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BUILDING MANAGEMENT AT DYRHAM¹

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William Blathwayt (?1649–1717), son of a lawyer who died when Blathwayt was a young child, raised himself from very moderate circumstances to a position of considerable standing in the public service by remarkable industry and administrative abilities.¹ His career was launched by his uncle Thomas Povey (?1618–1700), on the evidence of Pepys and Evelyn one of the most ingenious and cultivated, if idiosyncratic, men of his day. In a marriage brokered in 1686 by his one-time superior and mentor at the Plantations Office, Sir Robert Southwell, Blathwayt secured the hand of a Gloucestershire heiress, Mary Wynter. William Blathwayt anticipated the need to rebuild the Wynter's seat at Dyrham in the business-like negotiations before his marriage. The house was dilapidated and the need to replace it real, but so too was the desire to use the fact to secure an advantageous settlement, emphasised by the extension of the building metaphor to the settlement itself. Blathwayt wrote to Sir Robert Southwell: '... and then, as a secret to you alone (for it may perhaps displease the old gentleman) I am afraid there will be a necessity of building a new house at Dyrham or being at a very great expense in repairing this and so now you have, I think, the reverse of the medal and all the fronts of the edifice you are building which 'tis good to judge in model beforehand'.³ Blathwayt's father-in-law John Wynter died in 1688 and both his mother-in-law and his wife died in 1691, leaving him in full possession of the Wynter estate. Then at the height of his powers as Secretary

at War to King William III, Blathwayt rebuilt his country house and created elaborate waterworks in its park.⁴

Characteristically of his time, William Blathwayt was deeply involved in the planning and execution of his project. However, Blathwayt's attendance upon King William III during his summer campaigns in Flanders from 1692 to 1701 meant that building operations were conducted by correspondence. This article considers how he applied his acknowledged administrative skills to the notoriously difficult task of supervising building workers.

Rebuilding began in 1692. The new west front superimposed on the body of the Tudor house by 1694 was designed by Samuel Hauduroy, who was also (although it could have been a namesake) employed in internal painting.⁵ In a statement of plans and designs prepared for Blathwayt, Hauduroy refers intriguingly to 'Un dessein de l'escalier de Milord Nottingham', hinting at a link with the building of Burley-on-the-Hill from 1694 to 1708 by William Blathwayt's close, albeit grander, contemporary in public service, Daniel Finch, 2nd Earl of Nottingham.⁶ Nottingham visited Dyrham, in the company of Lord Peterborough, in 1701.⁷

Hauduroy was largely regarded as just another superior craftsman. He was kept short of money and the measurements of his work were closely scrutinised and corrected before payments were made. William Talman, the Comptroller of the Royal Works, designed the east front started in 1700, after the demolition of the remaining parts of the old

house. He had at least a consulting role for the stable block built in 1698, and was treated as befitted his office with considerably more respect.⁸ The new house was ready for occupation in 1703.

The architects Blathwayt employed at Dyrham had little to do with routine superintendence.⁹ Building was supervised by clerks of the works. They were local men. The first was Samuel Trewman, rector of Dyrham. He died in 1698.¹⁰ The health of his successor Arthur Wynter was poor – ‘I have not yet strength enough in my lame leg to walk without crutches’.¹¹ These men managed the workforce and oversaw the acquisition and movement of materials but they lacked technical knowledge of building and Blathwayt allowed them little decision-making autonomy.

Blathwayt received regular reports from Dyrham from his agent Charles Watkins. The letters were returned to their sender with comments in the margins, Blathwayt commanding Watkins, ‘You keep this and other letters to be reviewed’.¹² Blathwayt often found the reports wanting. He complained that the joiner Christopher Jacob’s account was unintelligible and that he needed to explain what he had done since Blathwayt was last at Dyrham, and what he intended to do.¹³ A weekly statement was returned to Watkins with the complaint that the garden account was jumbled in with the rest and that no distinction was made or particulars given of ordinary or extraordinary work: ‘Mr Wynter [the clerk of the works] is to blame who sends me the accounts in this method’.¹⁴ Blathwayt was quick to complain of lack of information: ‘what has become of the pigeon house?’ he wrote to Watkins, and he wondered why he did not hear one word of Mr Humphreys, who was working on the chimney-pieces.¹⁵

