in pupils.¹¹⁷

It was at home within a small group of elite women that she attempted to provide for her family. The room that served as a chapel in the early morning was transformed into a workshop where aristocratic émigrés spent their days making novelties and straw hats to sell.¹¹⁸ Numerous memoirs record similar makeshift workshops being set up for the manufacture of saleable items. Differences in the personalities of the predominantly female home-based workforce can be surmised from descriptions of their evening activity. Madame de Saisseval, whose two infant sons died shortly after her arrival in England, prioritised religious duty and care for her young daughters and sick husband; she does not appear to have joined in the moments of relaxation that provided other émigrés with respite from their shock, grief and disbelief at events in France.¹¹⁹ Her ‘fastidiousness’ was commented upon by the Marquise de

¹¹⁴ Ibid.; Auberive, *L’Héritière du Vœu*, pp.179-180.

¹¹⁵ Auberive, *L’Héritière du Vœu*, p.180.

¹¹⁶ Broc, *Dix Ans*, p.266.

¹¹⁷ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.343.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp.345-6.

¹¹⁹ Forneron, *Histoire*, vol.2, book 4, p.49, recorded evenings of dancing after long days of work.

Lage de Volude who nevertheless proved to be a source of moral and financial support for several years.¹²⁰ In contrast to the sombre Saisseval ménage, Madame de Ménerville, who painted fans which were then sent for sale in Portugal, and made tapestry items for sale in Russia,¹²¹ delighted in evenings of lively company at home with ‘young and often very pretty women, clothed in calico dresses, topped with a cheeky straw hat’ (des jeunes et souvent très jolies femmes, vêtues d’une robe d’indienne, coiffées d’un méchant chapeau de paille’).¹²² The description of the straw hat as ‘cheeky’ would not have sat easily with the Comtesse de Saisseval who was involved in their manufacture: there was a fine line to tread between making a living out of fashion and preserving her modesty and that of her daughters, especially as associations between milliners and prostitutes were commonplace. There is little surviving archival evidence of the millinery retail trade but it has been described as ‘a haven for widows and orphaned daughters ... a rather genteel occupation for those with little capital,’ which highlights the potential vulnerability of workers.¹²³ It was, however, one of the most lucrative sources of income at the time: Walsh recorded that a hat which took three days to make could be sold for twenty-five shillings.¹²⁴ This was a significant addition to the government allowance for an émigré widow, child or servant which at that time was one shilling a day.¹²⁵

The Education of Émigré Girls

Whilst working and caring for her husband, the comtesse, like other elite émigré parents, had to make arrangements for the education of her daughters which, under normal circumstances, she would have undertaken herself. Émigré schooling has previously been critically assessed from an ideological and political perspective.¹²⁶ The focus has been predominantly male and pupils have been presented as pawns in

¹²⁰ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.346; Lage de Volude, *Souvenirs*, pp.cxli, cxliii, cxlv.

¹²¹ Ménerville, *Souvenirs*, p.169.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.171.

¹²³ H-C and L. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.58.

¹²⁴ Walsh, *Cinquante Ans*, p.65.

¹²⁵ Ménerville, *Souvenirs*, p.160.

¹²⁶ See for example, F. Pestel, ‘Educating against Revolution: French Émigré Schools and the Challenge of the Next Generation’, *European History Quarterly*, 2017, vol.47, no. 2, 2017, pp. 229-56.

an adult game which aimed to preserve the status quo.¹²⁷ Education, training in responsible aristocratic behaviour, was for those destined to occupy ‘distinguished, honourable positions, advantageous to society at large’ (‘des emplois distingués, honorables et avantageux pour la société générale’).¹²⁸ Rather than focusing upon how émigré schooling was shaped by the need to uphold political and social ideals, this section takes a different approach by considering the experience of émigré education from the perspective of the Saisseval girls. From this viewpoint, the reactionary nature of émigré education could be seen, at least in part, as pragmatic and humane in that it provided displaced children with routine and occupation through the recreation of a familiar environment.

Benefitting from the relaxation of the penal laws, six English Catholic schools for girls and ten for boys had been established in and around London and in other cities in England by 1792.¹²⁹ Catholic schools proliferated over the following five years, many of which catered for few pupils and were only open for a short time. Many émigré clergy were employed as tutors; some established schools of their own, most notably the abbé Guy-Toussaint-Julien Carron (1760-1821).¹³⁰ According to Auberive, the school first attended by the Saisseval girls in England was run by the abbé Aloèsius Édouard Gaultier (c.1746-1818), an advocate of good manners and a pioneer of teaching through play.¹³¹ His biographer recorded that his school in London met with great success amongst the English elite and, as a result of attracting fee-paying English pupils, he was able to give free tuition to émigré children; he employed his most able pupils as teachers.¹³²

¹²⁷ Ibid; J. Reboul, *French Emigration to Britain in Response to the French Revolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), especially p.107.

¹²⁸ Lubersac, *Histoire*, p.112.

¹²⁹ F.X. Plasse, *Le Clergé Français Réfugié en Angleterre* (Paris: Société de la Librairie Catholique, 1886), vol.1, pp.52-53 ; *Laity's Directory* (London: J.P. Coghlan, 1793), pp.16-21.

¹³⁰ *Vie de l'Abbé Carron par un Bénédictin de la Congrégation de France* (Paris: Charles Douniol, 1866), pp.345-6.

¹³¹ Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.176. See A. Gaultier *Jeu de Fautes que les Enfants & les Jeunes Gens Committent le plus Ordinairement Contre la Bonne Éducation et Contre la Politesse* (London: P. Elmsley, 1796); Ducros de Sixt, ‘L'Abbé Gaultier’, in J. de Mancy (ed.), *Portraits et Histoires des Hommes Utiles et Bienfaiteurs* (Paris : H. Lebrun, 1833-34), vol. 1.

¹³² Sixt, ‘L'Abbé Gaultier’.

Des familles fort riches lui confièrent leurs enfants, et payèrent largement cette éducation. Grâce à ces sommes, l'abbé Gaultier put élever ainsi gratuitement un certain nombre de petits émigrés.¹³³

Very rich families entrusted their children to him and paid a high price for this education. Thanks to this money, the abbé Gaultier was able to educate without charge a certain number of little émigrés.

Auberive embellished the story to contrast the saintly, paid pupil-teacher Aline with English girls who 'gave vent to all manner of impertinence and caprice'

('l'impertinence et le caprice des élèves s'y donnaient librement carrière').¹³⁴

Although this account may not in reality relate to Aline, it provides an insight into teaching methods of an émigré abbé other than Carron, whose schools have been well documented.

Auberive chose to ignore Gaultier's secondary occupation of selling émigré crafts to English pupils' families. Lastic, on the other hand, showed how Gaultier took advantage of his position:

L'abbé Gaultier s'était ainsi introduit dans un grand nombre de familles anglaises, ce qui lui permit de se constituer en quelque sorte colporteur des ouvrages faits par les émigrés, qu'il parvenait à vendre à un prix élevé dans ces familles. Il inventait même quelques subterfuges pour les présenter d'une manière plus attrayant et en tirant ainsi une plus grosse rémunération.¹³⁵

The abbé Gaultier was thus introduced into a great number of English families which allowed him to act as a sort of hawker of émigré crafts which he managed to sell at inflated prices in these families. He even invented ruses to present them in a more attractive light and thereby making a greater profit.

He recorded that Madame de Saisseval helped Gaultier in his mission,¹³⁶ but it is reasonable to assume that in the same way that she shied away from reading aloud for profit, she was uncomfortable with Gaultier's methods. She had reasons other than religious ones to have scruples about moneymaking ventures; her aristocratic status meant that her contact with the world of business had been as a consumer, not as a vendor. However, just as she overcame feelings of reticence to obtain the best medical help for her husband and mother, for a year the comtesse benefited from Gaultier's ideas. Attractive packaging enabled him to inflate the prices of the dresses she embroidered:

¹³³ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.343.

¹³⁴ Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.177.

¹³⁵ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.343.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

L'abbé, grâce aux cartons et aux rubans qu'il avait pris soin d'y mettre lui-même, eut le plaisir de vendre trois guinées au lieu d'une les robes.¹³⁷

The abbé, thanks to the boxes and ribbons that he had carefully placed there himself, was pleased to be able to sell the dresses at three guineas instead of one.

Her association with Gaultier seems to have ceased when the British government ordered émigrés in Jersey to relocate to England in August 1796. Carron, their spiritual leader, re-established in London the schools he had founded in Jersey and, according to Auberive (citing Carron's correspondence) the Saisseval girls became pupils at his school.¹³⁸ The aristocratic female teachers included Madame de Cornuillier-Lucinière, who had benefited from the support of Lady Buckingham in Jersey in setting up an industry making and repairing clothes for émigré clergy.¹³⁹ Her reappearance in London highlights the crisscrossing of British and French elite female paths as they negotiated, on the one hand, strategies for survival, and on the other, possibilities for benevolent intervention.

The Comte d'Artois was an active supporter of Carron's schools. His paternalistic interest in education can be seen as an expression of guilt at the loss of life at Quiberon which deprived many children of their fathers. He regretted not being present at the battle, possibly through vanity and want of judgement: he had insisted on demonstrating his royal rank through an appropriately equipped and attired entourage which may have delayed his departure.¹⁴⁰ Another possible reason is that support from Pitt's government was so slow that when the French prince's transport to Quiberon from Hamburg was eventually arranged on a British frigate, the émigré army had already been defeated.¹⁴¹ An account of a visit by Artois in March 1800 confirms the royalist agenda of Carron's schools.¹⁴² It also provides an example of proud aristocratic, gendered display which reinforced the distinctions to which the

¹³⁷ Broc, *Dix Ans*, p.265.

¹³⁸ *Vie de l'Abbé Carron*, p.330; Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, pp.38, 40. I have not accessed Carron's correspondence. The abbé centred his mission on Somerstown from 1799. The schools' location at 1 and 3 Phoenix Street was recorded in *Laity's Directory* 1803. Plasse, *Clergé Français*, vol.2, p.137; Lastic, *Chronique*, pp.343-344.

¹³⁹ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, p.112. Auberive, *L'Héritière du Vœu*, p.185; H. Herluison (ed.) *Généalogie Historique de la Maison de Cornulier* (Orléans, 1889) p.255. Madame de Cornuillier-Lucinière entered into Carron's service as a teacher in London and remained with him until his death in 1821. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁴⁰ A. Phillips, 'Some Unpublished Correspondence of the Comte d'Artois (Charles X of France)', *Hermathena*, vol.19, no.43 (1922), pp.292-8 (p.297).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.296-7.

¹⁴² Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, pp.115-141.

children were accustomed. Artois awarded prizes at a ceremony during which girls in white dresses and smartly dressed boys witnessed their classmates being questioned on the kings of France.¹⁴³ The Comte de Botherel, who had appealed to Lord Buckingham in 1793 for support for émigré women and children in Jersey,¹⁴⁴ conducted a staged oral test followed by a speech extolling the courage of the mothers, wives and daughters of brave military men.¹⁴⁵ This illustrates contemporary discussion of the importance of mothers in nurturing the next generation of soldiers while showing an awareness of the suffering inflicted on women by war. From a political standpoint, it is easy to criticise the exhibition of obedient and cleanly dressed children reciting historical facts taught by their royalist teachers. Yet after all the disruption, filth and bloodshed of revolution and war, Carron and other educators surrounded émigré children with calm, ordered and civilised behaviour.

This mode of education did not suit every child. It is clear that Félicité de Saisseval presented a different problem from her sister, Aline, whose excess of virtue was the main source of concern (‘Cette absence de mesure et de discrétion dans la vertu’).¹⁴⁶ Present-day awareness of the effects of trauma in childhood might allow for a more sympathetic assessment of the badly behaved ‘little Saisseval’ dismissed by Castle as ‘no doubt the daughter of some *émigré*.’¹⁴⁷ This could have been either Félicité (b.1785) or Séraphine (b.1790); whichever one it was, the circumstances of their childhood were the same: by 1795 they had hidden then fled from an invading army, endured a dangerous sea voyage, suffered hunger and cold, been without shelter and witnessed their father’s descent into violent insanity. *The Jerningham Letters* and the Comtesse de Saisseval’s personal correspondence provide evidence of some of the manifestations of anxiety with which parents and teachers had to contend. Aline, as the eldest daughter, assumed an adult role, supporting her mother, and retreating quietly into prayer and obedience. Temperamentally different from Aline, who accepted the dislocation and deprivation stoically, her sister, Félicité, and possibly Séraphine too, reacted in the opposite manner by exhibiting disruptive behaviour.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.115

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter Three.

¹⁴⁵ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, pp.136-144.

¹⁴⁶ Auberive, *L’Héritière du Vœu*, pp.187-8.

¹⁴⁷ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.118, editorial note.

Illustrating elite female émigré resourcefulness in the way she sought and combined support from a variety of sources, the Comtesse de Saisseval, while not appreciating Lady Jerningham's suggestion of a public performance for money, accepted her support with her daughters' education.¹⁴⁸ Lady Jerningham had intervened as early as 1795: 'Little Saisseval' was sent away 'that she might not be troublesome at Oxburgh'.¹⁴⁹ A forthright expression of concern came two and a half years later in a letter, signed Eliza (Elizabeth) Jerningham (1727-1807). She apologised that the nuns at Hengrave were unable to cope with the comtesse's daughter who appeared to be mentally disturbed. She asked for the child to be removed from the school. Again, this could refer to either Félicité (thirteen) or Séraphine (eight):¹⁵⁰

You may suppose we hope Lady Jerningham dont take it ill that we have sincerely told her we cant keep Saisvalle [sic] any longer than her half year. She is a surprising oddity; they have reason to think her mind not right and the young Ladies are afraid of her, so you see we can't expose ourselves to the ruining of the School.¹⁵¹

Félicité is the more likely as the Stafford letters make it clear that Lady Jerningham had taken charge of her education by the end of 1800 (by which time she was fifteen).¹⁵² A letter sent in 1801 shows that she also covered the cost.¹⁵³ The Comtesse de Saisseval's gratitude for her intervention was unqualified. After a visit to Félicité at her new school, Brook Green House, Norwich, she noted an improvement in her daughter's behaviour: (Figure 4.1):

J'ai été voir plusieurs fois Félicie et par le bon témoignage que les maitresses en [sic] on [sic] rendues [sic] il parait que la suite de vos bontés pour elle a produit un commencement de changement qui me donne d'heureuses esperences [sic] je crois que l'éducation de cette Ecole était précisément ce qu'il lui fallait. Elle est aussi beaucoup mieux pour les manières.¹⁵⁴

I have been to see Félicie several times and through the good reports that the schoolmistresses give it seems that the result of your kindness is the beginning of a change which gives me hope and leads me to believe that the education at this school was exactly what she needed. Her manners are also much improved.

¹⁴⁸ SRO D641/3/P/3/10/168-180.

¹⁴⁹ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.81: Fanny Dillon to Charlotte Bedingfield, June 1795.

¹⁵⁰ The reference is to Félicité according to M. Mason, 'Nuns of the Jerningham Letters', *Recusant History*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1995), pp. 350-369 (p.366), citing C.S. Durant, *A Link Between Flemish and English Martyrs* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1925), p.438.

¹⁵¹ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.117: Eliza Jerningham to Charlotte Bedingfield, 3 January 1798.

¹⁵² SRO D641/3/P/3/10/168-180.

¹⁵³ SRO D641/3/P/3/10/106: Mrs E. Bayley to Lady Jerningham, 1801.

¹⁵⁴ SRO D641/3/P/3/10/172: Comtesse de Saisseval to Lady Jerningham, 7 October 1799.

J'ai été vois plusieurs fois félicité et pas le bon témoignage
 que les Mérites en son enfance il passit que le sort de
 vos bontés pour elle a produit un commencement de changements
 qui me donne d'humaines espérances; je crois que l'éducation
 de cette Ecole étoit précisément ce qu'il lui falloit, elle est
 aussi beaucoup mieux pour les manières. elle ma marqué

Figure 4.1. Madame de Saisseval to Lady Jerningham, 7 October 1799
 D641/3/P/3/10/172. Reproduced with permission of Staffordshire Record Office.

A postscript to one of Félicité's letters to Lady Jerningham was one of several expressions gratitude: 'a little word and millions of thanks for all your kindness' (un petit mot et des millions de remerciements de toutes vos bontés).¹⁵⁵

Your most humble and Obliged Servant,
 F. de Saisseval.
 Brook Green House -
 Sept. 11th 1800 -

félicité M'ayant envoyé la lettre My Lady je ne puis la laisser partir
 sans y joindre aussi un petit mot et des millions de remerciements de toutes
 vos bontés, j'ai senti bien ce que vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer, j'en
 suis bien reconnaissante et sensible plus que je ne le puis dire de ce que

Figure 4.2. Madame de Saisseval's postscript.
 Félicité to Lady Jerningham, 11 September 1800, showing Félicité's school address.
 D641/3/P/3/10/175. Reproduced with permission of Staffordshire Record Office.

This section has explored some of the challenges faced by Madame de Saisseval that were common to all émigrés. Contacts, initiative and money-making ventures played a part in securing accommodation, fuel and food, each of which had an effect upon émigré health. Others were specific to those who were parents, for whom the care and education of their children was a priority. In the case of the comtesse, as a widowed mother of girls, the education of her daughters took on particular significance as a means of displaying her aristocratic and religious values and ensuring their continuance.

¹⁵⁵ SRO D641/3/P/3/10/175. Félicité de Saisseval to Lady Jerningham, 11 September 1800.

