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CLERKS OF THE WORKS

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The clerk of the works is a somewhat elusive figure in architectural historiography. He has occasionally climbed out of the footnotes, when, for instance, an estate steward has reluctantly performed the role part-time. Sometimes he has seemed to be little more than a foreman, while on other occasions he has aspired to the exalted rank of executant architect. However, his contribution to the building process is rarely explored at length. This article seeks to rescue him from relative obscurity by examining his often uncomfortable position between client, architect and workforce.

When a country-house builder embarked upon what was usually the biggest enterprise of his life, he ventured into potentially uncharted territory. As Henry Wilson of Stowlangtoft Hall in Suffolk wrote in the 1860s to Sir Thomas Fremantle, after completing his own house and anticipating Sir Thomas's undertaking: 'I rejoice at your determination, though I should be still better pleased if, like myself, you were stepping out of the mire instead of stepping into it'.¹ In the absence of reliable cost-estimating procedures the drain on a builder's purse was difficult to predict.² They found themselves engaging large, diverse workforces which lacked the customary discipline of their own estate employees. Large quantities of materials had to be secured from a wide range of sources and made available on site when needed. Assistance and support from someone well-versed in reading architects' drawings, in building techniques, man-management, and keeping accounts was therefore essential.³

There were established precedents for the organisation of building projects, both large and small.

In the king's service, the clerk of the works emerged as a specialist administrator during the course of Edward III's great building programme of the mid-fourteenth century.⁴ The clerks were not specifically trained for their role, but were increasingly drawn from the growing body of king's clerks, who moved from one royal duty to another. They were clearly distinguishable from the master craftsmen responsible for the technical direction of the work. For men such as William of Wykeham, the appointment proved to be a stepping-stone for further advancement. Geoffrey Chaucer was another notable clerk of the works.⁵

The clerk's essential duty was to account for his expenditure, although it was a difficult process without the benefit of a regular system of estimates on the one hand or of any predetermined allocation of money on the other. The clerks had other responsibilities. They organised the craftsmen, labourers, materials and transport necessary for the undertaking. They paid the workforce and maintained its discipline; they ensured the security of the building materials and oversaw the disposal of any surpluses. The clerks' role developed to embrace inspection of the works as well as accountancy, and the title 'surveyor' was coupled with that of clerk in the patents of employment from 1421 onwards. In the sixteenth century it was to become the sole designation. Early in that century came the appointment of men who spent their whole career in the service of the king's works and, with the engagement of the master carpenter James Nedeham in 1532, a significant shift to the employment of technically qualified men.⁶

The scale of royal building led to increased differentiation of roles. Lay surveyors, not trained in writing and book-keeping, needed a staff of professional clerks. A purveyor acquired materials; a tally-man checked their arrival and looked after their security; another clerk oversaw the workmen and kept the books. When specialist knowledge was needed, craftsmen were deputed to inspect materials and fix rates for contracts. Progress clerks watched the pace of building so that targets were met.

Country-house builders were aware of the importance of these tasks undertaken by the royal clerks/surveyors, but finding one man who could perform them all effectively was difficult. Gentlemen builders of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for whom architecture was a polite accomplishment rather than a professional qualification, might have the knowledge, interest and time to cover much of the ground themselves. Sir Roger Pratt (1620–1685), recognised the danger of overspending, and argued that it chiefly proceeded from a lack of providence or the ignorance of the builder. He recommended that ‘If estate owners have neither skill, time or patience to superintend building, better get an experienced honest surveyor’.⁷ His near contemporary, Roger North (1653–1734), a builder himself and an intelligent and astringent commentator on current architectural practice, recommended that project supervision should not be delegated: ‘... if he leaves the affair to his surveyor ... he shall be miserably disappointed in charge as well as convenience’. North therefore envisaged that gentlemen should keep close personal control of their building projects.⁸ Epitomising this approach, Thomas Worsley was his own architect and builder in the construction of Hovingham Hall from 1751 to 1778, building, as the epitaph carved on the keystone of the house states, ‘according to his means not his wishes’.⁹ Few, however, are likely to have matched the total commitment of William Wrightson in the 1740s, an old man who daily directed the building of Cusworth Hall, on a bleak hillside overlooking