There was no overall strategy for the execution of the work: it had a marked seasonal character and comprised a series of separate agreements with individual craftsmen, for day or piece work, each

new task involving negotiations about prices, with Blathwayt involved in the minutiae of the arrangements.¹⁶ Attempts were made to pressure craftsmen into agreements by the threat of competition. In 1698 Charles Watkins thought that although the Corsham mason Philip West offered a fair price for the next season’s work, progress might be speeded up by ‘joining’ another person with him. Blathwayt agreed but added that ‘the conclusion of the agreement ought to be subject to my approbation’.¹⁷

Blathwayt’s complaints about the lack of progress reports were matched by those from discontented craftsmen who claimed that they lacked instructions. There was no overall plan, and the workforce depended upon day-to-day decisions by Blathwayt. Plans and drafts passed to and fro between Dyrham and London, delays were excused by the absence of instructions, and there is evidence of changes of mind by Blathwayt. Recently built walls and chimneys were pulled down on receipt of a new draught from London.¹⁸ Discussing the wilderness (‘leave it alone’) and the terrace, Blathwayt told his gardener Thomas Hurnall not to send a model because he expected to change his mind. He did however want a draught of a proposed niche and basin; it would be easier for him to amend than send one from London first.¹⁹ On his part, Hurnall complained that he could not start the terrace in front of the greenhouse until the old horse pond was filled in, which depended upon a decision about the position of the new pond. Nor could he take earth from the position of the back court walls until it was known where they should go, and he was still awaiting a decision on a draught and cost estimate sent previously, before work on the head of the canal could start and levelling in the wilderness proceed.²⁰ Christopher Jacob’s explanation for not completing work on the back staircase and closets was that he had no answer to his letter asking which boards he should use.²¹

Building materials such as stone and timber

were generally not stockpiled in advance of need. The use of estate resources, however, was no guarantee that an adequate flow of goods would be maintained. In 1698 Watkins reported that Richard Broad's men, who were cutting stone, needed persuading to work faster, but they blamed the quarrymen. Another hand had been sent there. It was a familiar tale of responsibility passed round the workforce.²² Five years later this eagerness of the craftsmen to blame each other was just as evident, underlining a serious management flaw in the construction of this large house. Watkins wrote that Blathwayt's priorities could not be met because Philip West would not have enough of the different sorts of stone required. West had been told that it was his fault that he did not have sufficient supplies beforehand because he had had notice to provide them.²³

The arrival of imported goods was delayed by lack of transport. Watkins inspected materials at Bristol where Cornish tiles and raggs (large rough slates) were stowed securely in a cellar and deals were piled on the quay.²⁴ He reported to Blathwayt that three loads of deals had arrived at Dyrham but there was a shortage of teams. The estate was fully committed at the quarry or bringing in its own timber before the winter. Watkins concluded that it was essential to hire additional teams but he had to await Blathwayt's approval. Blathwayt responded that everything must be brought in before winter, whatever the cost.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, Blathwayt questioned the adequacy of supervision at Dyrham. Watkins emphasised to Trewman the need to supervise strictly the haulage teams. He told him: 'those kind of fellows are addicted to laziness and ought constantly to be followed'.²⁶

Blathwayt's agents at Dyrham were conscious of the limits of their authority but they faced some inconsistency on Blathwayt's part. When Philip West was about to start work on the cataract, a central feature of the new waterworks, Hurnall wrote

asking for a draft with directions. Blathwayt replied: 'Now you know all these things are in your hands and that t's not possible for me to give directions from hence' [!] Blathwayt expressed the same sentiments about the steps to the east front of the house: 'The draught is in your hands and the form of the steps marked on it'.²⁷

Not surprisingly, the staff and craftsmen at Dyrham were reluctant to display any initiative. And yet Blathwayt could be irritated by this. Watkins reported that the kitchen court lay in much disorder and might have been paved if he had had an order. 'How could I think of it without you mentioning it to me?' was Blathwayt's testy response.²⁸

There was an unwillingness to proceed even on technical matters without Blathwayt's approval. Wynter reported the collapse of a newly-built arch under the greenhouse, when the centre was removed.²⁹ It was Philip West's fault and he was loath to remedy it until Blathwayt was there.³⁰ Blathwayt replied that the arch should be rebuilt without waiting for him, 'who can do no good in it' in any case. He instructed that someone at Bristol used to vaulting should be consulted. Subsequently Watkins concluded that Philip West senior was most at fault by making the sweep of the arch wrong. A carpenter called Hill was engaged to make new centres, significantly at half the price Christopher Jacob had originally quoted.³¹