Elite Female Support for ‘French Emigrant Ladies and Children’

The Marchioness of Buckingham supported lay émigrés such as the Comtesse de Saisseval in three principal areas: industry, health and education. Firstly, she built on the experience she had gained in establishing the straw plait industry at Gosfield and the tapestry factory at Winchester by acting on behalf of lay émigrés seeking to achieve self sufficiency through the sale of their work.¹⁵⁶ However they differ in the detail, many French accounts testify to the marchioness’s commitment to manufacture and sale as a means to subsistence: she used her rank to facilitate the sale of fashion items produced by elite female émigrés, including the Comtesse de Saisseval. Her intervention differed from that of Lady Jerningham in that she was more sensitive to the ‘delicacy’ of the women she supported, recognizing their reluctance to be dependent on outside help. The Duchesse de Gontaut-Biron recorded the help of the government in arranging for items to be sold at a ‘bazaar’, stressing the care that was taken to avoid humiliating women of such refined manners (‘évitant avec soin ce qui pouvait humilier leur délicatesse’)¹⁵⁷ ‘Bazaars’ were a new kind of retail opportunity where indoor counters could be rented at a modest cost.¹⁵⁸ Forneron recorded that Lady Buckingham funded a ‘huge shop’ (‘un vaste magasin’) - probably the bazaar referred to by the Duchesse de Gontaut-Biron - and the Comtesse de Saisseval and her mother worked there.

Un vaste magasin de tapisseries, modes, broderies et fleurs artificielles est créé avec les capitaux de la marquise de Buckingham, qui emploie comme ouvrières ou filles de comptoirs la marquise de Réaux, la comtesse de Saisseval, la comtesse de Lastic.¹⁵⁹

A huge shop selling tapestries, fashion items, embroidery and artificial flowers was created using capital provided by the marchioness of Buckingham who employed as workers or counter staff the Marquise de Réaux, the Comtesse de Saisseval, the Comtesse de Lastic.

Kerbiriou repeated, and enlarged upon, the claim. He recorded that some émigrés ‘were taken on in the workshops of the marchioness, who had opened a fashion and flower shop’ (‘s’embauchèrent dans les ateliers de la marquise de Buckingham qui avait ouvert un magasin de modes et de fleurs.’)¹⁶⁰ Recent research by Carpenter cited the *Courrier de Londres*, 22 April 1794 as the source of the information that the

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter Two for the straw-plait industry and Chapter Three for the tapestry factory.

¹⁵⁷ Duchesse de Gontaut-Biron, *Mémoires* (1835; 5th edition, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909), p.39.

¹⁵⁸ J. Stobart, *Spend, Spend, Spend! A History of Shopping* (Stroud: The History Press, 2008), p.109.

¹⁵⁹ Forneron, *Histoire*, vol.2, book 4, p.49.

¹⁶⁰ Kerbiriou, *Jean-François de La Marche*, p.404.

Duchess of Buccleuch, the Marchioness of Buckingham and the Duchess of York acquired premises in Grosvenor Street to which émigrés sent items for sale.¹⁶¹

Secondly, Lady Buckingham responded to the needs of those who could not support themselves through work. In addition to visiting émigré clergy in Middlesex Hospital,¹⁶² she provided aid to sick and pregnant refugee women and their children. This has left only a faint trace in the records but is significant nevertheless as she was generally the only one of the ‘English ladies’ who provided this specialised support to be named.¹⁶³ Records confirm that she was directly involved in the re-establishment of a separate committee for the support of lay émigrés, which was further refined to focus solely on women and children. In 1792 Sir George Thomas, M.P. for Arundel (c.1740-1815), had established a Committee for the Relief of Lay Émigrés which had been swiftly incorporated into the Committee for the Relief of Emigrant Clergy, headed by Wilmot, to avoid competing for support.¹⁶⁴ From 1793, relief had been provided to lay émigrés by the Wilmot Committee and informal groups of women who each raised money from personal acquaintances.¹⁶⁵ When the situation worsened during the Reign of Terror, these efforts were supplemented by a Treasury grant of £7,880 per month to support the 4,008 clergy and 375 lay émigrés registered for relief.¹⁶⁶

Lady Buckingham was closely involved in the increasing formalisation of assessment procedures by women whose fundraising continued to supplement government relief.¹⁶⁷ A report dated 7 April 1795 (printed in 1796) recorded her

¹⁶¹ K. Carpenter ‘The Novelty of the French Émigrés in London in the 1790s’, in Kelly, D. and M. Cornick (eds.), *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2013), pp.69-90 (p.85).

¹⁶² See Chapter Three.

¹⁶³ ‘Historical Sketches: English Generosity’, *Saturday Magazine, July-December 1840*, vol.17 (1841), pp.189-96; Lambert, Abbé, *Vie de Messire [sic] Antoine-Éléonore-Léon-Leclerc de Juigné, Archevêque de Paris* (Paris: Le Clère, 1823), pp.194-5. Other clerical memoirs focus on Lady Buckingham’s support for the émigré clergy.

¹⁶⁴ Carpenter, *Refugees*, p. 45; C. Shaw, *Britannia’s Embrace and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.23.

¹⁶⁵ Shaw, *Britannia’s Embrace*, p.37.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ SCA WWM/P/16/3: *Committee of Ladies for the Relief of Female Emigrants* (1796).

name (M. Nugent Buckingham) as one of the visitors to émigrés living in poverty in St Georges Fields where twenty-seven cases of need were identified:¹⁶⁸

the persons whose names are subjoined, did on Saturday the 4th of this month [April 1795] visit several of those unfortunate sufferers, do testify of their own personal knowledge and from credible accounts collected on the spot, the truth of the facts contained in the first Nine Articles of the annexed Report. The following twenty-seven cases were verified at the same time by the most authentic information.¹⁶⁹

‘A Manuscript Paper’ listing the cases was distributed by the subscribers to their acquaintances to elicit donations. Amounts were not specified; the request was simply for ‘such donations as be thought likely to prove sufficient for the purposes intended.’¹⁷⁰ Documentary evidence such as this cannot adequately determine the efficacy of the committee’s action, although it claimed: ‘The success with which these applications were [sic] attended, enabled the ladies to give the unfortunate sufferers some degree of present relief in cloathing [sic], food and medicine.’¹⁷¹

Crucially, this is an early example of a female fundraising initiative that was organised in such a way that it could be effectively scaled up. It also illustrates the level of need, and the existence of an assessment process for female cases in which Lady Buckingham was involved before the losses at Quiberon precipitated action by Bishop de la Marche which has been better recorded.¹⁷² The lying-in charities she had established in Buckinghamshire and Essex c.1787 had equipped her with experience and knowledge which was of use in prioritising cases and raising awareness of need. Her strong personality and sense of mission made her an asset to the fundraising endeavour. Whereas individuals and groups of both sexes and all classes and ages had contributed to the relief of persecuted priests, eliciting donations for dispossessed members of the aristocracy was a more challenging task which required different tactics. The committee assessed individual cases and then circulated their details to personalise the *ci-devant* mass. Two of the five cases described in detail have been reproduced here to emphasise that the Saisseval family was a typical example, with the difference that the comtesse’s health and religious faith enabled her to stand up to the ordeal. The committee recognised the reluctance

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp.1-2.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp.2-3.

of impoverished elite women to accept help: their names were left blank to preserve their modesty:¹⁷³

Madame de L___ F___, having been prematurely brought to bed in Holland from apprehension of being seized by the French, her child died and she was seized with a fever in the brain, and has been raving ever since She is now confined in St Luke's Hospital, leaving her husband and five children (the eldest not seven years old) in want of cloathing and every necessary. No.42 Pitt Street, St Georges Fields¹⁷⁴

Madame de R. ____, in the last stage of consumption, unable to stand without support. Her husband received a ball in his thigh at the siege of Metz, which could not be extracted, and which now prevents him from walking but with extreme difficulty..... They appear particularly wretched and miserable. At Fleming's, Wood's Court, opposite the Pantheon ¹⁷⁵

When existing resources proved insufficient to cope with escalating need, William Wilberforce requested a meeting with the Marchioness of Buckingham. The meeting, which took place at Lady Buckingham's on 5 March 1796, was also attended by her husband.¹⁷⁶

Thence with Henry Thornton & Wilmot, by appointment at my desire to Ly Buckm's Lord B there look'd insolent & scarce notic'd us - Much embarass'd but carried it off - M^{rs} Crewe - James Grenville - L^d & Lady Buckley[probably Bulkeley] L^d Berkeley & others there Bp of St Pol - ¹⁷⁷

Wilberforce's request indicated confidence in either her capabilities or her influence, or most probably, both.¹⁷⁸ He noted that she and her companion, Miss Macnamara, were 'earnest about poor Emigrants.'¹⁷⁹ The diary entry shows that, in contrast to the earnestness of the marchioness, the marquess's manner at the meeting was offhand. His brusqueness cannot here be excused by the insecurities that dogged his earlier life.¹⁸⁰ It is more likely that he lacked the enthusiasm for good causes that fired the marchioness. In common with Wilberforce, whose religious conversion in 1785 had

¹⁷³ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁷⁶ Abridged version of diary entry for 5 March 1796, cited in J. Hirst, *Memoir and Letters of Lady Mary Arundell* (Leicester: [n.pub.], 1894), footnote, p.7.

¹⁷⁷ Transcript from original diary entry for 5 March 1796: Bodleian, MS. Wilberforce, c. 34, p.104, with thanks to Professor John Coffey, University of Leicester.

¹⁷⁸ In 1792, Wilberforce had agreed to be on the Committee for the Relief of the Emigrant Clergy 'partly to do away with French citizenship' which became an embarrassment: S. Wilberforce, *Life of Wilberforce by his Son* (1838; London: John Murray, 1868), p.108. He would therefore have been aware of Lady Buckingham's support for the émigré clergy.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.; Hirst, *Memoir*.

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter One of this thesis.

a profoundly empowering effect on his practical politics, Lady Buckingham's affirmation of faith drove her philanthropic endeavours. The marquess did not share their religious fervour and was not blessed with the 'charm, tact, and lightness of touch in human relationships'¹⁸¹ that characterised both Wilberforce and the marchioness. Nor did he possess their 'gregariousness ...and liveliness in conversation' which, as Wilberforce's biographer noted, were 'powerful tools for motivating others'.¹⁸² These characteristics had been displayed by the marchioness from a young age; in adulthood they were crucial to effective fundraising and charity work. It is probable that on this occasion, as on many others, Lord Buckingham was content to let his wife take the lead.

It was agreed 'by a great number of ladies' at a subsequent meeting at the house of Bishop de la Marche in March 1796 that elite British women who had been recruited by pamphlet and sermon to help émigré priests in 1792, and who had set in motion an assessment process for lay émigré families in 1795, should now: 'confine themselves to the relief of their own sex'.¹⁸³ This no doubt seemed the most pragmatic solution: the bishop's intervention had helped hundreds of refractory clergy, many of whom were personally known to him; then, after Quiberon, he was instrumental in saving many disabled soldiers from mendicity.¹⁸⁴ However, the volume of new cases of both sexes became overwhelming; moreover, he was unaccustomed to dealing with female requests for help, especially on the scale with which they now presented themselves. A Committee of Ladies was therefore formed to support refugee women through pregnancy, childbirth, sickness and poverty.

Female autonomy - and in particular the specific role of Lady Buckingham - is unlikely ever to be fully uncovered as convention dictated the style and angle of the report which recorded that the ladies had been prompted ('induced') to raise funds from and for women 'under the Direction of the Persons of the highest Rank in the

¹⁸¹ J. Wolfe, 'William Wilberforce (1759-1833)', politician, philanthropist and slavery abolitionist <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 1 March 2019].

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ March 1796. SCA WWW/P/16/3, *Ladies Committee*, p.5.

¹⁸⁴ Weiner, *French Exiles*, p.105.

Church and the State'.¹⁸⁵ On 17 March 1796, at a meeting of the United Committee for the Relief of the Suffering Clergy, and Laity of France in the British Dominions, a plan for a Subscription for the Relief of French Emigrant Ladies and Female Children was approved.¹⁸⁶ Those present included John Wilmot (Chairman), and Wilberforce. Several other male committee members, including Lord Buckingham and Edmund Burke, subsequently requested that their names be added to the resolution.¹⁸⁷ On 7 June 1796, arrangements were in place for fundraising to meet an increased demand by extending the appeal to more women living in the provinces. It was resolved at a meeting 'at Mr. Lloyd's, Stationer at the Corner of Harley Street and New Cavendish Streets' that the 'Plain Narrative of the Facts' should be more widely circulated than it had been in the spring of 1795, to recruit 'ladies, residing in the country, as may wish to take an active part in promoting subscriptions.'¹⁸⁸

There were specific instructions as to the manner and the amount of subscriptions to avoid diverting funds from local causes: 'The sums to be subscribed are made small, with a view to prevent this subscription from interfering with the ordinary exercise of charity towards our own poor.'¹⁸⁹ The aim was to mitigate a latent Francophobia which was intermittently inflamed by the press in articles such as one which described the émigrés' 'sumptuous living' at the expense of the British state.¹⁹⁰ Aristocratic émigré behaviour, and its portrayal, sometimes gave rise to prejudice which made the task of the committee a delicate and demanding one:

At the same time the distresses of our own poor and many ill founded and prejudicial reports, which were spread abroad, respecting the emigrants from France, required some caution and great perseverance in the endeavours, which were made to interest the public in their behalf.¹⁹¹

The appeal was competing for funds with, amongst others, an earlier similar Society for Widows and Children which had catered for the families of British servicemen

¹⁸⁵ SCA WWW/P/16/3, *Ladies Committee*, 9th page (unnumbered).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 11th page (unnumbered).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.1.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6. Hannah More had used similar wording in *Prefatory Address to the Ladies &c. of Great Britain and Ireland in Behalf of the Emigrant Clergy* (Boston: Weld and Greenough, 1794), p.4. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁹⁰ 'The people are surprised that the French who have taken refuge in this country are enabled, many of them, to live so sumptuously', *The Times*, 1 September 1792.

¹⁹¹ SCA WWW/P/16/3, *Ladies Committee*, p.4.

whose lives were endangered by the war with France.¹⁹² The appeal to patriotic sentiment which had attracted subscriptions to that charity could not, of course, be employed in support of families of the enemy. A different approach was required. One tactic used to encourage upper-class British women to donate to the latest émigré cause was to appeal to fellow feeling by stressing both the sex and status of the victims: ‘these affecting scenes of distress in which so many individuals of their own sex and rank in life were involved’.¹⁹³ By urging compassion towards women who had once enjoyed the same privileges as themselves they reminded potential donors of the precariousness of the aristocracy. Donors were encouraged to prioritise benevolence towards the local poor, but urged to donate to the destitute French any money which would otherwise be spent on luxuries – implicitly the root cause of the revolution in France. Subscriptions were capped at five shillings per annum for married women, and one shilling for unmarried women to avoid jeopardising native good causes.¹⁹⁴

This example links the Marchioness of Buckingham indirectly to the Comtesse de Saisseval as the donor and recipient of aid, but shows up the inadequacy of the provision, however solicitously it was organised. Even when the Comtesse de Saisseval qualified for an allowance of ‘seven pounds, seventeen shillings and sixpence a month’ from the Ladies Committee, it was insufficient for her entire family once her personal funds were exhausted.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Pontlevoy recorded that during the Comte de Saisseval’s final illness in 1798, she managed to get help from the king’s physician (‘Elle obtint des hommes qu’il fut traité pendant cette dernière crise par le médecin même du roi’).¹⁹⁶ It is apparent that the medical help she sought accorded with her status not her means. Auberive named the institution to which the Comte de Saisseval was sent as ‘the asylum of Doctor Willys [sic].’ (‘l’asile du docteur Willys’).¹⁹⁷ The Rev. Dr. Francis Willis (1718-1807) was the ‘mad doctor’ whose reputation had been elevated since his apparent success in

¹⁹² ‘Society for the Relief of the Widows and Children of Seamen and Soldiers, Who May Die or be Killed in his Majesty’s Service during the War’, *London Diary or Woodfall’s Register*, Thursday 28 March, 1793.

¹⁹³ SCA WWW/P/16/3, *Ladies Committee*, p.3.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁵ Weiner, *French Exiles*, p.111.

¹⁹⁶ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.23.

¹⁹⁷ Auberive, *L’Héritière du Voeu*, p.189.

treating George III during his first bout of madness in 1788.¹⁹⁸ For an average stay of five to six months at his asylum in Greatford, Lincolnshire, the cost was estimated as ‘three guineas per week’.¹⁹⁹ The comtesse’s status had enabled her to secure the services of Dr. Willis, but she was unable to meet such a high cost.²⁰⁰

Despite the support of the Ladies Committee, when the Comte de Saisseval died, the comtesse was unable to afford mourning clothes. According to Broc, *Dix Ans*: ‘She and her daughters pawned their coloured dresses to buy black dresses and an ecclesiastic paid for the burial.’ (‘Elle et ses filles mirent leurs robes de couleur au mont-de-piété pour acheter des robes noires et un ecclésiastique paya les frais de l’enterrement.’)²⁰¹ Pontlevoy recorded that the dresses pawned had been donated by Lady Jerningham.²⁰² Published correspondence shows that Lady Jerningham subsequently invited the widowed comtesse to her house, but her reference to her visitor’s appearance is indicative of insensitivity to her plight: ‘Yesterday I had Mde [sic] de Saisseval (Looking uncommonly pretty in her Weeds).’²⁰³

The example of the Comtesse de Saisseval highlights the fact that the charity established by the Ladies Committee for the Relief of Female Emigrants met only the most basic needs of survival. It was not designed to help aristocrats keep up the appearance of rank. The publication in 1797 of *A Short Account of the Charity* provided evidence of its success by listing the way the money was spent on sixteen Quiberon widows, seventeen ‘sick and lying in women’ and thirty girls’ schooling.²⁰⁴ It also highlighted the way in which a single generous donation had staved off immediate need: the committee had been able ‘to relieve one hundred Families with Money, Clothing, and Coals’ while more formal systems were put in place.²⁰⁵ The Duchess of York, who, as her position dictated, interested herself in many charitable

¹⁹⁸ L. Smith and T. Peters ‘Details on the Establishment of Doctor Willis, for the Cure of Lunatics (1796)’, *History of Psychiatry*, vol.28, no.3 (2017), pp.365-77.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, fn. p.377. This comprised a weekly charge of one guinea for visits and remedies; one guinea for lodging and one guinea for a ‘keeper’.