Doncaster, from a bo’sun’s chair fixed to the scaffolding.¹⁰

Yet there were many owners who had neither the time nor inclination to involve themselves on the scale of Worsley or Wrightson. Some were non-resident for years on end, some were deeply immersed in government business, and, as the roads improved, the gentry generally went up to London more frequently. Moreover, Bath and other spa towns flourished as the well-to-do flocked there in the hope of a cure from illness or simply to enjoy a more pleasurable social round than life in the country provided. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when an increasing number of houses were either being rebuilt or remodelled, it was common for estate stewards to act as clerks of the works.¹¹ Their particular assets were local knowledge of the estate and the surrounding region. They were also deemed trustworthy, as members of the master’s ‘family’ and administrators of estate income.

Certainly, given a competent steward, a master’s absence was no bar to his detailed involvement in building construction and maintenance. The letters that frequently passed between Lord Fitzwilliam and Francis Guybon, his steward at Milton in Northamptonshire, show that although Fitzwilliam did not once set foot in Milton during the twelve years covered by the correspondence, the able Guybon kept his master well informed about all aspects of estate activity, and Fitzwilliam could effectively manage Milton affairs from the capital.¹² Guybon engaged, supervised and paid building craftsmen, although the responsibility for reports on Milton House and discussions with the architect William Talman, who inspected Milton in 1688, were passed to Fitzwilliam’s chaplain, the Reverend Jeremiah Pendleton. In the 1720s to 1740s, Daniel Eaton, steward at Deene in Northamptonshire for the third and fourth Earls of Cardigan, was well-versed in surveying, building technology, and brickmaking.¹³ He prepared estimates of cost for

building work, and was additionally enrolled in the Court of Common Pleas as an attorney. Such skills would have been of particular value in negotiations with farm and building labourers and craftsmen for it was Lord Cardigan's practice to employ few regular full-time labourers, instead contracting for nearly all work 'by the great', a fixed price being agreed with individuals or groups of men.

William Blathwayt had considerably less confidence in his estate staff when he rebuilt Dyrham in Gloucestershire from 1692 to 1703. He was deeply involved in the planning and execution of the project but his duties as Secretary at War to William III, and his attendance upon the king during his summer campaigns in Flanders from 1692 to 1701, meant that building operations were conducted by correspondence. Building was supervised by local men acting as clerks of the works, with his agent, Charles Watkins, supplementing the clerks' reports with his own statements of progress. Blathwayt's clerks of the works managed the workforce and oversaw the acquisition and movement of materials, but they seem to have lacked technical knowledge of building. In fact his acknowledged administrative skills proved to be no guarantee that the notoriously difficult task of supervising building workers would be accomplished without problems. Unwilling to delegate authority, his diffident and easily confused staff were forced to refer the smallest details for his decision.¹⁴

It is not surprising that the additional responsibilities associated with a major building project were sometimes accepted with reluctance.¹⁵ Indeed, it is difficult to see how a full-time steward could also perform the onerous duties of a clerk of the works. It might be possible where the relatively small scale of the project, or the desired rate of progress, meant that the work could be handled by the estate workforce, or a small number of trusted master-craftsmen. When a clerk of the works was employed, he might come from a number of different backgrounds, with many of the non-professionals doing the job only