Blathwayt did involve himself in technicalities, sometimes fruitlessly. The plumber Avery's estimate for lead solder for the bagnio [bath] was described by Watkins as 'a vast quantity', provoking Blathwayt into the marginal annotation 'A cheat'. Blathwayt asked why the lead sheets should not be lapped instead of soldered but had to accept that such a seal would not be watertight.³²

When Watkins reported that the great cedar staircase was ready for varnishing in 1703, Blathwayt replied that since the painter Highmore's man was employed on another job, it should be covered up

meanwhile, to prevent the loss of colour.³³ Wynter also wanted instructions on which boards to lay under the lead on the greenhouse roof. He suggested the worst of the deals received from London; Blathwayt agreed, and his involvement with detail even extended to proposing the arrangement of downpipes from the greenhouse roof gutter.³⁴

It is little wonder that Blathwayt's agents at Dyrham were cautious. A decision by the London joiner Hunter to involve John Harvey of Bath in work on the staircase provoked the Blathwayt response: '... my observing that Hunter takes care to do his own work and not mine. That he has engaged me very unwillingly with Mr Harvey... and I don't see how I shall get out of his hands'. Blathwayt continued that 'Hunter intends never to have finished but to linger in the country at my expense'. Hunter was not the only tradesman to be accused of dilatory behaviour: 'Philip West too loiters in his work and would spin out the summer with his workmen which I will not endure'.³⁵ 'I know', Blathwayt protested on one occasion, 'the aversion mankind has at Dyrham for finishing anything'.³⁶

But procedures intended to discipline his estate workforce were less successful when applied to itinerant craftsmen who could easily find other employment, especially since Blathwayt's policy was to pay his builders as little and as late as possible.³⁷ At the height of summer the estate employed between 40 and 50 day labourers, of which a varying proportion would have worked on the house.³⁸ Dyrham labourers were paid more at harvest time – in the 1690s wages were advanced from a typical 10*d* per day to 12*d* at the end of June for the harvest and reduced again in early October, falling still further to 8*d* in mid-winter. Some money was held back – 4 days pay for each of nine men and eight days for a tenth man – lest the men should leave the work.³⁹ Fewer men were employed in the winter but there was work at times for 30 or more men in

the stables and gardens. Labourers were disciplined by reducing their wages. Jonathen Snell and William Robbins, for example, had 6*d* of their 1*s* per day wage abated for loitering.⁴⁰ Some local men were paid more highly when they assisted London craftsmen – J. Vanderlast received 2*s* per day when he worked with the joiners.⁴¹

It was specially difficult to retain men at harvest time. Hurnall reported that some of the labourers and one of the ploughmen had gone. Blathwayt ordered 'not to employ them'. Philip West and Christopher Jacob had been charged not to let any of their men go on any pretext whatsoever.⁴²

But the problem of retaining labour was not simply seasonal; craftsmen knew their value and exploited it. It was reported to Blathwayt that Hunter had taken a joinery job in Bristol and left with two of his men. The plasterer Thomas Porter had also left, with one of his hands, so that work would be delayed. The men said however that they could catch up, with more hands. 'Abominable' was Blathwayt's marginal reaction. In a subsequent letter Blathwayt fulminated that Hunter's proceeding was unpardonable and occasioned by Watkins's managerial weakness. Nevertheless, he enjoined that all possible means should be used to get him back, including writing to his employer at Bristol obliging him not to detain a person engaged by Blathwayt. Not a farthing should be paid to Hunter's men still at Dyrham until he returned. Wynter was instructed to tell Hunter and Porter that Blathwayt would not be served this way and they should return to their work immediately. Meanwhile they should not be paid.⁴³

William Blathwayt could not forbear writing more. He complained at not having an account for a great while and instructed Watkins to go to Dyrham and 'see things go on'. Blathwayt wrote again from The Hague on 2 November 1701, hoping that Hunter and Porter may be brought to reason 'and that they will ease me of their company as soon as may be'.⁴⁴