²⁰⁰ Broc, *Dix Ans*, p.265.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.23.

²⁰³ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.157: Lady Jerningham to Lady Bedingfield, Monday 17 March 1799.

²⁰⁴ *Short Account*, p.5.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.6.

initiatives, was by this stage recorded as Patron. The French princes, (Artois and Angoulême) as well as being supporters of Carron's schools, showed an interest in the work of the Ladies Committee: they were thanked for their donations.²⁰⁶ Their concern for the future of the next generation of elite males had already been expressed through their interest in the émigré boys' school, established in 1795 at Penn by Edmund Burke, with the support of the Marquess of Buckingham.²⁰⁷ Artois's interest in aristocratic female well-being was a further indication of his sense of guilt at the loss of life at Quiberon. His donation to the Ladies Committee linked him to the philanthropic endeavour of Lady Buckingham, in whom he possibly saw a reminder of his deceased sister: in each woman practical piety was combined with inventiveness and sociability. Linked initially thus through elite philanthropy, both parties stood to gain from the connection which was sealed by a personal gift in 1797: Artois gave to the Marchioness a miniature of Madame Élisabeth.²⁰⁸ A symbol of grief and respect for his sister paved the way for an introduction to the Buckingham household, the consequences of which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Lady Buckingham's next philanthropic intervention was in female education. She used funds raised by the Ladies Committee to establish in Hammersmith a school for impoverished émigré girls.²⁰⁹ It opened in 1796 and was managed by her companion, Miss Macnamara. The curriculum reflects the marchioness's experience in teaching her own daughter and in overseeing the education and occupation of the local poor, each of which continued to occupy her throughout this period. Academic learning appropriate to the former privileged status of the pupils was accompanied by the practical skills they would need in order to survive. Whereas French schooling prioritised the appearance and manners of rank, Lady Buckingham promoted the deployment of 'talents and industry' as a route to independence for bereaved and

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ NRO A VI 43: Marquess of Buckingham to Edmund Burke, 26-29 May 1796.

²⁰⁸ Marquis P-F de Lubersac, miniature on ivory, 64mm diameter, gold frame, the reverse engraved 'Portrait de Madame Elizabeth [sic] de France. Donné par Monsieur Frere du Roi à Madame la Marquise de Buckingham. Août 1797'; last sold by auction at Christies in 2010: 'Marquis P.F. de Lubersac, *Madame Elizabeth*' <<https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/marquis-p-f-de-lubersac-french-fl-c-5371325-details.aspx>> [accessed 19 January 2020]. Listed in *Stowe: A Description of the House and Gardens of the Most Noble and Puissant Prince, Richard Grenville-Nugent-Chandos-Temple, Marquis of Buckingham* (Buckingham: J. Seeley, 1817), p.53.

²⁰⁹ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, p.87; *Short Account*, p.5.

impoverished girls.²¹⁰ Their activities were designed to help them become virtuous Christians and well-informed mothers who were able to earn a living.²¹¹ This involved learning useful skills ('talens [sic] utiles') such as sewing, alongside grammar, English, geography, drawing and music.²¹² The marchioness's commitment was clear even though as with many short-lived female initiatives, evidence is meagre.²¹³ When the school was threatened with closure through lack of funds, she appealed to Lord Grenville for help. Her letter to him on behalf of Miss Macnamara drew attention to the difficult choices faced by destitute émigré parents, reliant on charitable handouts. They had to choose between food, clothing and education:

She desires me to tell you that nothing could have prevailed upon her to break up an establishment that does so much good but the *want of funds*; and that if Government will be as generous as you mentioned in giving 700l., she will undertake to educate, board, lodge and clothe the children *without taking any of the Committee money*, which would be great help to the parents, and induce them to put their children to the school, instead of keeping them, as many do for the sake of the weekly allowance, in their wretched garrets, naked, starved and without instruction.²¹⁴

Shortly after this letter, pupil numbers fell when many émigrés, including Madame de Saisseval, returned to France following the Concordat of 15 July 1801;²¹⁵ others followed as result of the Peace of Amiens, signed on 25 March 1802. No longer needed, the marchioness's school merged with Carron's school for girls in 1802.²¹⁶ The building, Blythe House, then became a home for twenty-four émigré clergy.²¹⁷

Conclusion

Like other impoverished elite female émigrés, Madame de Saisseval accepted with reluctance the help of charitable women in England. This was partly because of aristocratic and national pride but it was also the result of being more accustomed to

²¹⁰ *Fortescue*, vol.6, pp.468-9: Marchioness of Buckingham, Pall Mall, to Lord Grenville, 10 March 1801.

²¹¹ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, pp.87.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ See *Short Account*, p.5: 'Expence [sic] of the School at Hammersmith, consisting of 30 girls, at 10£ each per annum'

²¹⁴ *Fortescue*, vol.6, p.469. Italics as in printed transcript.

²¹⁵ Pontlevoy, *Notice Biographique*, p.26. Dom Bede Camm (ed.), *Sister Mary of St Francis SND, Hon. Laura Petre (Stafford-Jerningham)* (London: R&J Washbourne Ltd., 1913), p.124, recorded that: 'in 1801 Madame de Saisseval secured a portion of her husband's estates'.

²¹⁶ Lubersac, *Journal Historique*, p.88, citing WDA Diary of Bishop Douglass. 26 March 1801.

²¹⁷ D. Bellenger *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789* (Bath: Downside Abbey 1986), pp.78-9, citing WDA, Diary of Bishop Douglass, 30 March 1801.

dispensing largesse than receiving it. Upon her return to France, although she did not pick up the courtly trappings of her old life, she did pick up the thread: she displayed continued allegiance to elite female philanthropic ideals of practical piety through the fulfilment of the second premise of her vow to Madame Élisabeth. With the help of her friend and co-signatory, Madame de Carcado, she established in 1803 a school for orphaned girls: *L'Œuvre des Enfants Délaissés*. Described as 'the link' ('trait d'union') between the charitable institutions of the *ancien régime* and the new order,²¹⁸ it was one of many philanthropic initiatives introduced by the comtesse with the support of her daughter, Aline.²¹⁹ Numerous émigré memoirs recorded the lesson of humility learnt in exile, but this was not a quality the Comtesse de Saisseval had lacked. She had since pre-revolutionary days believed that rank entailed responsibility which should be displayed through good works, the nature of which was dictated by Catholicism, the religion of France.

Like her French counterpart, the marchioness recognised and acted upon the responsibility of rank. Her activity on behalf of the émigrés was a continuance and extension of her support for local and national causes. An increase in the number of refugee women and children provided the stimulus for the development of efficient methods of collecting funds, assessing cases and distributing aid, a process in which the marchioness was actively involved. The hardship of émigrés such as the Saisseval family provided Lady Buckingham with an opportunity to demonstrate and develop her philanthropic capabilities. This display of benevolent aristocratic behaviour, rooted in religious duty, brought the marchioness into contact with the Comte d'Artois and heralded a shift in the motivation behind her offers of support.

²¹⁸ F. Mourret, *Histoire Générale de l'Église: l'Église Contemporaine* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1928), p.40.

²¹⁹ Lastic, *Chronique*, p.368: 'Visite des malades à domicile et dans les hôpitaux, vers 1802; Œuvre des enfants délaissés, 1803; Œuvre des ouvrages, 1811; Œuvre des petits séminaires, 1815; Asile du saint Cœur de Marie; Œuvre de saint Joseph; Œuvre du denier de saint Pierre.'

Chapter Five: Lady Buckingham's Philanthropic Activity, 1796-1812

In order to address questions about the nature and duration of the marchioness's philanthropy, this chapter shifts the emphasis away from the capital, the focus of most emigration studies to date, and reviews interaction with émigrés at the Buckinghams' country houses between 1796 and 1812. It investigates the means Lady Buckingham employed both inside and outside the home of enacting the role of Catholic, pious, elite female, within the normative roles of the Protestant aristocracy. It argues that the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Charles O'Connor as librarian to the marquess, and visits by émigré clergy and then by the Bourbon court, increasingly helped the marchioness to operate a Catholic household within an ostensibly Protestant one. When Lady Buckingham continued to provide relief to émigrés in England long after the majority had returned to France in 1802, her response to changes in the nature of support needed shows an evolution in her interpretation of the traditions of hospitality and charitable obligation that had prescribed her philanthropic activity during her early married life. Questions of motivation are addressed by sources which show that the marchioness undertook an increasingly heavy workload, continuing to fulfil obligations to the local community and her family while displaying through support of the remaining émigrés the hospitality towards strangers dictated by her religion.

The chapter argues that Lady Buckingham benefited from her husband's political and dynastic ambitions in the fulfilment of her different but complementary agenda. Out of respect for Lord Buckingham's wishes, in public she continued to surround her faith in secrecy, but when the Comte de Provence arrived in England in 1807 in need of an ally, the marquess seized the opportunity for advancement and found virtue in his wife's Catholicism. The marchioness's religious belief had previously been an embarrassment to the marquess, but now it became an asset. Empowered both by her religion and her successful philanthropic schemes, she supported her husband as they oversaw together the accommodation of the French royal family and their courtiers at Gosfield then Hartwell, against the wishes of the government who, for reasons of national security, wanted them further from the capital. The chapter demonstrates how the marquess secured the goodwill of the exiled Comte de Provence and the

court by providing accommodation, and by offering entertainment at Stowe, but when their presence legitimised the increasingly open celebration of Mass in the mansion, it attracted criticism of Lady Buckingham's Catholicising influence. Moreover, any benefit an increased Catholic witness may have afforded her after years of secrecy was counteracted by the additional burden that hospitality towards the royal émigrés placed upon her. Anxiety became evident in her eagerness to demonstrate that she was a good and hospitable Catholic who could justify her station in life.

This chapter responds to earlier works on Georgian philanthropy by showing the complementarity of elite female and male roles in public and in private. The discreet use of female aristocratic status was revealed in Donna Andrew's study of the correspondence of Countess Spencer which demonstrated the ways in which an individual could negotiate the boundaries between traditionally accepted public male and private female roles.¹ The countess performed a public function - supporting her community through patronage and philanthropy - from a private place - her home. Andrew's study supported Amanda Vickery's questioning of the notion of 'separate spheres',² which had been used as a metaphor to place men in the public realm and women in the home. As Robert Shoemaker argued, an acceptance of these 'mechanical boundaries' failed to reflect the degree of variety that was evident in lived experience.³ As evidence of overlapping gender roles, the current chapter shows that the Marquess and Marchioness of Buckingham, for differing reasons, deemed the French royal family worthy of their personal support in public and in private. In unison, they trusted their own judgement in defiance of the official line.

Co-operation between aristocratic women and men has been proven to be at the core of political activity. In *Elite Women*, Elaine Chalus showed that networking, canvassing and electioneering were central to elite female agency in shaping the

¹ D. Andrew, 'Noblesse Oblige: Female Charity in an Age of Sentiment', in J. Brewer and S. Stave (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.275-94.

² A. Vickery, A., 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *Historical Journal*, vol.36, no.2 (1993), pp.383-414.

³ R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1998), p.318.

political careers of their male relatives and were an accepted part of their lives.⁴ This thesis has aimed to show that philanthropic activity can be viewed in the same light. John Cannon highlighted female philanthropy as an underexplored area of activity where women's agency was potentially as important as in the 'narrow parliamentary definition of political life' used by Chalus.⁵ Chalus had demonstrated that elite women were politically helpful to their families when they safeguarded kinship interest without attracting adverse publicity. In the same way, carefully managed elite female philanthropic activity could enhance their families' political and social standing. Cannon observed that philanthropic women presented 'the acceptable face of aristocracy' which, as Stephen Howard has shown, was the image which was increasingly projected in biographies and obituaries: 'the didactic display of virtuous women' was a feature of mid to late eighteenth-century England.⁶ He argued that philanthropy was one of the areas in which women had been able to participate in public life.⁷ Late Georgian elite women's agency within philanthropy became more widely recorded in general terms in an attempt to encourage emulation, but the question remains as to whether it was actually more widespread than previously imagined or whether it was simply more often promoted as a virtue.

In light of Cannon's observation, this chapter argues that, like the political hostesses and others who were instrumental in furthering their husbands' political careers, the marchioness actively supported Lord Buckingham's but, although her aim was the same as her peers', her method was different. Her tactics become clearer when a broader definition of politics is adopted, taken to include those activities undertaken to ensure social stability, or lead to social change.⁸ As preceding chapters have shown, through a display of small and large-scale charitable acts Lady Buckingham cultivated the image of a benevolent aristocracy which demonstrated that her husband, burdened with highly criticised wealth, was worthy of his status. She

⁴ E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

⁵ J. Cannon, 'Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-1790, by Elaine Chalus', *English Historical Review*, vol.121, no.493 (2006), pp.1185-6.

⁶ S. Howard, '“A Bright Pattern to all her Sex”: Representations of Women in Periodical and Newspaper Biography', in H. Barker and E. Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow: Longman, 1997), pp.230-49 (p.232).

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.247-8.

⁸ See Shoemaker, *Gender*, p. 232, for this definition of politics, in relation to public actions by women 'intended to change government policy or shape social conditions'.

illustrates the transition to increasingly public displays of benevolence by elite women over the course of the eighteenth century as a means of justifying their position in society. The accommodation and entertainment of the exiled Bourbons and their court was the pinnacle of a lifetime of philanthropy and trumpeted the survival of a proudly tolerant and charitable British aristocracy. But this came at a cost: the frenetic political activity that took a toll on Lord Buckingham's health was matched in intensity by Lady Buckingham's hospitality and charitable initiatives and, in all probability, contributed to her early death.

The surviving evidence reveals the extent to which the marchioness conformed to the norms of female behaviour in support of her husband's ambition and when, how and why she subverted them. Diaries, such as *The Wynne Diaries*, and personal correspondence, largely held at the Huntington Library, to, from and about the marchioness provide evidence of developments in her personal and religious life from 1796 onwards. They give an insight into the mechanics of patronage and the operation of her bi-confessional household during a period of sustained philanthropic activity on behalf of émigrés. *Collection de Portraits et Médailles de Cheveux*,⁹ a book created for, and dedicated to, the marquess and marchioness by a Bourbon courtier, gave thanks for their hospitality to the exiled royal family, and confirms the extent of their personal involvement in the minutiae of émigré support at the highest level.

When the marchioness assisted her husband in a display of status through lavish entertainment, she was reinforcing his sense of entitlement and it is upon records of these events that most interpretations have previously been based. But ambition alone does not explain the upgrading of the Buckingham's support to include the Bourbon royal family. The *Collection* and other sources reveal benevolent acts out of the public eye that suggest a genuinely philanthropic and personal aspect to their hospitality. In addition, published correspondence such as *The Jerningham Letters*,¹⁰ and unpublished letters such as those from her sister-in-law, Elizabeth, Countess of

⁹ BL Add. MS 33793, Marquis de Sy, *Collection de Portraits et Médailles de Cheveux* (London, 1813).

¹⁰ E. Castle (ed.), *The Jerningham Letters, 1780-1843*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1896).

Carysfort (1756-1842), reveal how the marchioness's philanthropy was viewed by her kinship network, while visual and verbal representations show how she was portrayed to the public in her lifetime and beyond. Lady Buckingham's obituary and a contemporary biography provide an insight into eighteenth-century ideals of modest female behaviour, but they also show the opportunities for participation in public life afforded by philanthropy.

Catholic Presence at Stowe

Central to a consideration of the evolution of Lady Buckingham's piety and philanthropy is the question of how open she could allow herself to be about her religious faith. In the early 1790s although the penal laws against Catholics had been relaxed, full emancipation had not yet been achieved. As a result, within the Buckingham household caution continued to dictate a measured approach to the celebration of Mass. It could by that time be conducted without fear of official recrimination, so the practice no longer demanded secrecy; indeed in many households there had been a disregard for restriction on worship for several decades as the laws were rarely enforced. The Buckinghams, however, found themselves in a more delicate position than many, partly because the marchioness was the only Catholic in the Grenville family, partly because Lord Grenville, her brother-in-law, was hoping to drive forward the issue of Catholic emancipation against the wishes of George III.¹¹ This made a degree of moderation advisable, in order not to compromise the growing mood of toleration which could easily be threatened by overt displays of 'Romanish' behaviour. Accusations of 'popery' were periodically levelled against the Grenvilles: those opposed to the family's political manoeuvring in general, and to their strong support for Irish union and Catholic emancipation in particular, focused their attacks upon the marchioness's supposed proselytising influence.¹² On a personal level, keeping Catholic 'comings and goings' at Stowe as low key as possible was a tactful management of the sensibilities of Anna Eliza

¹¹ Although the king enjoyed personal friendships with Catholic families such as the Welds, he was adamant that emancipation contradicted his coronation oath.

¹² See J. Sack, 'The Grenvilles' "Eminence Grise": The Reverend Charles O'Connor and the Latter Days of Anglo-Gallicanism', *Harvard Theological Review* vol.72, no.1/2 (1979), pp.123-42 (pp.127-8): 'Much evidence survives that the staunchly Protestant Grenvilles, despite personal regard even fondness for Lady Buckingham, looked askance at Roman comings and goings at Stowe and especially feared a proselytising tendency in the Marchioness and her immediate ménage'.