once. They might be clerics, estate tenants, stewards or craftsmen, independent craftsmen, or pupil architects. In exceptional cases, like that of Thomas Ripley, the role shaded into that of executant architect. A London-based master carpenter and, most importantly, a protégé of Sir Robert Walpole, Ripley held a string of official positions in the King's Works from 1716. He was already architect of the London Custom House (1718) and probably that at Liverpool, before he began supervising the construction of Houghton Hall (Norfolk) in 1721. Not only was he responsible for the superb quality of the execution of Colen Campbell's designs during the house's construction between 1721 and 1735, but also he seems to have adapted them, especially those of the stables, to the extent that Isaac Ware, admittedly an apprentice of Ripley's, claimed in 1735 that Ripley was the architect of Houghton. Certainly he was the architect (1727–41) of nearby Wolterton and had conducted day to day work and served as general contractor for alterations at Raynham in the 1720s.¹⁶ Gaining experience of architectural design and construction through the position of clerk of the works, and thereby attracting a patron's eye, was important to other able young men from craft backgrounds: William Etty at Castle Howard, James Paine at Nostell Priory, John Carr at Kirby Hall, and Samuel Wyatt at Kedleston Hall, for example.¹⁷ On the other hand, when Edmund Rolfe greatly extended Heacham Hall in Norfolk in the 1770s, but probably never employing more than two dozen men on site at any one time, the work was supervised by Charles Hay, a small farmer who seems to have managed the estate.¹⁸ It was unlikely, however, that anyone other than a full-time clerk of the works could effectively supervise big projects where most of the work was done by sizeable workforces of directly-recruited men.

At Henham Hall, entirely rebuilt in the 1790s for Sir John Rous, the clerk of the works was the estate carpenter, Rufus Marsden.¹⁹ At peak periods in the building cycle he was supervising eighty men. The

weekly statements or pay-bills he prepared have unusually almost all survived, covering the period of building, from March 1792 to early 1800. They take a form familiar for most big building projects throughout the period covered by this study, listing the names of workers, the number of days they were employed, and their wage-rates, earnings and expenses. The men are usually grouped by trade, although in the Henham case this is rarely stated explicitly.

Yet the recording of other payments throws further light on the key organisational role of the clerk of the works beyond the supervision of labour. Marsden travelled to Yarmouth where he bought deals, battens, scaffold poles and mahogany veneers. He arranged the transport of the goods to the building site, and the movement of considerable quantities of timber from the estate's woods. He paid the contractors, leisurely in the mode of the eighteenth century, with sums advanced by Rous or his agent. In all Marsden accounted for the payment of some £17,200 over seven years, more than 80 per cent of the money spent building the house passing through his hands.

In the absence of a suitable candidate from his estate or, increasingly, a recommendation from an architect, the prospective builder of a country house might have recourse to his friends, or a business acquaintance. Mathew Wilson of Eshton (Yorkshire) recorded in his Day Book in 1824 that his supplier of timber, 'John Settle of Skipton, recommended me to one Mawson, a joiner and house carpenter. Agreed with him for 35s per week until my house finished if he conducts himself well, very strongly recommended'. In the margin of the book Wilson scribbled 'To be a foreman'.²⁰

However, for clients with no architectural or building knowledge, and who had no suitable estate servant to call upon, it was not enough simply to recruit a clerk of the works. It was necessary to define his responsibilities and determine to whom he reported. Was he the client's agent, or, if an architect was involved, was he his man? If this

was unclear, the position of the clerk of the works as 'pig in the middle' could be very uncomfortable and the consequences serious. Building was an activity inherently difficult to manage which often led to friction between the parties involved. It does not follow, however, that enterprises were always beset by problems, even given the frequency of cries of anguish from disgruntled clients. Conflict, especially when litigation was envisaged and where papers survive, is inevitably better documented than amity. Nevertheless, apart from the recital of difficulties, the study of problem projects reveals much about the changing expectations of clients, and business patterns.

When Humphrey Repton was engaged by George Freke Evans to make alterations to Laxton Hall (Northants) in the 1800s, problems soon arose concerning the clerk of the works.²¹ Their crux was supervision. Repton provided the first clerk, John Collett, whom Freke Evans, already wary of Repton's delays about plans and his expense claims, believed to be incompetent from the start. Repton, with no training, yet perhaps the wordiest member of the architectural profession, shrugged the matter off, blaming jealousies and ignorance among the tradesmen. Eighteen months later, Freke Evans himself seems to have attempted to find a replacement through the master carpenter on the site. As the latter explained, it was not easy, for he reckoned that out of 40 workmen it was rare to find more than one who was fitted to act as clerk of the works. A man might be a tip-top carpenter, but useless at keeping accounts and directing a large, assorted workforce. At this point Repton employed the fifty-seven year old, and presumably vastly experienced, Uriah Woolcot. He proved to be no more acceptable. Repton, increasingly exasperated by his exacting client, sought to distance himself from the problem. His view was that Evans clearly knew what was going on day to day, whereas he, not receiving copies of Woolcot's report to Evans, had no intelligence about detail and progress until the clerk of the works was in serious trouble. Somewhat nonchalantly,

Repton claimed that as far as he was concerned no news was good news. He expected that if points of detail were not covered by the architect's plans, they could be settled on site between the clerk and the client. Clearly, this left the latter in a vulnerable position.