Watkins had sent for Porter to see if he could persuade him to stay until the work was finished but both he and Hunter 'have told Mr Wynter plainly that they will serve no master that will debar them from all other business besides'. William Blathwayt's disciplinary bluff had been called.⁴⁵ In due course Watkins reported that Hunter had returned – it was now winter – and Porter talked of returning from Frome in two or three days.⁴⁶ Blathwayt annotated the letter and returned it with the news that he would be at Dyrham 'next week'.⁴⁷ The following year Watkins despaired of getting things ready for Blathwayt's summer visit. 'Such a pack of people you have here there is no depending upon them'. Since the previous Sunday a great part of the workforce had been revelling and drinking. 'They must be watched and sobered up' responded Blathwayt. Philip West could not get sawyers at any price so he could not finish the arbours and other things. Blathwayt's response was that he must borrow men from Hunter agreeing a day-rate.⁴⁸

Finding enough masons was a perpetual problem. Although dissatisfied with the progress of Richard Broad's work in 1698 it was difficult to get more men. Charles Watkins visited quarries with Trewman and found that all stone and freemasons were busy for the summer.⁴⁹

Philip West was criticised for not employing enough men. He was told that unless he got more hands he would be paid only half his subsistence money that week and none the next, but he replied that without subsistence money he could not go on with the job. It is clear that Blathwayt's threats to keep money back could only work so far.⁵⁰ Philip West and his father were going 30 or 40 miles to find masons but they were very scarce. Men from Frome would not come unless they were guaranteed work through the winter. They could hardly keep those they had – two left the site in one week.⁵¹

In any case there was a shortage of stone from the quarry. Ashlar was used up as soon as it was

raised. There were three raisers and five hewers at the quarry and West said that if he got more hands he would run out of stone. Another man was put on at the quarry. It was hoped that at least when the greenhouse was done the stone would come fast enough.⁵² Watkins concluded that West could not do all that was wanted that year. 'A monstrous computation' fumed William Blathwayt.⁵³ Watkins commended Philip West for his personal efforts from 5am to after 7pm but Blathwayt was grudging in his response: 'But not to be excused for not engaging men enough'.⁵⁴

Blathwayt's contracted craftsmen were perpetually worried about money. They wrote directly to him as a consequence of being kept short. Hunter pointed out that it had been agreed in London that his men should be paid every two months.⁵⁵ Clearly, keeping money back was a device to prevent them leaving the job.⁵⁶ They were paid subsistence money but Hunter wanted money on account to pay for glue and nails. Blathwayt responded 'allow him four or five pounds upon account'.⁵⁷

The masons Simpson and Broad were also unhappy about payments. They found that when passing their accounts Watkins made 'such great abatements which will be to our great loss and almost our ruin . . . sir we are in great want of money'.⁵⁸

John Jacob prudently wanted to know from Wynter how he would be paid, before he undertook some jobbing work, including making good tiling defects – he had worked at Dyrham as early as 1692 and was all too familiar with local practice. Blathwayt responded insensitively: 'An odd answer methinks, another workman should be got who may be more diligent'.⁵⁹

With the death of William III in 1701 the need for Blathwayt's attendance on summer expeditions came to an end, although he remained Secretary at War until 1704 and held office at the Board of Trade until 1707. Additionally, his responsibilities as Member of Parliament for Bath until 1710 restricted

the time he could spend at Dyrham. Blathwayt certainly visited the house in 1701 and 1702 but Talman's east front became habitable in 1703 and the proud owner was by then ready to receive the most illustrious of visitors. Blathwayt knew that the queen was to visit Bath in August and he gave instructions that the Dyrham deer should be preserved carefully in case she came down. The keeper was to remember the speckled fawn 'we took notice of. If he could be kept tame with milk or otherwise . . . it would be well'. A family visit was also by then a possibility. Blathwayt arrived in July, his three children having preceded him. Strict instructions were given that there should be no building work while he was in residence.⁶⁰

As the completion of the house approached, the organisation of domestic arrangements for longer stays at Dyrham became more pressing. However, problems with the appointment of a new housekeeper parallel Blathwayt's uneasy relationship with his builders. Neither Blathwayt nor Watkins seem to have been involved with the hiring of a Mrs Paul in 1703 – Watkins reported that Thomas Edwards, Blathwayt's attorney, had advised him that the housekeeper was expected in about a week's time.⁶¹ Having met her, Watkins wrote 'I can say but little of her more than that she appears indifferently well and is seemingly versed in the business you design her for and Mr Edwards gives her a good commendation'. 'A very indifferent account' was William Blathwayt's terse response.⁶² Mrs Paul started to take care of the furniture and examine everything by the inventory.⁶³ But there were problems. She called her intended bedchamber 'a disgraceful garret' and used the laundry-room for herself. Blathwayt insisted that the proper bedchamber must be used but could be improved by moving wainscot from the laundry room and making a chimney. But 'let me not be troubled with this impertinence when I come down'.⁶⁴ But soon Blathwayt was to write: 'Prepare for discharging Mrs Paul as soon as the new housekeeper shall arrive.