Brydges (1779-1836) who married Richard, Earl Temple, in 1796: she was a staunch Protestant, openly opposed to any form of Catholic relief.¹³ She was of great advantage to the family's prestige: when she gave birth to a son in 1797, the marquess and marchioness were able to claim royal lineage, as her ancestors included Henry VII.¹⁴

The first evidence of arrangements for Catholic worship at Stowe is dated 1797.¹⁵ No reliable record exists of how Lady Buckingham conducted her worship at Stowe prior to this date, although Lady Mary recorded that her mother had been allowed annual visits to a Catholic priest in London from 1781, visits which later became more frequent with the help of her aunt, Margaret Nugent.¹⁶ From 1792 the presence of French refractory clergy in England, which coincided with the relaxation of the penal laws, provided increased opportunities for Catholics to celebrate Mass. As noted in Chapter Three, Lady Buckingham's visits to Winchester had given her access to French priests and to the Rev. John Milner who conducted Mass in a Catholic chapel, consecrated in 1792. Senior French clerics whose visits to Stowe are recorded, and who had the authority and opportunity to administer the sacraments to the marchioness, included Jean-François de la Marche, Bishop of St Pol de Léon and the Abbé Noël Paul Thomas Martin, general superior at the French presbytery established at the King's House in Winchester.¹⁷ According to Lady Mary, their presence at Stowe resulted from her father's respect for their intellect.¹⁸ At Winchester he had catered for their academic needs. Kerbiriou noted:

¹³ She admired those who tried to 'save the country from the Dominions of Liberals and Catholics' HL STG Box 4 (22), letter to Percy Grace, 3 April 1829, quoted in H. Young, 'Grenville, Anna Eliza Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-, duchess of Buckingham and Chandos' <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 22 May 2018].

¹⁴ Richard Plantagenet-Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville, 2nd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (1797-1861).

¹⁵ A. Fremantle (ed.), *The Wynne Diaries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935-40) vol.2, p.197.

¹⁶ J. Hirst, *Memoir and Letters of Lady Mary Arundell* (Leicester: [n.pub.], 1894), p.2. Lady Mary recorded his name as Father Thomas Talbot (1727-1795) (Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District). However if the meetings were in London, it was more likely to have been Father James Talbot (d.1790), (Vicar Apostolic of the London District).

¹⁷ See D. Bellenger, 'The French Priests at the King's House, Winchester, 1792-1796', *Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, vol.40, (1984), pp.99-105.

¹⁸ According to T.E. Bridgett (C.S.S.R), 'The Story of the French Exiles: par F.X. Plasse, *Le Clergé Français Réfugié en Angeterre* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1886)', *Dublin Review*, 1887, vol.17, no.1, pp.140-157 (p.149) he also catered for their spiritual needs: 'When the University of Oxford printed and distributed to the priests an edition of the Latin Vulgate Testament, consisting of 2,000 copies, the

une bibliothèque avait été mise à la disposition des hôtes du château par le marquis de Buckingham qui avait fait un abonnement avec une librairie de la ville pour fournir des livres utiles¹⁹

a library was made available to the guests at the castle by the marquess of Buckingham who had subscribed to a local book shop to provide useful books

Lady Mary recalled that Lord Buckingham then hoped that the clerics would enjoy the display of taste and learning in the library at Stowe: '[he invited] several of the French clergy whose attainments in literature were highly appreciated by him ... to the enjoyment of his magnificent library'.²⁰

Lady Mary recollected that when the family was at Stowe 'there were always at least two of the French clergy residing at the house.'²¹ This arrangement was advantageous to all concerned: the marquess's intellectual aspirations were gratified, the priests gained an entry to political circles at Stowe, and the marchioness benefitted from a succession of priests to conduct Mass. If Hirst paraphrasing Lady Mary is to be believed, it was at their request that the oratory which subsequently became the marchioness's sanctuary was created:

On the representations made by these learned and pious men, that if they were to be his visitors he must allow them a place, however small, where they could celebrate Mass, Lord Buckingham desired the groom of the chambers to prepare rooms for them, opening one onto the other one of which led in to a closet lighted by one window, only seven feet by ten, but large enough to contain a large table which served as an altar. 'And this closet', wrote her daughter forty years after, 'for the remainder of my mother's life was her oratory.'²²

An unsigned, undated, framed print of a priest within such a room was recently found in the archive at Stowe.²³ The image may, with further investigation, shed light on the location of the oratory within the mansion. More evidence that French Catholic priests were house-guests at Stowe was provided by Elizabeth, Lady Fremantle,²⁴ a frequent visitor to the house. She noted the presence of three priests in

Marquess had 2,000 more printed at his own expense.' My own search of Plasse, *Clergé*, found only a reference to the copies provided by the university. Hirst, *Memoir*, p.4, repeated Bridgett's version.

¹⁹ L. Kerbiriou, *Jean-François de la Marche, Evêque-Comte de Léon* (Quimper; Paris: Le Goaziou, 1924), p.450.

²⁰ Hirst, *Memoir*, p. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ I am grateful to Anna McEvoy for this information.

²⁴ E. Chalus, 'Fremantle [née Wynne] Elizabeth [Betsey] Lady Fremantle (1778-1857)' <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 22 April 2019].

1799: ‘There is mass every day as three priests are now in the house’.²⁵ Although the priests were generally not identified, the names of the Abbé Martin and the Bishop of St Pol de Léon featured in diary entries recounting visits to Stowe in the 1800s.²⁶

Elizabeth, Lady Fremantle (née Wynne), known as Betsey, arrived in England in 1797. Her reception by Lady Buckingham illustrates a different aspect of benevolence towards those affected by revolution and war. Betsey’s case is significant because it highlights the fact that refugees of the revolution appeared in multiple guises, not all of them French. Lord Buckingham was the patron of Thomas Francis Fremantle (1765-1819), captain of the ship that carried Betsey to safety when she and her family, the Wynnes, were forced to flee their home on the continent ahead of Napoleon’s advance.²⁷ The first mention of Stowe in her diary was on 2 December 1797 when she described Stowe as ‘a most magnificent place.’²⁸ She was by this time married to Fremantle, who had suffered an injury during the attack on Santa Cruz de Tenerife where Nelson had lost his arm.²⁹ The marchioness responded to Captain Fremantle’s need to convalesce by inviting the couple to stay at Stowe until his recovery was complete.³⁰ As traditions of patronage and hospitality demanded, Lord Buckingham took care of financial compensation for his protégé,³¹ while Lady Buckingham welcomed his new wife into their circle. After her first meeting with the marchioness, Betsey noted: ‘Nothing can be more attentive and civil than Lady B. is to me. She has the most pleasing and engaging manners.’³²

A coming together of several different strands of the marchioness’s philanthropy can be observed through her treatment of the new arrival. From the outset, the hostess exhibited accomplishment and benevolence. On the young woman’s first visit, Lady Buckingham established a rapport by taking her on a tour of the house, focusing on works of art. The conscious exhibition of taste and skill elicited the admiration of

²⁵ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries* (1952), p.303.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.292, 361; P. Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent’s Journal of her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* (Barbados: University of West Indies Press, 2002), p.261.

²⁷ Chalus, ‘Lady Fremantle’.

²⁸ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.2, p.197.

²⁹ Chalus, ‘Lady Fremantle’.

³⁰ L. Kennedy, *Nelson and his Captains* (1951; London: Penguin, 2001), p.103.

³¹ E.J. Hounslow, *Nelson’s Right Hand Man: The Life and Times of Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Fremantle* (Stroud: The History Press, 2016), p.103.

³² Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.2, p.197.

Betsey, who was a talented watercolourist: ‘There are some most beautiful paintings, several of her own doing, likewise that are very fine.’³³ The marchioness then demonstrated her largesse to Betsey by displaying her interest in maternity provision. The guest, who was six months pregnant, was taken to call on ‘a Mrs Dardies that lives in small cottage in the garden.’ The woman was ‘a Catholic ... uncommonly big with child’.³⁴ Three months later Betsey was a beneficiary of a personal touch which was typical of Lady Buckingham’s generosity: when her first child was born she received a crib which the marchioness’s youngest son George had made and she had ‘fitted up’.³⁵ Throughout their acquaintance, Lady Buckingham set the example of aristocratic magnanimity towards her community. For instance, in 1800 Betsey recorded a visit to the local school in which, as archival evidence has shown, the marchioness showed an active interest: ‘walked with Lady B. to the school where the children are taught plain work, knitting, spinning, weaving &c. &c.’³⁶

When Lady Buckingham took Betsey to visit Mrs Dardies, she not only selected someone who was pregnant like her new protégé, she introduced her to a fellow Catholic in the locality. This diary entry is illustrative of a strong emphasis on Catholicism in Betsey’s accounts of her first visit to Stowe. She revealed the presence of co-religionists in the mansion at Christmas time, 1797: ‘Miss Macnamara and the Abbé Martin arrived today. She is a Catholic and great favourite.’³⁷ Many of the émigré clergy whom Lady Buckingham had helped returned to France in 1801, but some of those who remained were entertained at Stowe to musical evenings, fine dining, parlour games and garden walks. As was seen above, their spiritual needs were met with provision for worship in the mansion. To Betsey’s delight she was able to go to Mass ‘almost every morning’ in Miss Macnamara’s room ‘where there is a nice little chapel fitted up.’³⁸ Lady Mary had

³³ Ibid. Lady Buckingham’s artistic skill and patronage were well-known: G. Brown, *A New Treatise on Flower Painting* (1797; London: G. Riley, 1799), p.4; A. Collins, *Peerage of Great Britain* (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1812), vol.2, p.615. A paint palette confirming that she studied under Reynolds has recently come to light in the Royal Academy. I am grateful to Dr Myles Campbell for this information. See <<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/palette-with-colours-set-by-sir-joshua-reynolds-p-r-a-for-mary-marchioness>> [accessed 22 January 2020].

³⁴ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.2, p.197.

³⁵ Ibid., vol.2, pp.203-4.

³⁶ Ibid., vol.3, p.26. See Chapter Two of this thesis.

³⁷ Ibid., vol.2, p.197.

³⁸ Ibid.

claimed that her father had obliged her mother for some years to celebrate Mass behind a screen.³⁹ Without implying any kind of coercion, Betsey confirmed this practice, a pointless precaution as everyone knew she was there: ‘Lady B. does not show herself but is present’.⁴⁰

It is not clear whether the ‘little chapel’ and ‘the oratory’ referred to earlier are the same, but whatever the place and manner of her attendance at Mass, from at least 1797 the marchioness had access to the services of émigré Catholic priests at Stowe. The service was still conducted in relative privacy but was no longer a source of embarrassment to the marquess. He and his wife had fulfilled an aristocratic duty by displaying the fashionable virtue of benevolence towards émigré clergy. The practice of the marchioness’s faith through Mass became less contentious when it was, at least ostensibly, for the benefit of the oppressed priests.

Catholic presence at Stowe increased further when the Irish Catholic scholar, the Rev. Dr. Charles O’Conor (1764-1828), was appointed as resident librarian to Lord Buckingham in 1798.⁴¹ His appointment was the result of patronage links forged in Ireland.⁴² In O’Conor the marquess found someone who shared his academic interest in Irish history, and his ideals of nobility as ‘a stimulus to the ranks beneath it’.⁴³ This recognition of aristocratic duty was accompanied by O’Conor’s praise for the British constitution, but robust condemnation of the Penal Laws as ‘the most ferocious bondage that ever disgraced the annals of a civilized nation’.⁴⁴ Courtesy of Lord Buckingham, the Grenvilles therefore found in their midst a vehement advocate

³⁹ T. Brindle ‘A Conversion under the Old Penal Laws’ *The Rambler: A Catholic Journal and Review*, new ser., vol.3 (London, 1855), pp.44-59, 117-26 (p.125).

⁴⁰ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.2, p.197.

⁴¹ I have been unable to locate an official record of O’Conor’s appointment as chaplain. For biography, see W. O’Sullivan, ‘O’Conor Charles (1764-1828)’ <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 16 January 2018]; ‘Dr O’Conor’, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, (November 1828), p.466; ‘The Reverend Charles O’Conor’ *Irish Magazine and Monthly Asylum for Neglected Biography*, vol.4 (1811), pp.134-6; ‘Rev. Chas. O’Conor and the Marquis of Buckingham’, *Irish Magazine*, vol.5 (1812), pp.406-7.

⁴² During his second viceroyalty of Ireland, Lord Buckingham had become acquainted with O’Conor’s grandfather, Charles O’Conor (1710-1791), an eminent antiquarian and historian to whom he granted a pension.

⁴³ Expressed in his biography of his grandfather, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late Charles O’Conor* (Dublin: J. Mehain, 1796), pp. iv-v, cited in G. Costigan, ‘The Tragedy of Charles O’Conor: An Episode in Anglo-Irish Relations’, *American Historical Review*, vol.49, no.1 (1943), pp.32-54 (p.35).

⁴⁴ O’Conor, *Memoirs* pp.x-xi, quoted in Costigan, ‘Tragedy’, p.35.

of emancipation. Appointed to the socially respectable post of librarian, as opposed to the more contentious one of chaplain, in the sixth year of the Buckingham's involvement in supporting French Catholic émigrés, O'Connor became an acceptable Catholic presence within an elite Protestant household. He was engaged as an academic, but he was ideally placed to provide the marchioness with an on-site chaplain of her own persuasion; whereas the émigré clergy were only 'resident' from time to time, O'Connor became a permanent member of the household. The daily practice of Holy Communion at Stowe cannot be substantiated with absolute certainty, although Hirst made the reasonable assumption that when O'Connor was appointed:

his residence in the house at Stowe, owing to a constant necessity of having recourse to the MSS, ensured to the Marchioness a daily Mass and the ineffable happiness of daily Holy Communion.⁴⁵

Its likelihood can be surmised: like the visiting émigré bishop, a Catholic cleric of O'Connor's standing would not have accepted the post of resident librarian without an assurance of suitable provision for the practice of his faith. O'Connor's biographer noted that he was allocated a specific room in the mansion for the celebration of Mass, but that the room reverted to its former use as a dressing room upon the death of Lady Buckingham.⁴⁶ Again, this could be the room in the print, referred to earlier.

The domestic proximity of O'Connor to the marquess and thereby to such important political actors as his brother, William Wyndham Grenville, Foreign Secretary from 1791 to 1801, and their cousin, William Pitt, Prime Minister from 1783 to 1801 and from 1804 to 1806, has been explored in earlier studies on the Grenvilles, notably 'Eminence Grise' by James Sack. Sack recognised *en passant* the strength of Lady Buckingham's personality: he described her as 'formidable'.⁴⁷ This adds a new dimension to an elite female more usually described as wealthy, lively, and a skilled musician and artist,⁴⁸ descriptions which have hardly served to distinguish her from

⁴⁵ Hirst, *Memoir*, p.8.

⁴⁶ Sullivan, 'O'Connor'.

⁴⁷ Sack, 'Eminence Grise', p.138. This description is borne out by Melesina Trench's comments. See Chapter Two.

⁴⁸ A.P.W. Malcolmson, *In the Pursuit of an Heiress: Aristocratic Marriage in Ireland 1750-1820* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1982), p.22; J. Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p.67; M. Bevington, *Stowe Landscape Gardens* (1997; London: The National Trust, 2005), p.74.

many of her peers. Like Sack, William Gibson, in his monograph on domestic chaplains, featured Lady Buckingham as a noteworthy presence. Citing O'Connor as an example of a Catholic chaplain with 'a largely secular' role within an elite household,⁴⁹ he noted that the relationship between O'Connor and the marchioness was 'marked by discussion of political matters'; that their letters were 'full of gossip and snippets of news', and that 'she wrote to him of her anxieties'.⁵⁰ This illustrates the secular aspect of their relationship, which was similar to that with other members of the family. However, their shared religious faith united them in a different, private, closer bond than that enjoyed by the others.

A central issue is the difference O'Connor's presence made to the marchioness's life. Apart from assisting her in the practice of her faith, he supported her in two other key areas. Firstly, like her, he seems to have been able to handle the marquess's prickly personality.⁵¹ With a shared antiquarian interest in Irish history – the primary reason for his appointment as librarian – the cleric's intellectual companionship helped to present the politically disappointed marquess with a pastime. He provided Lord Buckingham with a diversion from frustration at a perceived lack of recognition for his services to the Crown, and respite from estate business and building projects. O'Connor also lightened the load of the administrative tasks which fell to the marquess, by maintaining the militia accounts, for example.⁵² This partially relieved the marchioness's feeling of responsibility for her husband's wellbeing: their solicitude for one another is apparent throughout their correspondence.⁵³ Secondly, and of great significance to marchioness's daily life, O'Connor undertook the education of Lady Mary during her difficult teenage years. This task was increasingly beyond the capabilities of Lady Buckingham, not because of a lack of intellectual ability on her part, but because her daughter refused to co-operate with

⁴⁹ W. Gibson, *A Social History of the Domestic Chaplain, 1530-1840* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp.107-11.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* pp.108-9.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.110.

⁵² Gibson, *Domestic Chaplain*, p.108.