Generally, it was a matter of judgement how much detailed support the clerk needed from the architect. However, if the former was not up to the job – and was reporting to a client with little experience of building – trouble ensued if he was not well supervised. At Sheringham (Norfolk), built in the 1810s again to the designs of Repton (with his son John Adey Repton), the first clerk of the works, the local workhouse master, a man diligent to a fault according to the enthusiastic client, Abbot Upcher, allowed the premature removal after incessant rain of wooden arches supporting the cellar roof.²² To everyone's surprise and dismay it caved in. Who was to blame? The unfortunate clerk of works, the workmen, Upcher himself, or the ever-volatile Repton? Or was it the impossibility of closely supervising an inexperienced clerk of the works ninety miles away from Repton's base at Hare Street near Romford?

Also in the early nineteenth century, when the architectural profession faced criticism of its inability to control costs, and agonized about its relationship with general building contractors, two well-documented examples from the career of Lewis Wyatt are especially revealing on the subject of building supervision and the relationship between client, architect and clerk of the works. By the 1820s he was an architect of considerable experience both public (he held positions in the Office of Works for over thirty years) and private (he inherited the flourishing Cheshire practice of his uncle Samuel in 1807).²³ Lord Sherborne commissioned him to rebuild his eponymous Gloucestershire house, insisting it should preserve something of the spirit of its predecessor.²⁴ Before building began in 1829 Wyatt had discussed the management of the project with his client. A

curiously fragmented structure was devised. John Roberts, already employed at Sherborne, would agree contracts for the supply of materials and take charge of masons, bricklayers, slaters and quarrymen whilst George Beedham, who had worked under Wyatt's direction at Stoke Hall (Notts.), would supervise the carpenters and joiners. In addition a general accountant supervisor was 'to conduct the whole and prevent jealousies'. Faint hope. Wyatt's opinion of Roberts was soon qualified although he admitted the burden of supervising a great number of men seven days a week was a heavy one. But when Lord Sherborne's agent, George Newmarch, timidly complained 'that matters do not quite go on satisfactorily', Wyatt recognised the folly of divided responsibility which had fuelled both jealousies and costs. When Beedham left in some haste on the discovery of dry rot in the spring of 1835, Lord Sherborne's patience broke. Having spent upwards of £40,000 he wrote to Newmarch, 'Considering that I was dealing with a gentleman I had no written agreement with Mr Wyatt, therefore I can only complain generally that he never paid the attention to the works which according to our understanding he was bound to do . . . I might as well have saved all the percentage [Wyatt's five per cent commission] for a common builder could not have done worse'. Seeking to avoid litigation both parties sought advice and arbitration between 1835 and 1837. Lord Sherborne pressed for Wyatt to be made liable for the cost of putting the house in order, and awards for negligence of at least £1,780 were made against him.²⁵ In the end, Anthony Salvin was brought in to complete the interior between 1841 and 1842.²⁶

In 1826 Wyatt was invited by Gibbs Antrobus to submit plans to extend Eaton (by Congleton) Hall in Cheshire.²⁷ Antrobus had very recently inherited the house from an uncle who had been a partner in Coutts Bank. The client initially contemplated the extension of the existing house but, uneasy about the balance between old and new accommodation, then proposed rebuilding on a new site, whilst

stressing that his income was fixed and the estate entailed. Wyatt, almost doubling the cost of the project in prospect, persuaded the Antrobuses to build their house in 'new' Elizabethan style, although Mrs Antrobus 'was glad . . . to find that the style of architecture you gave us was not so much more expensive than the Grecian'. These were early days.