The only reason we need give her is that she refused to sign the inventory'. Witness to this confrontation is an unsigned inventory still at Dyrham.⁶⁵

William Blathwayt had a horror of ignorance, considering intelligence to be the life-blood of all business.⁶⁶ His demands for information on building progress were characteristic. In his public office, the 'rigid though kindly taskmaster', whose criticism at its harshest was reputedly never caustic, was also a man with an overwhelming respect for those greater than himself.⁶⁷ However, he clearly had little respect for or trust in his subordinates at Dyrham. Many of his comments were indeed caustic, censorious, and rarely supportive. His unwillingness to delegate authority exacerbated the situation but in the end his bluster foundered on the reality of building operations at the end of the seventeenth century. His background was urban and bureaucratic. He had no experience of estate management and was over forty before he gained possession of the Wynter property. He was ill-equipped to manage the construction of a large house, in a world poles apart from the royal court and London society in which he flourished. Whether his administrative skills saved him money cannot be quantified, although to strike hard bargains for a project with a high proportion of piece-work must have been advantageous. The cost of building – running at the rate of about £1,000 per annum in 1701 and totalling certainly over £6,000, while probably nearer £10,000 – could hardly have been found from Blathwayt's rents alone – they reached £2,263 in 1717.⁶⁸ Details of Blathwayt's personal estate, however, show that it increased substantially in value between 1686 and 1705, from some £4,000 to over £20,000. The rewards of public office therefore comfortably covered the expenditure on Dyrham.⁶⁹

William Blathwayt set the seal upon his building enterprise by the payment of £6-9-0d on 20 September 1710 to Mr Kip for 'Drawing and Engraving the House and Garden etc for Sir Robert Atkin's Survey of the County'.⁷⁰ This

was not, however, his last word on building. In the same year an agreement was reached with John Harvey for the erection of a monument in Dyrham church after Blathwayt's death. Experience had taught Blathwayt of the propensity of workers to find clean and dry accommodation wherever they could.⁷¹ The agreement stipulated that Harvey's work was to 'be chiefly wrought in the wain [waggon] house' and that his servants were 'not to ly in any part of the house or outhouses'.⁷² William Blathwayt, having learnt some hard lessons in the building of his great house, sought to control his

final commission from beyond the grave. Only then could he rest in peace.⁷³

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NOTES

- 1 The Blathwayt papers, including letters and estate accounts for the period of rebuilding Dyrham, are in Gloucestershire County Record Office, Gloucester, reference D1799, hereafter GRO.
- 2 Blathwayt's biographical details are from Gertrude Ann Jacobsen, *William Blathwayt. A Late Seventeenth Century English Administrator*, New Haven and London, 1932, 31–55.
- 3 GRO D1799/c8, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Sir Robert Southwell at King's Weston, 25 September 1686.
- 4 The house and garden are described in Mark Girouard, 'Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire', *Country Life*, CXXXI, 1962, 335–339 and 396–399; J. A. Kenworthy-Browne, 'The Building of Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire for William Blathwayt between 1692 and 1702', *Connoisseur*, CXLIX, 1961, 138–144; Anthony Mitchell, 'The Park and Garden at Dyrham', *National Trust Yearbook*, 1977–78, 83–108; J. Kenworthy-Browne, revised with additions by J. Harris and N. Stacy, *Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire*, London, 1995; James LeesMilne, *English Country Houses. Baroque 1685–1715*, London, 1970, 85–94.
- 5 Details of work attributed to Louis Hauduroy (fl. c. 1700–12) and Mark Antony Hauduroy (fl. c. 1735–7) are given in Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England, 1537–1837*, I, 1962, 248, and II, 1970, 218. See also Geoffrey Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660–1820*, London, 1981, 263.
- 6 The reference suggests that Hauduroy copied the design. The statement continues: 'Un autre dessein ou les proportions du dit escalier sont dessigne en grand avec les proportions de l'escalier que Jay prise aupres de bichop quater' [Samuel Hauduroy undated account, GRO D1799/E236]. The meaning of the last two words is not clear but 'quater' may simply indicate 'fourthly' in the list of items. Nottingham sold his Kensington house in June 1689 and did not begin to build Burley until five years later. Hauduroy appears to have completed his design between the two dates. The building of Burley-on-the-Hill is described by H. J. Habakkuk in 'Daniel Finch, Second Earl of Nottingham: His House and Estate' in J. H. Plumb (ed.), *Studies in Social History*, London, 1955, 139–178.
- 7 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 4 June 1701.
- 8 Samuel Trewman's accounts record the spending of 4s on a side of mutton when Mr Hauduroy was at Dyrham [Account 14 May 1692, GRO D1799/A104] whereas Talman's visit to Dyrham in 1698 warranted the provision of at least half a buck for his entertainment, and he is one of Blathwayt's 'particular friends' for whom withdrawals had been made from the cellar, when stocks were stated in 1701 to have fallen 'somewhat short of the last' [Letter Charles Watkins from Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 5 November 1701, GRO D1799/E241].
- 9 The agreement dated 2 June 1693 with the London joiner Robert Barker stipulated that he was to receive directions not from the architect or clerk of the works but from Blathwayt or his clerk John Povey [GRO D1799/E236]. However, the contract dated 12 August 1698 with the carpenter Edward Wilcox for work on the