⁵³ Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue Esq., Preserved at Dropmore* (London: H.M.S.O., 1892-1927), vol.1, pp.476-7; HL STG Boxes 47 and 48.

her. Initially she persevered, drawing up a strict timetable.⁵⁴ She then explained the problem to her husband:

I am very sorry to give you uneasiness, but can no longer defer acquainting you with Mary's conduct to me, both in justice to her and to myself. I find my health by no means equal to the continual unpleasant scenes I am obliged to go through with her, and I also find that I can be of no manner of use to her. It is enough that I appear to wish her to do any thing to set her against it⁵⁵

Lady Buckingham had attempted to continue to teach her daughter alongside O'Connor but the situation was untenable by 1803:

my being even present at her lessons with Dr O'Connor prevents her from paying the least attention to him and indeed the short time that she is with him is spent in saying and doing the most impertinent things she can invent to plague him.⁵⁶

She felt that her efforts had been in vain:

I had hoped to have been rewarded for the most laborious and painful task that ever mother went through by finding in her at last a friend and companion, but now at the age of sixteen ... she neither consults me or lets me know her thoughts upon any subject even the most trifling, she generally avoids my society⁵⁷

The reverse of the letter is annotated with a message in O'Connor's handwriting: 'She gave me this desiring me to read it to Lady Mary'.⁵⁸ The letter ended with a plea from Lady Buckingham for Lord Buckingham to 'write to some of your sisters to recommend some proper person'.⁵⁹ The matter was somehow resolved; Mary continued under the instruction of O'Connor; her Catholic education was assured. The duty was a trying one, but led to affection on his part (and eventually on hers). Crucially, relieved of the enervating and time-consuming task of educating her daughter, Lady Buckingham was able to deploy her energies elsewhere. While continuing to support local charities,⁶⁰ she cast wider her net of émigré relief.

In brief, O'Connor's significance is not that he exerted any particular influence on Lady Buckingham, religious or otherwise. Indeed, her Catholicism, and the practical application of its tenets, had been central to her life since her teenage years and its hold on her was firmly fixed by the time of O'Connor's arrival at Stowe. It is rather

⁵⁴ HL STG Sch-Ed Box 2 (31): Undated timetable for Lady Mary, written by her mother.

⁵⁵ HL STG Box 34 (12), 1803: Kept among O'Connor's papers and possibly never sent.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ HL STG Accounts Box 169: Charities, 1800-1809; STG Sch-Ed Box 2, 1788-1804.

that he, like Margaret Nugent, Miss Macnamara, the émigré clergy and Betsey Fremantle, provided the marchioness with the companionship of a co-religionist. In addition, although he does not seem to have been officially appointed as chaplain, his presence in the house obviated the need for complicated arrangements for the celebration of Mass. However, as Gibson observed, O’Conor’s role ‘seems to have been a general Christian influence, rather than a sectarian Catholic one’,⁶¹ and this is borne out by the various functions he fulfilled, many of which lightened the marchioness’s marital and familial responsibilities. O’Conor’s dependence upon the patronage of the marquess and marchioness, coupled with feelings of personal fulfilment and material comfort are apparent in his refusal to take advantage of the opportunity to take up an Irish bishopric.⁶²

Lady Buckingham’s letters to O’Conor were sometimes teasing in tone,⁶³ showing that a sense of fun balanced the strong religious faith that informed her capacity for compassion and hard work. Examples of her disregard for protocol allow for a refinement of our understanding of late eighteenth-century elite female sociability. Although Lady Buckingham complied with expectations of female behaviour in some ways, freedom from restraint is apparent in others. Piety and gaiety were not mutually exclusive. Her devoutness, expressed through worship and philanthropy, was just one part of her personality; it did not prevent her from enjoying herself; in fact it seems to have liberated and energized her. Examples of her leisure activities abound. For instance, on a visit to Vauxhall Gardens with a party of family and friends ‘she insisted on going early that she might see all’ and ‘had ordered a Rum Punch, which was much approved of’.⁶⁴ In September 1798, the year of O’Conor’s arrival, Lady Buckingham headed a list of ‘Quality’ in Beaumaris, Anglesey that appeared in the *Oracle and Public Advertiser*.⁶⁵ The list included Lady Mary and Lord George, and Miss Macnamara, at the seaside to enjoy: ‘Bathing Machines, Jaunting Cars, Gigs, Pleasure Boats, elegant Assembly Rooms and other

⁶¹ Gibson, *Domestic Chaplain*, p.110.

⁶² HL STO Box 4 (443) 1800-1803, April 12, Bath. From George Grenville, with a note added by O’Conor ‘Lord Buckingham’s kind letter on my [re]fusing to canvas for an Irish Bishop[ric].’

⁶³ For example, HL STO Box 7 (459), 23 March 1809, Mary Marchioness of Buckingham to Rev. Dr Charles O’Conor, in which she sends him a ‘faring’ (compass?) so that he could look where he is going instead of at the North Star ‘and so be the means of saving his pocket from being pickt[sic].’

⁶⁴ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.3, p.119.

⁶⁵ *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, Saturday 8 September 1798.

conveniences'.⁶⁶ O'Connor was not amongst their number, but six other 'Rev. Doctors' were.⁶⁷

Religious and scholarly men took part in all manner of entertainment organised by the marchioness, including the elderly Bishop of St Pol de Léon, whose workload decreased when the majority of émigré clergy returned to France following the Concordat of 1801. Recording this fusion of benevolence and fun Lady Maria Nugent (1771-1834),⁶⁸ who sometimes visited Stowe at the same time as Betsey, recorded in November 1805:

In the evening Lady Buckingham invented a game called "kiss the doctor", which sent us all to bed very merry. The old Bishop of St Pol de Léon seemed to enjoy the fun as much as any of us.⁶⁹

The marchioness enjoyed scaring her guests to provoke laughter: in 1800, after the traditional Christmas custom of providing food and 'seeing the poor people eat'⁷⁰ she enlivened proceedings for her house-guests when she was 'determined to give them a fright, and had ghosts and apparitions in the Gallery prepared for this purpose'.⁷¹ Betsey became an indispensable part of the circle, with bonds strengthened and continuity ensured by, for example, the regularity of the invitations issued, and Lord Buckingham acting as godfather to one of her sons.⁷²

Betsey was aware of the necessity of playing her part to maintain the goodwill of her husband's patron. The obligation was not always an easy one. Noisy entertainment organised by Lady Buckingham was not to Betsey's taste: 'There was no end to Ghosts and romping all evening, which everybody enjoyed much more than I did.'⁷³ Both she and Fremantle were obliged at times to accept invitations they would have preferred to decline.⁷⁴ Betsey was an asset to the household, especially when, by degrees, the exiled French royal family secured a foothold. A socially adept French speaker with musical talent, as a teenager she had come into contact with the Comte

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Married to George Nugent, the son of Lady Buckingham's half brother, Edmund.

⁶⁹ P. Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent's Journal*, p.261.

⁷⁰ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.3, p.25.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.26.

⁷² Ibid., p.25.

⁷³ Ibid. p.26.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 65: 'He was obliged to go and stay at Stowe'.

d'Artois in Venice in 1791, and had found him 'very amiable';⁷⁵ she had been introduced to the Comte de Provence in 1796 and considered him kind and affable, with 'all necessary qualities to make a *good King*.'⁷⁶ She had played the harpsichord for him, at his request:

The King having wished to hear me play on the Harpsichord it was settled that I should have my Harpsichord carried in the Duke of Villequier's room and that he should come to surprise us there.⁷⁷

'The King Will Definitely Come to Stowe'

The Comte d'Artois was the first member of the French royal family to advance the interests of the Bourbon monarchy through the Buckingham. As noted in Chapter Four, he had come into contact with Lady Buckingham in London in 1795 through her support for Quiberon widows and the school she established for émigré girls. It is possible that his gift of a miniature of Madame Élisabeth in 1797 had been a small but significant step in the process of gaining entry to Stowe through the marchioness, in the hope of securing influential support for the Bourbon cause. By the time of the French prince's first visit to Stowe in December 1801, Lord Buckingham was on the rise, not through political appointment, but through prestigious titles which boosted his self-esteem: in 1800, at his request, Lady Buckingham had been awarded the *suo jure* Irish title, Baroness Nugent of Carlanstown, with special remainder to their younger son, George;⁷⁸ the following year the marquess was awarded the Order of the Garter. Although neither of these made up for the dukedom he felt he deserved, in conjunction with the grandeur of Stowe they were sufficient to impress the French princes, who equated property, titles and royal lineage with influence within the government.

On the first visit of the Comte d'Artois to Stowe, the marchioness requested that Betsey should bring her young son Tom (b.11 March 1798). It allowed Lady Buckingham to demonstrate her interest in infant well-being and may have pandered to the prince's well-known concern over children and their futures. Equally it could

⁷⁵ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries* (1952 edition), p.48.

⁷⁶ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol. 2, pp.77-8. Italics as in original.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.79. Villequier was chamberlain to Louis XVIII.

⁷⁸ For Lord Buckingham's application for the barony, see *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, vol.6, p.273. For Irish peerages and title-bearing women, see P. Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp.512-13, 517.

simply have been a kindly gesture, to provide a distraction at a time when tensions ran high. Betsey noted: ‘Went to Stowe immediately after breakfast with Tom, who was particularly asked in two notes from Lady Buckingham.’⁷⁹ That evening, the small gathering included Miss Macnamara, the Comte d’Artois, the Duc de Condé and his son, the Duc de Bourbon.⁸⁰ The assembled company was entertained by Betsey, who played the pianoforte, a recent acquisition for the marquess’s library, refurbished in an anticipation of a visit by George III, which never took place.⁸¹ This ‘soft’ way into ‘hard’ politics (support for the restoration of the French monarchy) shows use being made of kinship links, patronage and philanthropy, within an ambience created to make the exiled royals feel at ease.

From the moment ‘the french princes settled in England’ observed Hirst, ‘they brought a host of catholic society to the house ... It became necessary to have Mass publicly said in the mansion of Stowe.’⁸² He interpreted this as ‘an immense triumph for the Marchioness’, as if it was what she had been planning all along.⁸³ It seems more likely that the public celebration of Mass fulfilled a wish, not an aim, and was a result of Lord Buckingham turning a blind eye to Catholic ‘comings and goings’, his pride satisfied by the coup of securing royal visitors. Their religion was secondary to their high status. Yet in 1805 in London, Lady Buckingham still persisted in discreet religious practices with the apparent aim of placating her husband, but possibly enjoying the performative element. Lady Jerningham observed:

She is ... quite a Saint in the Belief and practice of every little act of Piety that is cherished in Convents. She walks every morning to hear prayers at Mr Eyre’s Widow’s and is totally taken up with acts of devotion.... she walks about to Succour distress, fasts to subdue herself, and the whole is to be (at Lord Buckingham’s desire) Conducted with Secrecy, but it really is ‘le Secret de la Comédie’ that every person is acquainted with.⁸⁴

The marchioness’s involvement in émigré support could have come to a neat conclusion when the aristocratic Bishop of St Pol de Léon, who spent the last summer of his life at Stowe, died in London at the age of seventy-seven in 1806. A

⁷⁹ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.3, p.64: 12 December 1801.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ This was the large library, as opposed to the Gothic library, which was not constructed until 1806.

⁸² Hirst, *Memoir*, p.8.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.1, p.265: Lady Jerningham to Lady Bedingfield, 25 April 1805.

significant number of clergy had died in exile; many more had returned to France under the terms of the Concordat. As for female religious, the number of English Poor Clares at Gosfield had dwindled to twelve by 1805.⁸⁵ Deaths recorded on a monument in the graveyard of St Catherine's Church Gosfield include that of Emilia Keith (d.1799), writer of the begging letters discussed in Chapter Three.⁸⁶ By this time, whether by design or not, the marchioness's wish had been fulfilled: Catholicism was no longer a closet affair; Mass could legally be celebrated.

The number of lay émigrés had also declined. Madame de Saisseval was amongst those who returned to France as soon as it seemed safe to do so. This raises questions about the Buckingham's continued support for the few remaining émigrés. A combination of philanthropy and hospitality was employed as a means to social advancement but this cannot satisfactorily explain all of the marchioness's charitable acts, the scope of which went broader and deeper and lasted longer than previously thought. It is, however, certainly possible to see in the surviving letters from the Comte d'Artois to Lord and Lady Buckingham (addressed individually), a redoubling of their efforts to secure French royal presence at Stowe:⁸⁷

Les vrais amis se retrouvent toujours et j'en fais la douce épreuve aujourd'hui. Je vous confie pour vous seul et pour la chère marquise que votre lettre m'a trouvé.⁸⁸

Real friends always meet again. I have the delightful proof of that today. I confide to you alone and to the dear marchioness that your letter found me.

Two months later, in his reply to an invitation from Lady Buckingham, the Comte d'Artois expressed the intention of the Comte de Provence ('le Roi') to come to Stowe, but stressed the need to heed the concerns of the British government who had restricted royal émigré movements:

Le Roi ira très sûrement à Stowe; c'est son vœu, son désir, sa volonté... Vous savez que ce voyage a été annoncé et vous savez ce qui est arrivé. Je conviens, et je sens comme vous, que le désir exprimé par le Gouvernement n'a aucun rapport à Stowe, et que mon frère pouvait y aller demain, sans craindre de contrarier le Ministres...

⁸⁵ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.3, p.164.

⁸⁶ Inscriptions on the west and north faces of the monument gave their date of arrival as 27 July 1795, and recorded five deaths between 1797 and 1800. Inscriptions on the east and south sides were not legible.

⁸⁷ See J. Morris, '“La Noble Hospitalité”: The Marquess of Buckingham and the Bourbon Court in Exile in the English Country House, 1807-1814' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Leicester, 2011).

⁸⁸ BRO D/54/44: Charles Philippe (Comte d'Artois) to Marquess of Buckingham, 28 September 1807.

[mais] la réponse qu'il a reçu du Go^{vmt} [sic] et d'après des circonstances qu'on ne peut pas détailler dans une lettre, le roi a pensé (et j'ai partagé son opinion) qu'il était plus sage, plus ferme et plus noble de rester en ce moment tranquille à Gosfield.⁸⁹

The king will definitely come to Stowe; it is his wish, his desire and his request... You know that this journey was announced, and you know what happened. I agree and I feel like you, that desire expressed by the government has nothing to do with Stowe and that my brother could go there tomorrow without fear of going against the wishes of the Ministers...[but following] the response he received from the Government and as a result of circumstances which cannot be elaborated in a letter, the King thought (and I shared his opinion), that it would be wiser, safer and more noble to stay quietly at Gosfield for the time being.

The Comte d'Artois thus made it clear that it would be politically unwise for the king to leave Gosfield where he was accommodated, courtesy of the Buckingham. The main aim was to regroup the Bourbon court as near to London as possible, primed for a return to France.⁹⁰ Any move which might alarm the British government was best avoided.

The Buckinghams' joint philanthropic ventures from 1807 onwards, as discussed briefly here, and in detail in 'La Noble Hospitalité',⁹¹ centred in large part around accommodation for the royal family and their courtiers at Gosfield and Hartwell. Their show of support may have been motivated by their belief that the restoration of the monarchy was the only means of re-establishing the social order. In a letter to the Comte de Provence in November 1807, Lord Buckingham praised his devotion to duty, and expressed the belief that, in time, forces for good would prevail:

La marche de la Providence, quoique lente parait avoir prepare en tout point l'Esprit de la France pour les evenements qui entre les mains de son Dieu pourrait en tout moment rendre la paix a l'Europe et le retablissement de l'ordre social de tout le monde civilisé⁹²

The march of Providence, although slow seems to have prepared the Spirit of France for the events which in the hands of God could at any moment bring peace to Europe and the re-establishment of social order to the civilised world.

The only act which would make peace and order possible ('le seul acte qui nous assurera de nous conserver ces bonheurs'),⁹³ was 'the return of the illustrious

⁸⁹ Ibid: Charles Philippe (Comte d'Artois) to Marchioness of Buckingham, 9 November 1807.

⁹⁰ See P. Mansel, *Louis XVII* (1981; London; John Murray, 2005), pp.137-68.

⁹¹ Morris, 'La Noble Hospitalité'.

⁹² HL STG Box 46 (22) Marquess of Buckingham to Comte de Provence, 27 November 1807.

⁹³ Ibid.

[Bourbon] family to France' ('la rentrée de son Auguste famille en France').⁹⁴ Lord Buckingham nailed his colours to the mast: he considered it his duty to aid the monarchy of France. He acted as 'a public man', a man with the public interest at heart.⁹⁵ He repeated the invitation to Stowe, seconded by his wife:

J'espere que je n'abuse pas des bontes de votre A R en prenant la liberte d'ajouter que vivement penetre de ces sentiments dont comme homme public je ne suis jamais departi j'ose envisager ce moment tant desire avec un interet tout particulier qui m'est inspire par l'attachement tendre et respectueux que je lui est vouee [sic]. Ce sont des vœux que Lady Buckingham partage avec moi.⁹⁶

I hope that I am not taking advantage of your Royal Highness's good nature when I take the liberty of adding that, imbued with those feelings from which as a public man I have never departed, I dare to envisage with particular interest that longed for moment inspired by a tender and respectful attachment to you. Lady Buckingham joins me in these wishes.

Until the relaxation of the penal laws, public spirit would have involved extirpating papacy. Within a climate of, as yet, uneasy toleration, his language of 'the public man' may have been a well-practised defence against criticisms of Catholic influence at Stowe which cast doubt over his allegiance to the king. Despite Buckingham's best efforts to fulfil his public duty, George III had remained indifferent to him. He deployed such language in this instance to further his interests with the French court to compensate for disappointment over such a snub. He allowed personal ambition to masquerade as public duty. The 'longed for moment' referred to in the letter was a French royal visit to Stowe which he hoped would lead to the recognition of services rendered to the 'rightful' king of France. It is also possible, as Mansel has suggested, that he and Lady Buckingham sought a royal match for Lady Mary.⁹⁷ It was certainly a view adopted in French noble circles: it was suggested that following the death of Artois' mistress, the Comtesse Polastron, in 1804,⁹⁸ the Buckinghams did all they could to interest Artois in their daughter. Lord Buckingham, proud of his royal lineage, which was displayed on the ceiling of the newly completed Gothic Library,⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ For a discussion of the duties of 'a public man' see M. McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁹⁶ HL STG Box 46 (22). No accents as in original. Punctuation added to translation for clarity.

⁹⁷ Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, pp.141-2.