- outhouses, offices and stables provided for the reference of disputes to 'Mr Talman, Comptroller of His Majesty's Works' [GRO D1799/E235].
- 10 His surviving accounts begin on 9 January 1691/2 and with short gaps run to the end of October 1694, and then resume from March 1696 to the end of that year. Trewman died in 1698. Thomas Edwards wrote to William Blathwayt from Bristol 5 October 1698 about the death [GRO D1799/E239]. Thomas Hurnall wrote to Charles Watkins thanking him for favours received while in London adding that he discovered on his return to Dyrham that Samuel Trewman had died and was buried 'last night' [GRO D1799/E239].
- 11 His successors' accounts run from January 1699/1700, with short gaps, to September 1702. There are also accounts from March 1703/4 to March 1704/5 [GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Arthur Wynter at Dyrham to Charles Watkins, 4 October 1701]. Arthur Wynter is likely to have been related to Dyrham's previous owners.
- 12 GRO D1799/E242, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham, 1 November 1701.
- 13 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins 27 May 1701.
- 14 GRO D1799/E241, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham, 4 June 1701.
- 15 GRO D1799/E240, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham, 22 October 1701. The spelling of the name Humphreys varies. He signed himself Humphries.
- 16 Blathwayt sought to control the number of men engaged by the master craftsmen. Robert Barker, a London joiner, was obliged to take four principal workmen with him and use local men 'as he shall be ordered to employ' [Agreement between John Povey and Robert Barker, 2 June 1693, GRO D1799/E236]. Philip West employed 14 hands in the summer of 1699 and was paid £20/month but then reduced his workforce to ten and the payment came down to £15. William Anderson (clerk of the works for a period after Trewman's death) thought that as long as good weather lasted the faster the work went on the better, but the implication was that unproductive day-labour was to be avoided [Letter from William Anderson at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 9 September 1699, GRO D1799/E239].
- 17 GRO D1799/E239, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 14 September 1698.
- 18 GRO D1799/A104, Samuel Trewman account 25 June 1692.
- 19 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from William Blathwayt to Thomas Hurnall, 3 February 1700/1?
- 20 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Thomas Hurnall at Dyrham to Charles Watkins? 21 April 1701.
- 21 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Arthur Wynter at Dyrham to Charles Watkins, 19 April 1701.
- 22 GRO D1799/E239, Letter from Charles Watkins to *William Blathwayt*, 10 August 1698. Edward Wilcox, Talman's man engaged as carpenter and foreman, fell out with Avery the plumber. Watkins thought that Wilcox could therefore have been partial when examining Avery's work [GRO D1799/E239, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 5 October 1698].
- 23 GRO D1799/243, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 17 April 1703.
- 24 The deals were described as 'Norway'. A later supply of deals from Sweden was arranged for Blathwayt by Dr John Robinson, Minister to Sweden [Jacobsen, *William Blathwayt*, 263, 265, 330 fn.71]. He was unable to arrange direct shipment to Bristol and so had them sent by a Swedish ship to London [Letter, J. Robinson from Stockholm to William Blathwayt, 31 August 1701, GRO D1799/241]. Watkins undertook to look out for a London/Bristol ship and the deals were put on the 'William and Mary' for Bristol in November [Letter, J. J. Freeman Cutler to John Povey, 25 November 1701, GRO D1799/241].
- 25 GRO D1799/239, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 30 July 1698.
- 26 GRO D1799/239, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 10 August 1698. The term 'ploughs' was generally used for the teams of oxen used for haulage. Mules were also used to transport goods the eleven miles from Bristol.
- 27 GRO D1799/E245, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins 12 June 17???
- 28 GRO D1799/E242, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham, 1 November 1701.
- 29 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Arthur Wynter, 13 October 1701.
- 30 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 22 October 1701.
- 31 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 8 November 1701.

- 32 GRO D1799/E243, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins, 14 April 1703.
- 33 GRO D1799/E243, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins, 21 April 1703.
- 34 GRO D1799/E240, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 30 June 1701.
- 35 GRO D1799/E243, Letter from William Blathwayt to Charles Watkins, 6 April 1703.
- 36 GRO D1799/E245, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins, 14 October 17??.
- 37 William Blathwayt's cost-consciousness extended to postal charges. He complained on 11 July 1703 that he had received a package exceeding two ounces in weight and paid 3s, (this was not the only occasion on which this happened) whereas if the dispatches had been split into smaller packets they would have been free. 'Pray let this be a rule to you and everybody else in future' [Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins 11 July 17??, GRO D1799/E245]. Postal rates were even in Blathwayt's mind when he instructed Watkins to chide his children for not writing promptly after arriving at Dyrham. His daughter Anne had written but William (b.1688) and John (b.1690) had failed to write by every post. Their tutor Mr Oliver was to ensure that for a penance they wrote on the following Saturday letters in English, French and Latin, and on the next Monday a letter in English and one of the other two languages. 'You [Watkins] make up their packets so as not to exceed two ounces' [Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Watkins 11 July 17??, GRO D1799/E245].
- 38 The size of the building workforce cannot be quantified precisely but it does not seem to have been large, and its size would have varied according to the nature of the work being done. The mason Philip West employed up to fourteen men, the London joiners Barker and Hunter each had four men (at different times), the plasterer three, and the London carpenter Wilcox an unknown number. Richard Broad's small team of men prepared stone for West, and as many as eight other men worked at the quarry. Additionally, there were sawyers (from Sodbury), tilers, plumbers, painters and glaziers, and specialists like Humphries who made the chimney pieces, and Harvey the carver. These tradesmen were supported by local masons, carpenters and joiners from time to time, and labourers, who demolished the old house, did the digging and fetching and carrying. Four to six men worked in the stables.
- 39 GRO D1799/A104, Samuel Trewman account, 25 June 1692.
- 40 GRO D1799/A105, Samuel Trewman account, 2 June to 28 July, 1694.
- 41 Joseph Vanderlast was paid 2s per day for helping London joiners, and 4s for working before and after 6 o'clock by Mr Barker's agreement with him [Samuel Trewman's account 28 October 1693, GRO D1799/A103].
- 42 GRO D1799/E243, Letter from Thomas Hurnall at Dyrham to Charles Watkins, 27 May 1703.
- 43 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins at Whitehall to William Blathwayt, 9 September 1701.
- 44 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from William Blathwayt at The Hague to Charles Watkins, 2 November 1701.
- 45 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 25 October 1701.
- 46 Winter work was highly prized. In 1698 Richard Broad was paid 3½d per foot for raising and working new quarry stone. Philip West offered to do it in the winter for 3¼d and it was thought that he would take 3d – such was the attraction of secure winter employment [GRO D1799/E240, Letter Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 3 August 1698].
- 47 GRO D1799/E242, , Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 1 November 1701.
- 48 GRO D1799/E242, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 8 July 1702.
- 49 GRO D1799/E240, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 3 August 1698.
- 50 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Arthur Wynter to Charles Watkins, 23 April 1701.
- 51 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 4 June 1701.
- 52 'Greenhouse' was the contemporary term for Orangery.
- 53 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 31 May 1701.
- 54 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 4 June 1701. In spite of Blathwayt's strictures, West must have impressed him. He first worked at Dyrham in 1692 and was engaged in 1705 on a seven-year maintenance contract at £10 per annum, to secure the mansion and adjacent buildings from wet and wind by keeping tiling in good