⁹⁸ Vicomte de Reiset, *Louise d'Esparbes, Comtesse de Polastron* (Paris: Émile Paul 1907), pp.315-6. This supposition was based on AN Bulletin de Police AF iv1502, January to May 1808.

⁹⁹ Bevington, *Stowe House* (1990; London: Paul Holberton, 2002), p.78: 'Circular panel...painted with 726 armorial bearings of the Grenville, Temple, Nugent and Chandos families'.

would certainly have considered his daughter to be of a suitable pedigree to marry a French prince. Her conversion to the Catholic faith in 1809 would have increased her chances.¹⁰⁰

Although ambition undoubtedly played a part, compassion is evident in the Buckingham's support of fellow aristocrats, banished from their homeland. Personal sources illuminate the reach of their intervention in royal and other émigré support from 1807 onwards. The principal source for this is a leather bound volume, *Collection de Portraits et Médaillons de Cheveux*, containing royal portraits and locks of hair, as well as a copy of the will of Louis XVI and an account of his last moments.¹⁰¹ It was commissioned by the Duc de Sérent, former tutor to the Ducs d'Angoulême and du Berri as an expression of the gratitude of French royal and aristocratic émigrés for the Buckingham's hospitality.¹⁰² Handwritten by the Marquis de Sy, it is of great significance as royal memorabilia, but its relevance to this study lies in the personal nature of the gift. Unlike other expressions of gratitude, such as ancient books presented for preservation and display in the library at Stowe, this volume was dedicated to the marquess in person and did not pass to his son.¹⁰³ Completed after the marquess's death, it was donated to the British Museum by the Duc de Sérent. It is now in the British Library.¹⁰⁴

The volume highlights the activity of Lord and Lady Buckingham behind the scenes, eclipsed by accounts of their extravagant entertaining. A sense of continuity in the support they offered is heightened by the background of the Duchesse de Sérent who was accommodated with her husband by the Buckingham's.¹⁰⁵ Like the Comtesse de Saisseval, she had been a member of the court of Madame Élisabeth,¹⁰⁶ whose miniature had been in Lady Buckingham's possession since 1797. As the princess's senior lady-in-waiting, the Duchesse de Sérent had stayed with her as long as she

¹⁰⁰ Her conversion was recorded in J. Hirst, *Memoir*, p.9.

¹⁰¹ BL Add. MS 33793, *Collection de Portraits*.

¹⁰² Armand-Louis, Duc de Sérent (1736-1822).

¹⁰³ See Rev. C. O'Connor, *Bibliotheca Ms Stowensis* (Buckingham, J. Seeley, 1819), vol.2, pp.23-6 and Morris, 'La Noble Hospitalité', p.46.

¹⁰⁴ S. Nagel, *Marie-Thérèse: The Fate of Marie-Antoinette's Daughter* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008), p.235.

¹⁰⁵ Bonne Marie de Montmorency-Luxembourg, Duchesse de Sérent (1739-1823)

¹⁰⁶ J. Trey 'Une Place Chez Moi': La Maison de Madame Élisabeth', in Trey (ed.), *Madame Élisabeth*, pp.153-157 (p.154).

was allowed, but had not been permitted to accompany her during her incarceration in the Temple 1792 to 1794. Arrested and imprisoned in the Collège du Plessis (Prison Égalité),¹⁰⁷ she later emigrated to Mittau in Latvia with her husband, who continued to accompany his former royal charges.¹⁰⁸ She became lady-in-waiting to Marie-Thérèse, Duchesse d'Angoulême (1778-1851), daughter of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette.¹⁰⁹ When the court was banished from Mittau under the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807, the royal family and courtiers were accommodated by the Buckingham family firstly at Gosfield and then, from April 1809 at Hartwell.¹¹⁰

The dedication of the *Collection* was addressed by the Duc de Sérent to the Marquess of Buckingham and bears his signature. Its first page displays, in the bottom left hand corner, a plan featuring a cottage, 'Brook House', at Hartwell. Described in the introduction, its significance was explained thus:

Je parlerois de la reconnaissance personnelle que je vous dois, Mylord, pour cette précieuse et si touchante amitié qui s'est occupée du soin de me préparer une retraite agréable à la campagne qui put me rapprocher de ma famille, et me procure les douceurs d'une réunion pour laquelle je ne cessois de former de vœux.¹¹¹

I would speak of the personal gratitude I owe you Milord, for this precious and touching friendship which took the trouble to prepare for me a pleasant retreat in the countryside which enabled me to be near my family and obtain for me the delight of a reunion for which I will never cease to be grateful.

The Duc de Sérent included the marchioness in his expression of gratitude, linking the closeness of his bond with her to her benevolence and her Catholicism, the latter only revealed to him upon the death of the Bishop of St Pol de Léon in 1806. This provides evidence of their contact prior to that date, and of Lady Buckingham's discretion:

C'est un de bienfaits dont je rends grâce à la Providence que celui de m'avoir rapproché de votre intimité et celle de votre excellente et respectable épouse, pour que j'aie été à portée de connaître, d'apprécier, parmi beaucoup d'autres vertus, cette bienfaisance inépuisable, dont une partie des secretes [sic] dispositions m'a été

¹⁰⁷ M. Carey (trans.), *Prison Journal during the French Revolution by the Duchesse de Duras* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1892), p.102.

¹⁰⁸ Nagel, *Marie Thérèse*, p. 207.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Their daughter, Anne-Félicité Simone de Sérent, later Comtesse de Damas, (1772-1848) accompanied them and also served a lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse d'Angoulême. Their sons had been killed in battle in 1796.

¹¹¹ BL. Add. MS 33793, *Collection de Portraits*.

confiée lorsque nous avons perdu un ami commun dans le digne et vertueux évêque de Léon.¹¹²

One of the blessings for which I thank Providence is that of bringing me close to you and your excellent and respectable wife, in whom I got to know, to appreciate, among many other virtues, this inexhaustible benevolence, and a part of whose secret dispositions was confided in me when we lost a mutual friend in the worthy and virtuous bishop of Léon.

Two letters and three notes show the amicable nature of the contact between the Duc de Sérent and the marchioness.¹¹³ The closing lines of a letter, written on behalf of the Comte d'Artois providing detailed arrangements for a royal visit to Stowe, are striking in their informality: 'Oh mon dieu, mon dieu, comme vous baillez, de tout ce discours, et moi aussi, pas mal, à dire vrai'.¹¹⁴ ('Oh my god, my god, how you must yawn, at this lengthy speech, and me too, truth to tell').

While the Bourbon court was accommodated at Gosfield, then Hartwell,¹¹⁵ dinners at Stowe were organised for their entertainment. The Duc and Duchesse de Sérent, and their son-in-law and daughter, the Comte and Comtesse de Damas, were included in the mainly Catholic guest list at a dinner on 9 October 1807. Betsey Fremantle was present at the same event, and recorded it in her journal, along with a seating plan which placed Lady Buckingham between 'le Roi' and 'la Reine'.¹¹⁶ O'Connor's place at the top table confirms the consolidation of his status within the household. This was in line with a growing tendency for learned chaplains with acceptable social skills to be allowed such a privilege,¹¹⁷ but, more significantly, it shows a relaxation in the marquess's sensitivities over Catholic presence within his Protestant household. This is confirmed by full provision being made for Mass the next day. Betsey observed: 'Her humpbacked Majesty [Marie-Joséphine de Savoie] made her appearance at eleven o'clock to attend Mass, with all the Poperies'.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ HL STG Box 48 (17), 1807; HL STG Box 48 (18), 1808, and HL STG Box 48 (22-24) undated.

¹¹⁴ HL STG Box 48 (18), Duc de Sérent to Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham, 6 January 1808

¹¹⁵ Gosfield: November 1807 to April 1809; Hartwell: April 1809 to April 1814.

¹¹⁶ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.3, p.319.

¹¹⁷ Rather than alone or with the steward and other domestic staff. See Gibson, *Domestic Chaplain*, pp.43-9.

¹¹⁸ Fremantle (ed.), *Wynne Diaries*, vol.3, pp.319-320.

Other Ranks, Patronage Links and Familial Obligations

The evidence presented so far suggests two sides to the Buckingham's support for high-ranking émigrés. On the one hand, the marquess, aided by the marchioness, reinforced his aristocratic status by courting favour with the exiled king, possibly in the hope of personal recompense for showing support for the Bourbon cause. This hospitality was accepted and acknowledged by the future Louis XVIII. On the other hand, courtiers such as the Duc de Sérent benefited from kindly gestures of a more humble nature, and not all the recipients of the Buckingham's generosity at this stage were noble. The personal correspondence of the marchioness reveals that her benevolence towards those affected by the revolution extended far beyond that generally acknowledged. For example, as Dominic Bellenger recorded, upon the death of the Bishop of St Pol de Léon, his landlady, Mrs Silburn, was provided with a home at Gosfield.¹¹⁹ Mrs Silburn had personally raised money for the relief of the émigré clergy, kept accounts for the Bishop of St Pol de Léon, and helped with the distribution of relief fund.¹²⁰ Her dedication and loyalty were recognized by the marchioness, whose letters show the level of attention she paid to the comfort of the elderly widow.¹²¹ By 1808 Mrs Silburn was accommodated in a cottage at Gosfield, the same location as a reduced community of Poor Clares, the Comte de Provence, and approximately 130 members of the Bourbon court.

Details that emerge from five surviving letters to Mrs Silburn exemplify the personal touches that characterized the marchioness's approach to philanthropy.¹²² In a hurried state, which was increasingly remarked upon, and will be discussed later in this chapter, she wrote a note enquiring after Mrs Silburn, and informing her of the arrangements for the delivery of a bust of the deceased bishop of St Pol de Léon.¹²³

¹¹⁹ D. Bellenger, 'Dorothy Silburn (1753-1820), Mother of the Exiled French Clergy', *Northern Catholic History*, issue 17 (1983), pp.14-16, 28 and issue 20 (1984), pp.18-20.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹²¹ HL STG Box 202 (29), June to September 1808.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ The bust was possibly made by marchioness: Elizabeth George listed sculpture as one of her accomplishments. G. Clarke, 'The Journal of Elizabeth George of Dadford', in G. Clarke (ed.), *Recollections of Nineteenth-Century Buckinghamshire*, vol.31 (1998), pp.65-123(p.117). In 1805, the marchioness had arranged for a bust of (General) George Nugent, her half brother's son, for Maria Nugent, his wife. 'An excellent likeness', it had been much appreciated by the recipient: Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent's Journal*, p.259.

I scrawl these few lines to say that by this day, Waggon goes to Gosfield our dear Bishops Bust directed for Mrs Silburn Gosfield Park Cottage to be left at the Kings Head Gosfield village. It is in a packing case. I suppose Mr Lambert can send it to your house in his cart but care should be taken it is not shaken too much.¹²⁴

As a further touch she added: ‘I send by the coach some gardening implements which may amuse you.’¹²⁵ Just as she had provided equipment for tapestry work to encourage the gainful employment of the émigré clergy at Winchester, she provided garden tools to keep Mrs Silburn occupied. A later letter still showed concern for Mrs Silburn’s health, but at the same time Lady Buckingham emphasised her rank by excusing herself for not writing sooner as a result of preparing for a visit to Stowe by the Prince of Wales:

I am a very bad correspondant [sic] at all times but am more particularly so now having had a good deal to do; and being now employed in preparing to receive the Prince of Wales who has given a very few days notice of his intention of coming to Stowe; and though he particularly desires to be received as a private person, still it requires some thought.¹²⁶

Her attention to Mrs Silburn was not entirely disinterested. With the Bourbon court accommodated in Gosfield Hall, it was useful to have someone on site who could report on their activities:

pray when you find it convenient to write give me as many particulars as you can about the very interesting progress at the Hall. I suppose you have by this time seen the Duchess d’Angoulême if not the Queen. I wish to know exactly what you think of them, - what would I give to be at Gosfield.¹²⁷

Returning her attention to Mrs Silburn, she asked for reassurance that the cottage was comfortable, and offered practical advice: ‘If you have chimney smoke you had best consult Master Newton who is famous for curing them.’ While stressing that Lord Buckingham was as anxious as she was to ensure the comfort of their new tenant, Lady Buckingham made it clear that she had been obliged to defer her own wish to visit Gosfield: ‘this is not the World to do all we like in.’¹²⁸

Lady Buckingham’s activity was constrained because Lord Buckingham was suffering from a bout of ill-health, possibly from overwork, as during his viceroyalty. The couple spent time at Wotton to aid his recovery:

¹²⁴ HL STG Box 202 (29), Mary, Marchioness of Buckingham to Mrs Silburn, 13 June 1808.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 30 September 1808.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Lord Buckingham has been very unwell for these 2 months past; we are but just returned from Wotton which is a place he is very fond of and I think he is much better for the stay he made there.¹²⁹

As well as being attentive to the marquess when he was unwell, the marchioness participated fully in her husband's public displays of benevolence towards the royal émigrés; these high profile cases are well known. Private endeavours on the other hand, by their very nature, are hardly known at all. It was out of deference to the Bishop of St Pol de Léon that she helped the middle-class Mrs Silburn, thereby extending the web of the Buckinghams' patronage.

An urgent message in the margins of a letter from Lady Buckingham to O'Conor suggests that even seemingly random acts of kindness can be traced to patronage links. See transcript below and Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.

Get a 5 pound note from Parrot [the estate steward] to give to Mr Hersan for the use of Baron Poly's widow. I will send you the 5£ by another post but lose no time as the woman is starving. Tell Monsr Hersan to lay out the money for Baron Poly's widow that she may not spend it on the funeral.¹³⁰

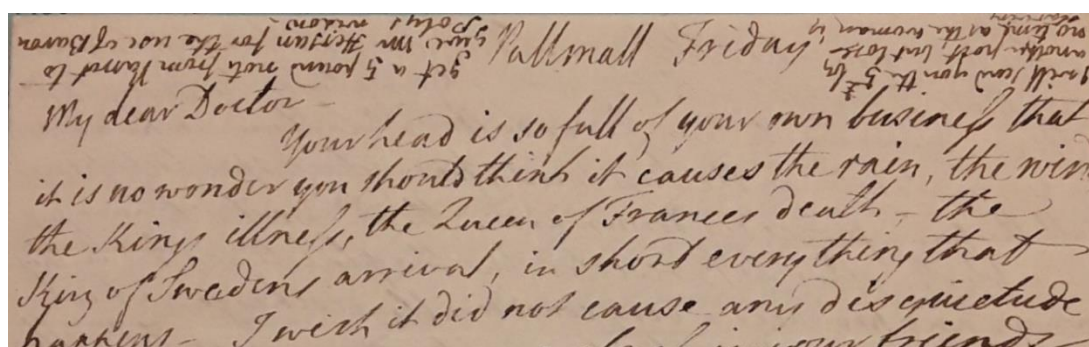


Figure 5.1. Marchioness of Buckingham to Rev. Dr Charles O'Conor, Pall Mall, 24 December 1810 (extract). STO Box 8 (468). The Huntington Library, San Marino, California

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ HL STO Box 8 (468) Mary Elizabeth Grenville to O'Conor, Pall Mall, 24 December 1810.

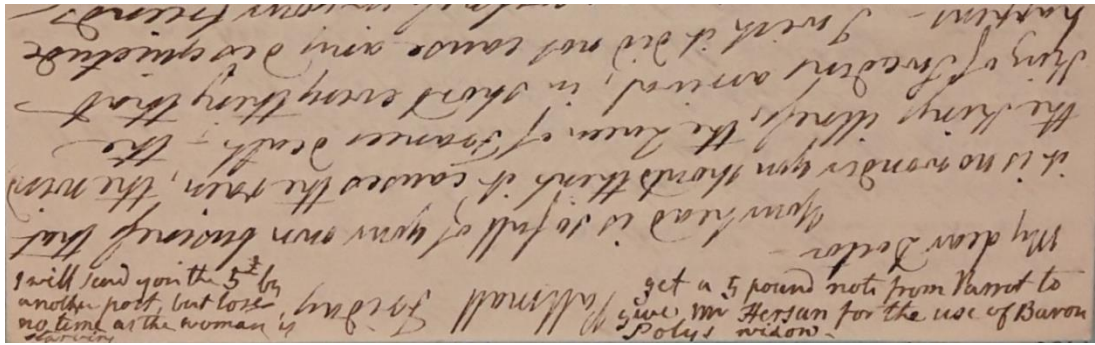


Figure 5.2. Marchioness of Buckingham to Rev. Dr Charles O'Connor, Pall Mall, 24 December 1810 (extract, top of page, inverted). STO Box 8 (468).

The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

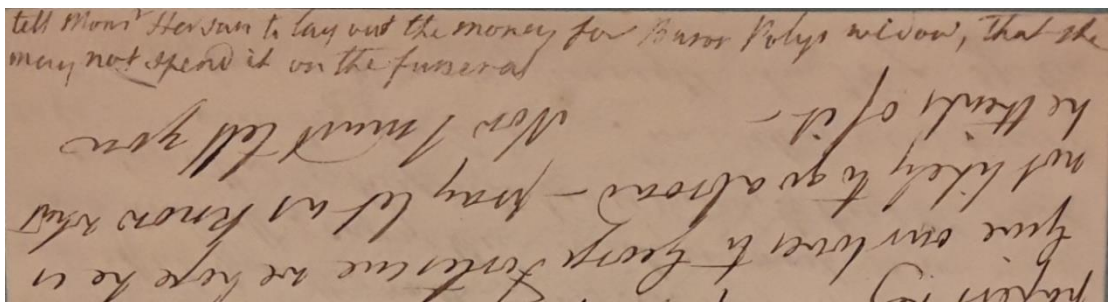


Figure 5.3. Marchioness of Buckingham to Rev. Dr Charles O'Connor, Pall Mall, 24 December 1810 (extract, bottom of page, inverted). STO Box 8 (468).