- repair, cleaning gutters, unstopping pipes and clearing snow off buildings. West had to find all labour and materials, except tiles [Agreement, September 1705, GRO D1799/E237]. This agreement was still in force when West was additionally appointed bailiff in 1709 [Agreement 29 September 1709, GRO D1799/E176].
- 55 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from Alexander Hunter at Dyrham to Charles Watkins, 28 May 1701.
- 56 GRO D1799/E241, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins, 31 May 1701.
- 57 GRO D1799/E241, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham, 2 June 1701.
- 58 GRO D1799/E243, Letter from Thomas Simpson and Richard Broad to William Blathwayt, 16 October 1703.
- 59 GRO D1799/E241, William Blathwayt's annotation of letter from Charles Watkins, 31 May 1701. Watkins defended himself against Blathwayt's assertion that the workmen were overpaid. He reported that he had watched the setting of paving stones (pitching) and assured Blathwayt that Philip West had 'but an indifferent bargain of it'. West allowed pitchers from Chippenham 3s3¼d per yd and they would have left the site had they not been given hope for a farthing more. The pitchers cost no more than the equivalent of 14d per day [GRO D1799/E243, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 21 April 1703].
- 60 GRO D1799/E245, Letter from William Blathwayt to Charles Watkins at Dyrham, 4 July 1703. Much detailed work remained to be done, especially in the garden, but the London joiners' final account was dated 8 September 1703 [GRO D1799/A110] and Blathwayt referred in October 1703 to the completion of the plasterer's, painter's and glazier's accounts as soon as possible [GRO D1799/E243, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins, 21 October 1703].
- 61 GRO D1799/E243, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 12 April 1703.
- 62 GRO D1799/E243, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 26 April 1703.
- 63 GRO D1799/E243, Letter from Charles Watkins at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 13 October 1703.
- 64 GRO D1799/E245, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins, 'the 20th'.
- 65 GRO D1799/E245, Letter from William Blathwayt at Whitehall to Charles Watkins, 'Saturday'. In April 1704 she was in dispute about her board wages, asserting that although Blathwayt's first offer was 4s per week (in addition to £12 salary) 5s was agreed [GRO D1799/E245, Letter from Mrs Paul to William Blathwayt? April 1704]. The 1703 inventory is compared with one drawn up in 1710 in Karin-M. Walton, 'An Inventory of 1710 from Dyrham Park', *Furniture History*, xxii, 1986, 25-76.
- 66 Jacobsen, *William Blathwayt*, 101.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 196-7, 256.
- 68 The documentation of Blathwayt's personal supervision of building from a distance provides a rich but incomplete picture of the construction of Dyrham, for no complete statement of building expenditure survives. The estimate of cost is based on fragmentary evidence in letters, accounts and reports (which include routine garden and estate expenditure as well as house-building), vouchers and receipts. Philip West, for example, was paid not less than £2,740 in the period 1692-1705, and the London joiner Hunter at least £496. Blathwayt's rental income is derived from GRO D1799/F92, Schedule of estate, 20 June 1717.
- 69 GRO D1799/A100, Particulars of personal estate, 28 September 1686, and Inventories of William Blathwayt's estate in the public funds, 5 April 1705, 24 January 1714/5, 18 February 1714/5, and 26 June 1716.
- 70 GRO D1799/A26, Statement of disbursements by Giles Jacob, Michaelmas 1709 to Michaelmas 1710.
- 71 By September 1698 some of the rooms were so well advanced that workmen were keeping their things in them. Blathwayt was concerned that if the windows were glazed they could be damaged by the men [GRO D1799/E239, Letter from Charles Watkins to William Blathwayt, 17 September 1698]. It was sometimes necessary to provide accommodation for visiting workmen. Arrangements for two of Philip West's masons to have beds in Henry Rogers's house were however conditional. 'No detriment if the men . . . are careful and will not smoke tobacco up in the chambers, the thatch of the house roof lyeth pretty low . . .' [GRO D1799/E241, Letter from William Tyler at Dyrham to William Blathwayt, 28 May 1701].
- 72 GRO D1799/F92, Agreement between William Blathwayt and John Harvey of Bath, 1 November 1710.
- 73 Ironically, as Anthony Mitchell has reminded me, William Blathwayt's name does not appear on the monument in Dyrham Church, although there is room for it below those of his parents-in-law and his wife.