The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

The daughter of ‘Baron Poly’s widow’ later recorded that ‘the marquess of Buckingham kindly patronised and assisted our family ... and proposed taking me in’.¹³¹ It is possible that the marquess’s support stemmed from the marchioness’s contact with Baroness de Poly when she and her husband arrived in London in the early days of the emigration. They had lived in poverty in St Georges Fields and tried moneymaking ventures such as embroidery and straw hat-making, activities in which the marchioness is known to have been involved.¹³²

O’Conor assisted the marchioness by carrying out charitable requests such as this in her absence, but it was she who drew attention to the need. This example of personal interest shown in 1810 illustrates the continued support of Lord and Lady Buckingham for individual cases, while sharing the task of organising large scale events to entertain the royal émigrés. They also continued to subscribe to nationwide

¹³¹ Baroness de Poly, *Memoirs de la Famille de Poly* (Northampton: J. Abel, 1822), p.126

¹³² See Poly, *Memoirs* p.128.

charitable schemes.¹³³ Thus, the aristocratic tradition of personal charitable donations to individuals continued alongside organised relief. Their philanthropy served a dual purpose: largesse enabled them to parade their status as had traditionally been the case, but it was also used to demonstrate an appropriate use of wealth. The Buckingham's activities suggest strongly that post-revolutionary anxiety over the need to justify the privileges of rank led to an escalation of their philanthropic acts.

Personal correspondence makes it clear that Lady Buckingham continued to fulfil her kinship and familial obligations too. Her active participation in the education of her two youngest children has already been noted, so has her nurturing of Betsey Fremantle and her family. She was also supportive of Lady Maria Nugent, including being involved in the care of her children when she accompanied her husband to India in 1811.¹³⁴ Lady Buckingham's status as moral guardian of the young within the kinship network is apparent from an apology for lying written to her by Lady Maria's daughter, Louisa, in January 1812, when she was about eleven years old:¹³⁵

I am really sorry for what I have done and will in future take a lesson from this never to do it again... Pray do allow me write to you. I have read this morning one of Dr Watt's hymns against lying instead of my usual one¹³⁶

Public and Private Opinion of Lady Buckingham's Philanthropy

'Character of the Right Honorable Countess Temple', *Hibernian Magazine*, Lubersac, *Journal Historique* and Rennel, *Principles*, published during the marchioness's lifetime, provided glimpses of favourable public opinion of her philanthropy.¹³⁷ However, opinions were divided, especially when an increased and more overt Catholic presence at Stowe raised suspicion of the marchioness's influence. A satirical print, James Gillray, *L'Enfant Trouvé*, published in May

¹³³ HL STG Accounts, Box 169: Charities 1740-1884.

¹³⁴ Wright, *Lady Nugent's Journal*, p.xv.

¹³⁵ Louisa Elizabeth Fremantle (née Nugent) (c.1800-75). In 1824 she married Betsey Fremantle's son, Thomas, later 1st Baron Cottesloe.

¹³⁶ HL STG Box 47 (5), Louisa Fremantle to Mary Elizabeth Grenville.

¹³⁷ 'Character of the Right Honorable Countess Temple' in Walker (ed.), *The Hibernian Magazine or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge* (Dublin, 1783), pp.169-170; L'Abbé de Lubersac, *Journal Historique et Religieux de l'Émigration* (London, 1802), pp.3-11, 25, 86-7 and T. Rennel, *Principles of French Republicanism...Preached on Sunday 26th October 1793 in ...Winchester* (London: F and C. Rivington, 1793), 2nd edition, p.25.

1808,¹³⁸ attacked the Grenvillites promotion of Catholic emancipation by targeting the marchioness's philanthropy (Figure 5.4). Her care for infants was used as a defining feature, showing that this aspect of her work was widely known. Presented from behind, the marchioness's posterior, draped in black, is embellished with a huge red crucifix.¹³⁹ Although her face is concealed by a black hood there is no mistaking her identity: she is surrounded by the recognizable Grenville family and the label on a basket placed on the table in front of her reads: 'For the Marchioness Broadbot[om]'.¹⁴⁰ The marchioness's nefarious influence is signified everywhere. The setting is an oratory, the marquess, in military uniform, wears a crucifix instead of a sword attached to his belt, and his brothers, Thomas and William, are dressed as monks with rosaries around their necks. The image, showing female 'Popery' at work is a highly charged indictment of the political implications of Lady Buckingham's charity.¹⁴¹ The caption guided the viewers' interpretation:

L'Enfant Trouvé - a Sample of Roman Charity - or - The misfortune of not being born with marks of the Talents - What a relation to the Broadbottoms? O Sainte Marie! Why there's not the least appearance of it! - therefore take it to the workhouse directly!

The term 'Roman Charity' demeans the life-saving act of filial devotion portrayed by many artists over the centuries: the classical myth of Pero breastfeeding her starving imprisoned father, Simon. The ironic use of the term to depict the marchioness's refusal to care for an abandoned baby maliciously suggested that Roman (Catholic) charity did not embrace all; Lady Buckingham's selective benevolence only saved those who served the Grenville family interests: the 'Talents' and 'Broadbottoms'. These terms were instantly recognizable to contemporaries as shorthand for the Ministry of All the Talents, formed by Lord Grenville in February 1806, and for those who, like the Grenvilles, were in favour of cross-party government. It echoed the visual portrayal of a family with oversized buttocks. Laden with criticism of

¹³⁸ J. Gillray, *L'Enfant Trouvé - a Sample of Roman Charity -or- the Misfortune of Not Being Born with Marks of the Talents*, published by H. Humphrey, 19 May 1808.

¹³⁹ The description in this paragraph is based on: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1640470&partId=1 [accessed 20 March 2017].

¹⁴⁰ The event that gave rise to the print was reported a few days earlier: an orphaned baby had been left outside the Buckingham's residence in Pall Mall in a basket labelled 'To the humane care of the Marchioness of Buckingham.' "Accidents and Offences &c.", *Examiner*, 15 May 1808.

¹⁴¹ See C. McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze: Prints of Women in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004) for representations of female power as politicians, wives and mothers.

Lady Buckingham's influence within the Grenville family, the image demonstrates that despite attempts at discretion and secrecy, which persisted throughout her life, her philanthropy and religion attracted unfavourable comment from those opposed to full emancipation for Catholics.



Figure 5.4. James. Gillray, *L'Enfant Trouvé – a Sample of Roman Charity – or – the Misfortune of not being Born with the Marks of the Talents*, published by Hannah Humphrey, 19 May 1808. © Trustees of the British Museum

Her religion detracted from her philanthropy: one obituary noted that she was ‘beloved by the poor, to whom she paid many personal attentions, and to whose wants her hand and her purse were ever open’ but because of her Catholic faith ‘we have ever regretted the influence which she had on the minds of her family’.¹⁴² The previous year, the *Morning Herald* printed an article which stated that Thomas Grenville ‘[had] been converted to the Roman Catholic religion by the Marchioness of Buckingham’ and that Earl Temple and ‘Lord G. Grenville’ had done the same. It cited the marriage of Lady Mary to the Earl of Arundell (in 1809) as proof.¹⁴³

¹⁴² ‘Biographical Memoir’, *The Literary Panorama*, vol.11 (June 1812), p.1192.

¹⁴³ Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *The Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore* (London: H.M.S.O., 1892-1927), vol. 10, p.187, Earl Grey to W.W. Grenville, 1811.

It was not until 1812 that the marchioness's willingness to engage directly with social problems was publicly praised, as it had been decades earlier. Two months before her death, by which time George III was incapacitated, his son had been declared Regent and progress towards emancipation was well underway, making her Catholicism less of an issue, she was the subject of a biography in *La Belle Assemblée*.¹⁴⁴ The male editor voiced the views of those late Georgian men and women who were anxious to stem the rising tide of female activity outside the home:¹⁴⁵

The lustre of female excellence shines brightest in domestic circles; it is for that they are formed and fashioned; and there they find the true sense of their most active benevolence.¹⁴⁶

Significantly, the writer made an exception in the case of Lady Buckingham who demonstrated what could be achieved for the general good by a female who made appropriate use of her rank: there were times when 'superior merit must and will display itself.'¹⁴⁷ Lady Buckingham assiduously fostered patronage links - with the Fremantles for example - but behind the scenes, as well as in public, she acted upon a personal sense of social responsibility, using her rank and her contacts to improve the condition of those less fortunate than herself. In the opinion of the writer in *La Belle Assemblée* she had succeeded so well in striking the balance between virtue and the public display of it that she was an example for other women to follow.

The views of family members and fellow Catholics at the end of Lady Buckingham's life test the extent to which this account matched reality. The concern expressed by her sister-in-law, the Countess of Carysfort,¹⁴⁸ indicated that the marchioness's display of Catholicism and exaggerated sense of duty had led her to neglect her own wellbeing:

Lady Buckingham I am sorry to say looks shockingly but between the Catholicité & all her various concerns she is so affairéd that she has not five minutes to spare in which she can tell her case to the medical people much less to la parenté who have in vain called upon her every hour from ten in the morning to ten at night. I believe

¹⁴⁴ 'Biographical Sketches of Illustrious Ladies: The Most Noble the Marchioness of Buckingham', *La Belle Assemblée*, vol.5, no.28 (January 1812), pp.3-5.

¹⁴⁵ John Bell (1745-1831).

¹⁴⁶ 'Biographical Sketches', p.3.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Countess of Carysfort, Elizabeth Proby, (née Grenville) (1756-1842).

she goes out of town tomorrow but I really think she will kill herself if she goes on in such a constant course of hurry and absolute fatigue ¹⁴⁹

Upon Lady Buckingham's sudden death from a brain haemorrhage at the age of fifty-four,¹⁵⁰ Lady Carysfort wrote to her daughter:

young and old must feel the loss of a creature endowed with such superior powers & particularly with an energy of mind and spirit which made her the life of every society in which she found herself. The whole still appears to me a sad dream: though her altered looks & her strange mismanagement of herself gave us all general anxiety yet we [were] certainly little prepared to expect the awful scene of last Monday.¹⁵¹

She highlighted the marchioness's key role in the maintenance of kinship ties:

few families have been so united as ours both in Affection & in Habit & it is a most important link (in the Chain) [brackets in original] that is now broke.¹⁵²

Lord Buckingham had immediately left Stowe when informed of the seriousness of his wife's condition, but had arrived too late to bid her farewell.¹⁵³ In his grief, he was supported by his sons:

nothing can exceed the filial Affection and Attention both of Temple and of George who sleep by turns in their father's room & though very deeply affected exert themselves in every way for his comfort¹⁵⁴

A sense of loss reverberates through contemporary sources which allude to the impact of the marchioness's death on the Grenville household. Lady Jerningham noted that, after the funeral, Lord Buckingham and his sons 'returned with affliction heavy, back to Stowe. Lord Buckingham has hardly spoken since.'¹⁵⁵ Richard, Earl Temple, dedicated to his mother's memory a favourite spot in the garden: he arranged for a marble stone to be embedded in the outside wall of 'The Marchioness

¹⁴⁹ EH NRA 26174 Proby: *Correspondence of 1st Earl of Carysfort and Family*, vol.2, pp.252-3 (p.253), March 1812, Countess of Carysfort to her daughter. Pencil note: 'This letter is wrongly placed as it was written before the death of Lady Buckingham'.

¹⁵⁰ 'Memoirs of the Marchioness of Buckingham', *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1812), pp.292-3 (p.292) gave the date and place of her death as 16 March 1812 at Buckingham House, Pall Mall. She was in London to see a specialist about her failing eyesight when a severe headache brought an abrupt end to her life.

¹⁵¹ EH NRA 26174 Proby: *Correspondence*, vol.2, p.248, March 1812, Lady Carysfort to her daughter.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ 'Memoirs of the Marchioness of Buckingham', p.293.

¹⁵⁴ EH NRA 26174 Proby: *Correspondence*, vol.2, p.249, March 1812, Lady Carysfort to her daughter.

¹⁵⁵ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.2, pp.18-19: Lady Jerningham to Lady Bedingfield, 23 March 1812.

of Buckingham's Seat',¹⁵⁶ stating simply, 'Mater Amata Vale'.¹⁵⁷ Subsequently aggrieved at a perceived lack of gratitude shown by Louis XVIII to his parents following the restoration of the monarchy in 1814, Temple moved from Gosfield to Stowe the altar the French king had ceremoniously placed there in 1809. He arranged for an inscription on the reverse recording his parents' generosity.¹⁵⁸

In accordance with a growing trend towards the promotion of family values, Lady Buckingham's obituary enumerated her virtues as: 'a wife, a mother, the mistress of a family'.¹⁵⁹ The praise of her as 'a friend to her neighbours of every rank'¹⁶⁰ recognised her ease with other classes, suggested by Elizabeth George, a tenant farmer's wife, who noted:

Although so grand a looking lady ... was in no way particular into whose house, or at what time she made her visits – never missed a week when at Stowe without coming to see my Grandmother and would go upstairs to see Father and uncle Thomas in bed when they were little boys¹⁶¹

The obituary paid tribute to her charitable activities in London, Buckinghamshire and Essex, showing that her benevolence in each of these locations was considered worthy of note. In its praise of her 'charming affability and frankness of manners' it echoed the sentiment of 'Biographical Sketches' in *La Belle Assemblée*.¹⁶² Her effect on those around her is apparent: she always gave 'life and animation to the circle of relations and friends who enjoyed the benefit of her society.'¹⁶³ This hinted at her motivational force which galvanised others into action. O'Connor's personal sense of loss is evident from the existence of a handwritten copy of the obituary amongst his papers at the Huntington.

the chief trait in her character was her charity and benevolence of which the instances are without number ... she had the means of discerning the wants of her fellow creatures. So that independent of the expressions of admiration excited by

¹⁵⁶ Also known as 'Dido's Cave'. Listed building record by Buckinghamshire County Council (1999): <<https://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk>> [accessed 7 March 2017].

¹⁵⁷ 'Beloved Mother Farewell.'

¹⁵⁸ See Morris, 'La Noble Hospitalité' for a full account of Richard's reaction to the death of his parents and of Bourbon 'ingratitude'.

¹⁵⁹ 'Memoirs of the Marchioness of Buckingham', p.292.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Clarke, 'Journal of Elizabeth George', p.117.

¹⁶² 'Memoirs of the Marchioness of Buckingham' p. 292.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

her exalted birth and accomplishments and merits there would be enough in her acts of beneficence alone to endear her memory to every feeling heart.¹⁶⁴

With so much energy deployed for the benefit of others, it may have been a simple need for peace and quiet that had made her keep her Catholicism private. According to her daughter she had crept to her oratory when overwhelmed by company.¹⁶⁵ For her funeral Richard, Earl Temple, let it be known that, because she ‘never avowed Her way of Thinking’ he requested ‘that every mark of Religious attention should be paid His Mother *Privately*.’¹⁶⁶ Lady Jerningham was unhappy about this as she and fellow Catholics would have liked to pay their respects to one of their number who had set an example to them all: ‘To Particular People, however, this does not entirely give satisfaction, as it was known to everyone that She was a most exemplary Catholic.’¹⁶⁷

Earl Temple’s wish for ‘no Public dirge’¹⁶⁸ may have been as much out of deference to his Protestant wife as respect for his parents’ wishes. It may also have been an unsuccessful attempt to avoid the unfavourable attention of the press. Immediately after the marchioness’s death, there was renewed speculation about Catholic activity at Stowe which discredited the marchioness and O’Conor. Between his handwritten copy of her obituary and the ‘Biographical Sketch’ from *La Belle Assemblée*, O’Conor recorded the slanderous comments and their rebuttal:

The Morning Herald of Monday last contained a Paragraph stating that Lord Grenville had about eight months ago abjured the Protestant Religion at the feet of Mr. O’Conor the marchioness of Buckingham’s Confessor in the Catholic Chapel at Stowe. The Morning Chronicle of this day contradicts the statement as far as it relates to Lord Grenville, from authority.¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has charted the increase in the number of Catholics who spent time at Stowe between 1796 and 1812. Until 1807, a Catholic presence provided the

¹⁶⁴ HL STO Box 10 (1074), 16 March 1812. It could have been written by O’Conor, but it seems more likely that he copied it as the *Belle Assemblée* article, handwritten in the same source, is prefaced by ‘From [not for] Bells Fashionable Magazine for Jan 1812’.

¹⁶⁵ Hirst, *Memoir*, p.4.

¹⁶⁶ Castle (ed.), *Jerningham Letters*, vol.2, p.18: Lady Jerningham to Lady Bedingfield, 23 March 1812.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ HL STO Box 10 (1074), March 1812.

marchioness with the companionship of co-religionists and the marquess turned a blind eye to the discreet celebration of Mass. The arrival of the future Louis XVIII and his court marked a turning point: in some ways it worked to the advantage of Lady Buckingham as her husband saw the desirability of allowing for the public celebration of Mass in the mansion during their visits. Confident in his status, he presented himself on equal terms with the royal visitors to whom he expressed fellow-feeling, enhanced by tolerance of their religious faith. However, the overt practice of Catholicism in the mansion, on a scale grand enough for foreign royalty, was unfamiliar to the marchioness. Until then, her faith had always been a subject of conjecture and it is possible that she had enjoyed the theatricality of subterfuge. It had given her the opportunity to present herself as a model of unassuming piety, and had afforded moments of privacy and quiet. When the arrival of the Bourbon court placed upon Lord Buckingham the obligation to make provision for the public celebration of Mass, her faith became an advantage and she would have been expected to play her part. Permission for such overt practice brought about changes to Lady Buckingham's lifestyle because it involved additional public appearances at a time when the marquess's ostentatious hospitality was attracting increased attention to his wealth and ambition. Lord Buckingham's critics were given fresh ammunition; Lady Buckingham's alleged 'catholicising influence', more visible at Stowe since 1807, was used to great effect by those who opposed the Grenvillite emancipation agenda.

The émigré relief in which the marchioness became involved from 1807 onwards was more contentious than it had been in the early days of the emigration when it had been based on ensuring the physical survival of impoverished aristocrats and clergy. The aim of the marquess at this stage was at least in part a political one, rooted in personal ambition. He saw the monarchy as the linchpin of a civilised country in which the status of nobles was secure. To this end, he met the Bourbons' need for accommodation and, with the marchioness, organised entertainment to relieve the boredom of waiting for the most propitious moment to reclaim the throne of France. The marchioness's sociability was an advantage to the marquess and to fulfil her duty to him, hospitality could have been the limit of her support. They both, however, took matters further. If their joint aim was purely self-interest, as it is

tempting to assume, it is doubtful that Lady Buckingham would have shown the same personal consideration to the king and court as she did to her patronage and kinship network and to her local commitments. In her philanthropic endeavours, in which she showed attention to detail at every level, she exemplifies those elite women who believed in their station in life and were determined to justify it. The increase in the demands she placed upon herself to present the image of both a good Catholic and a praiseworthy aristocrat resulted in a frenzy of philanthropic activity which had a detrimental effect on her health.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to fill a gap in knowledge about a largely ignored aspect of the lives of late eighteenth-century elite women: their role as instigators of social change through philanthropic initiatives. The study has provided an example of ‘soft power’, potentially as influential as that of the female political campaigners, confidantes and advisors explored in recent studies, but exercised in different ways. Lady Buckingham was adept in the art of socialising as a means of self-promotion in support of her husband, but evidence shows that throughout her married life her aristocratic sorties and gestures were accompanied by personal, practical, large and small scale interventions in the lives of those less fortunate than herself. Lady Buckingham’s motives for benevolent activity evolved over time, partly as a result of an increasing awareness of her own capabilities, and partly as a result of the emergence of new opportunities for women within the field of philanthropy. A judicious approach to changing circumstances enabled her to act for the benefit of others in a way that promoted the survival of the aristocracy and the social order in England.

The scant nature of the official historical record on the marchioness’s philanthropy has had the effect of aligning her activity with that of the majority of her peers: the award of her Irish Barony in 1800, primarily at the request of the marquess for recognition of their second son, was recorded briefly by Michael Bevington as ‘an honour which her charitable works and foundation of three village schools deserved.’¹ This thesis has probed her philanthropic interests, interrogating surviving partial sources which diminished her activity by presenting it as ‘behind the scenes’, whereas in her own time it was, in fact, not deliberately hidden and was often very much on display. The extent of her philanthropy was praised by articles in the contemporary press but later writers of Catholic didactic literature manipulated her story to accord with their notions of appropriate female behaviour: submissive, modest and private. French histories of the emigration, personal correspondence and other private papers demonstrate clearly, however, that the exaggerated claims in moralising versions of her story were based on extensive activity.

¹ M. Bevington, *Stowe House* (1990; London: Paul Holberton, 2002), p.17.

By the eighteenth century, elite female support for charitable causes had long been the norm, so philanthropic activity at local and national level was part of the marchioness's everyday life. Public and private charitable-giving was commonplace and aristocratic women routinely headed a growing number of subscription lists for societies in support of the poor and sick. However, many elite women were little more than figureheads whose attendance at fundraising events may have helped to bring in contributions, but was part of polite sociability rather than an acceptance of social responsibility. In contrast, as this thesis has shown, although beauty and wealth equipped Lady Buckingham to fulfil an ornamental role, her involvement in charitable relief went beyond lending her name and her presence to good causes. Rather than following a trend which, for some elite women, became simply a fashionable interest in charitable pursuits, she was at the forefront of changes in practice. She was a reforming aristocrat, active at a time when there was a growing awareness of the advantage to all parties of defusing potential discontent as manifested in France by caring for the lower orders to enable them to reproduce healthily, and to work productively for the prosperity and defence of the nation.

Most studies of elite philanthropy in this period align it with Protestant Evangelicalism in which the marchioness did not share. It was her strong Catholic faith that set in motion a lifetime of philanthropic activity and continued to be a driving force, even when other factors came into play. It was an area of her life in which she had from a young age exercised personal and well-informed choice, an atavistic return to the religion of her Irish forbears. Catholicism was a key part of her identity and, coupled with the confidence instilled by her father, it led to resilience and a proactive attitude. Her religion was both the cause of, and the solution to, a major issue in her early married life which exemplifies the challenges that could be faced by any Catholic during the reign of George III, but especially by those in bi-confessional families. It centred on Lord Buckingham's sensitivity to the opinion of George III, whose Coronation Oath - from the king's perspective - dictated that he should exclusively uphold Protestantism in the form of the established Church as the legally privileged religion of the land. Although the king maintained personal friendships with Catholics, he gave no concessions; the question of Catholic emancipation was one which caused him increasingly extreme agitation as ministers

came round to supporting it between 1798 and 1800.² Lady Buckingham therefore acquiesced when Lord Buckingham expressed the wish that she should exercise discretion in the practice of her faith; she was as determined as her husband not to act in a way which could either hinder his chances of recognition and advancement, or halt the steady progress of Catholic toleration. Her compliance pays testament both to her devotion to her husband and to the strength of her faith. This apparent sacrifice and respect for the marquess's wishes - in fact, simply a continuation of what she had always done - provided a solution to difficulties encountered in her marriage: it sanctioned the moments of solitary reflection that helped her regain her composure and strength after periods of intense familial, social and philanthropic activity. The marital negotiation of a code of conduct resulted in arrangements in public and private that were acceptable, indeed beneficial, to both parties.

Over time, motivational factors other than aristocratic responsibility and religious duty played a part in Lady Buckingham's charitable activity. There were personal reasons for an upsurge in her expressions of philanthropic zeal. Although George III's dislike of Lord Buckingham was common knowledge, she failed to understand the king's refusal to recognise her husband's efforts on his behalf during the Regency Crisis, and the marquess's resultant disappointment and ill health worried and upset her. When he left Dublin in 1789 at the age of thirty-six, he was physically and mentally exhausted after his second viceroyalty and showed signs that he was suffering from what today would be termed a nervous breakdown. The marchioness was so accustomed to working in close partnership with her husband that when his political ambition was thwarted, her expectations were frustrated too. His letters to her show just how important she was to him as a stabilising presence; Lady Buckingham's letters to his brother, Lord Grenville, show how keenly she felt the responsibility of helping her husband to recover his equilibrium. To fully regain a sense of purpose he needed to find a meaningful role which sat well with his self-image as a 'publick man'. The role of benevolent aristocrat was therefore one which

² J. Hadlow, *The Strangest Family. The Private Lives of George III, Queen Charlotte and the Hanoverians* (2014; London: William Collins, 2015), pp.498-500.

accorded with the ideas and ideals of both husband and wife, and might allow her to offset her husband's widely perceived weakness as a politician.

The marquess's rehabilitation was in part achieved through the continuance of his role as Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire which fed his need for pomp and visibility, and allowed for a demonstration of undiminished loyalty to the king. However, it was the arrival of the émigré clergy that provided a significant opportunity for Lord Buckingham to show and feel that his status still carried weight. He was in the right place at the right time to supplement his patriotic credentials with a display of benevolence, which was increasingly being touted as a regally approved national trait. In Winchester with his regiment when hundreds of refractory clergy arrived from France, the marquess stepped forward to arrange their accommodation in the King's House. Their arrival also gave Lady Buckingham the opportunity to demonstrate her philanthropy through visits to those who were sick, as well as to those who were capable of work. Most significantly, she showed her practical capabilities through the provision of appropriate equipment for both, including wheelchairs and tools. The personal satisfaction of helping large numbers of émigré clergy to achieve a degree of self-sufficiency through the manufacture of tapestry items had larger scale consequences both at the time and beyond. Lady Buckingham's intervention reduced their reliance on charity and state aid; it also enabled them to maintain a lower profile than would have been the case if more of them had been forced to seek employment in the city. This may have lessened the risk of them interrupting the progress towards complete toleration for English Catholics, a danger highlighted by Dominic Bellenger.³

The marchioness's experience in healthcare and industry, coupled with a forceful personality, enabled her to bypass restrictions increasingly placed on her gender and class. Her philanthropy evolved to become an alternative means of exerting pressure when political avenues were closed to her husband and, in consequence, to her influence. With growing confidence in her own abilities and recognition by others of the success of her schemes, she was emboldened to use philanthropy not just as a

³ D. Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789: An Historical Introduction and Working List* (Bath: Downside Abbey, 1986), pp.76-8.

means of demonstrating her status, but as a means of shaping the course of events. The collective force of individual actions became more urgent following Robespierre's Reign of Terror. The *ancien régime* (as the revolutionaries called it) had been dismantled in France between 1789 and 1791, but from 1793 onwards the level of destruction was such that it cast doubt on the accepted social order elsewhere.

The imperative of re-establishing calm and stability meant that individuals - especially aristocrats - were forced to redefine their roles. The Buckingham's case provides a close-up of the means employed and the effort involved in rebuilding aristocratic self-esteem and control in the wake of a crisis in national and personal confidence.⁴ Evidence suggests that rather than bringing to their attention the consequences of inequality, the revolutionary upheaval made aristocrats anxious to justify the status that they saw as their right. They did not perceive the problem in French society to be an unfair distribution of wealth and power, but a lack of communication and co-operation between the different ranks of society, most importantly an abdication of responsibility on the part of the rich. For this reason, from 1789 onwards Lady Buckingham continued - and possibly intensified - her charitable activity on behalf of her local community, demonstrating the accessibility that the French nobility were perceived to lack. She did not need the advice on Christian responsibility penned by moralists and educators such as Hannah More. Nor did Mary Wollstonecraft's incendiary criticism of aristocratic women as unfit to educate their offspring apply in her case. At the same time as maintaining her interest in local and national charity, she paid close attention to the education of her daughter, endeavouring to equip her to fulfil the same aristocratic obligations as herself with the dignity that befitted her rank.

The Buckingham's reception of émigrés added to an already heavy workload of familial, local and national commitments; their motivation was complex, though, in the first instance, their intervention resulted from chance. Arranging accommodation

⁴ The urge for aristocratic self-preservation had become all the more intense when defeat in America had been followed by potentially contagious revolutionary fever: J. Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.179-181.

for the émigré clergy gave the aggrieved and anxious marquess a benevolent task which was easily accomplished, and which pleased his wife by placing her openly and legitimately amongst a large number of co-religionists. Their presence provided the marchioness with spiritual comfort and an outlet for religiously-motivated philanthropic zeal; Lord and Lady Buckingham valued the praise heaped upon them by grateful, learned men. Their plight gave Lady Buckingham the opportunity to exhibit her initiative, experience and competence in establishing an industry and when the success of this venture was noted, by Edmund Burke and Bishop de la Marche among others, she emerged as the ideal candidate for dealing with subsequent arrivals.

The émigré clergy benefited from appeals in the later decades of the eighteenth century which urged elite women such as Lady Buckingham to set an example of charitable behaviour to the aspirational middling sorts. It was not a question of adjusting the status quo, it was more a case of clarifying the responsibilities of all, whatever their position in society. At the same time, charitable care was increasingly portrayed as gender specific, partly out of concern for the possible abuse of power in the unequal donor-recipient relationship. Having acted on behalf of the émigré clergy, who were considered appropriate objects of female concern in a way that 'ordinary' men were not, Lady Buckingham (and others) pre-empted the suggestion of Bishop de la Marche in 1796 that 'ladies' should 'confine themselves to the care of their own sex': by January 1795 circumstances had already dictated a new focus on refugee women and children as many families had been arriving in London, fleeing the continent ahead of Napoleon's advance. Evidence presented here has shown that, when their numbers increased following the defeat of the *Armée des Princes* at Quiberon in June 1795, a scheme for their aid was already in place with Lady Buckingham at its head.

Until the French Revolution and Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars forced thousands of aristocrats to flee for their lives, apart from those with family and patronage links, the women in England whom the marchioness had supported were of a far lower social standing than herself. She could relate to them as women, as wives and as mothers, but through her status she stood apart; her benevolence

towards them was an enactment of traditional *noblesse oblige*. It was a quite different matter when she came face to face with destitute French individuals of the same rank in society as herself. Through previous experience, Lady Buckingham was equipped and prepared to deal with problems of physical survival in practical ways but in the 1790s she confronted, in addition, a far greater, though less tangible, problem and it was one which directly affected herself. The recipients of her aid were the victims of an abrupt suspension of their aristocratic status - a fate from which she and her peers were potentially not immune in the volatile climate generated by revolutionary rhetoric.

Through her dealings with dispossessed elite female émigrés like the Comtesse de Saisseval, the marchioness became fully aware of the precariousness of her own situation, which heightened her determination to act in defence of the status quo. When temporary peace and the return to France of many émigrés, including the comtesse, in 1801 and 1802, lessened the burden of refugee support, she continued to fulfil, and even exceeded, her duty towards her kinship network and the local community. She also continued to offer hospitality at Stowe to émigré clerics who had chosen to remain in England following the Concordat. They provided her with the comfort of men of her own faith, and the marquess with intellectual companionship during years of uncertainty about the future of their peers in France. However, when a further opportunity to exert aristocratic influence presented itself, she grasped it for reasons which suggest a combination of vanity and desperation. Pride in her aristocratic standing had been strengthened by fear of its loss and she devised a means of elevating Lord Buckingham - and therefore herself - that would ease his anxiety by compensating in some measure for George III's continued rebuff. Showing a disregard for the wishes of the king and his government, she corresponded with the Comte d'Artois and, with her husband, succeeded in arranging not only visits to Stowe, but also accommodation for the entire Bourbon Court at Gosfield Hall and then Hartwell House, far closer to London than officially advised.

It was not obvious to the Buckinghams that the arrangement was one of expediency rather than choice; the Bourbons had few options open to them. As far as the marquess and marchioness were concerned, the contact was beneficial. It provided

the marquess with a *raison d'être*: he was flattered by royal guests who showed appreciation for his hospitality, in particular in their expressions of admiration for the Gothic Library, a symbol of his learning and hereditary credentials. The attention of the French royal family was a gratefully accepted consolation prize, which helped in some measure to dispel the Buckingham's disappointment over George III's failure to visit Stowe. Pride certainly played a part in their support for royal émigrés between 1807 and 1813, but it went beyond an ostentatious display of status. The marquess - and likewise his brother, Lord Grenville - believed that the restoration of the monarchy in France was the only route to peace and stability. In doing all within their power to ensure the wellbeing of the French king-in-waiting and his court, Lord and Lady Buckingham showed that they shared with their émigré guests the personal, familial and national concerns which they considered to be an intrinsic part of their aristocratic responsibility.

The Buckingham's exemplify responsible aristocrats who worked hard throughout their lives not just to display their status, but to justify and, ultimately, preserve it for the next generation. The philanthropic marchioness, in particular, provides an example of the 'acceptable face' of aristocracy observed by John Cannon to have contributed to its longevity in Britain.⁵ The irony is that neither she nor Lord Buckingham managed to instil in Lord Temple, son and heir to Stowe, the social responsibility that accompanied the possession of rank and wealth. The influence of Lady Buckingham is visible, nevertheless, in the conversion, marriage and later life of her daughter, Lady Mary Arundell, and in the reforming agenda of her second son George, Baron Nugent, whom she educated alongside his sister.⁶ Beyond the scope of the current study, each of these individuals warrants further investigation.

A further trace of Lady Buckingham's philanthropy lies across the channel. If 'benevolent ladies' such as the marchioness had not provided practical and timely aid, there would have been more émigré deaths, particularly among child-bearing

⁵ J. Cannon, 'Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-1790, by Elaine Chalus', *English Historical Review*, vol.121, no.493 (2006), pp.1185-6.

⁶ See 'The History of Arundel' <<http://ratcliffe-college.co.uk/arundel/>> [accessed 2 September 2016]; A. Seymour, 'Grenville, George Nugent, second Baron Nugent of Carlanstown (1788-1850), politician and writer' <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 8 March 2019].

females, deprived of male support. When the Comtesse de Saisseval fell into this category, her acceptance of help was reluctant, but it contributed to her survival, and made possible her return to France. She co-founded in Paris an educational institution for orphaned girls, which exists to this day as the Lycée Carcado-Saisseval, offering professional qualifications to enable young people to support themselves.⁷ Such a legacy of female support for females is a reminder of the marchioness's benevolence, as well as the comtesse's resilience, in each case rooted in a strong Catholic faith.

This research into the Marchioness of Buckingham has shown that increasing our knowledge of women in history is important in its own right, but it also has the potential to enhance our understanding of the men with whom they interacted. It has thrown light on the life and works of a reforming female aristocrat at a time of industrial change and national unease; moreover, it has provided evidence of the extent of the pressures under which the landowning classes operated, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of Lord Buckingham's personality and actions. The ongoing restoration of Stowe House has re-ignited interest in the evolution of the building,⁸ but the complex responsibilities of the occupants, particularly the women, have not yet been comprehensively explored. This thesis redresses an imbalance in representations of women at Stowe by bringing to light the 'serious' role of the marchioness. The depth of her investment in the future of her family, her local community and her class has never been fully acknowledged. She is just one example of an influential eighteenth-century elite female whose story has been uncovered by searching unofficial sources. A similar methodology could potentially bring others to light, which would help to establish whether her preoccupations and activities were exceptional, or typical of her gender and class.

⁷ 'Lycée Carcado-Saisseval' <<https://carcado-saisseval.com>> [accessed 20 January 2020].

⁸ N. Morris (ed.), *Stowe House: Saving an Architectural Masterpiece* (London: Scala Arts and Heritage Publishers Ltd, 2018).

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