In encouraging his clients to accept his plans and remuneration, rather than those of his former clerk of the works, Thomas Lee, he explained the basis of professional practice c. 1830. After thirty years in the business Wyatt knew what was expected of a clerk of the works

The usual [architect's] charge being 5 per cent on the expenditure of the building when executed from the necessary working drawings and under the superintendence of a regular Clerk of the Works whose duty it is to communicate with, and to report his proceedings to the architect. He is also to order and look into the proper materials, to keep a regular weekly building account, and to hire and pay the workmen's wages. The tradesmen's and merchants' bills, after being certified by him are either paid by the Gentleman or his Steward, who is usually appointed to keep a proper cash and building account.

The Clerk of the Works being in fact the builder will be a proper person to . . . look out the timber, deals, wainscots and laths, to see what oak timber, bricks, lime, sand or any old materials the estate can furnish, to look into and make contracts for proper supplies of stone, slate, lime, lead, or any other building materials, and for the carriage and delivery of the same. He is also employed to look into and hire at the customary wages of the country all workmen viz masons, bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, sawyers, slaters, labourers or any other he can employ with advantage and of them he is to keep a regular account of their time, to pay them all the wages they are hired at and with a proper check or assistant to see them on and off their daily work and to control the time allowed for their meals .

Wyatt added that the employment of a good clerk of the works could result in a cost saving of 10 to 15 per cent, with 'more satisfactory and better work done'.

The description of the clerk of the works as 'the builder', under his supervision, is instructive. He

went on to explain to Antrobus that he himself would not get tied up with general building contractors. If Antrobus employed, as he proposed, his late uncle's builder, that would be unacceptable to Wyatt, and the clerk of the works would be employed by and report to Antrobus alone. Antrobus might well have been confused which route to choose. In the end, he relied on Wyatt. His final bill for a 'plain and heavy' house was £23,000 – the cost had escalated from a first estimate of £10–12,000 for extensions; Wyatt's fee was £1,150. As the nineteenth century progressed, there is evidence of an increasingly professional approach to the appointment of a clerk of the works and the performance of the role. At Haverlingland in Norfolk in the 1840s, Edward Blore designed a new house for Edward Fellowes.²⁹ The clerk of the works was Richard Armstrong. He was neither an estate employee nor a local tradesman, and although he does not appear in lists of Blore's pupils, he was practising in London as an architect in his own right by the 1850s. Indeed, he reappeared at Haverlingland in the 1850s and 60s to design extensions and garden buildings. He was also responsible for alterations of 1856–60 to Englefield House, Berkshire, the seat of Edward Fellowes's brother, Richard Benyon, besides restoring churches for the family.

The layout of Armstrong's weekly reports to Fellowes was essentially the same as those prepared at Henham fifty years before. They show that he visited Bristol and Bath in 1839, at the start of the project, to arrange the supply of Bath stone. He obtained competitive bids from Norwich haulage contractors for the movement of building materials from Great Yarmouth and Norwich to Haverlingland. Dissatisfied with the performance of the Haverlingland brickmaker, Armstrong dismissed him and supervised production himself. Some estate owners involved themselves in the details of such disputes with building workers. Immersed in government business, William Blathwayt never hesitated to settle a squabble with the Dyrham workforce, although his messages from London and the

Netherlands lost something of their force by the time their contents were made known to the miscreants on site. For many, however, to be shielded by their clerk of the works from such problems was very welcome.³⁰

It is clear from his attitude to wages and expenses that clerks of the works like Armstrong could achieve savings of the order Wyatt claimed. The purse strings at Haveringland were indeed tightly controlled. Neither in his detailed reports nor in Edward Fellowes's own ledgers is there trace of the expense of the traditional roof-raising ceremony or of the sniff of a barrel of beer during the four years the accounts run.³¹ In the teeth of the worst depression of the nineteenth century (1837–42), Armstrong managed to employ men at Haveringland at rates 20 per cent or more below those of similar projects in the same county.³² When Armstrong closed his accounts, Fellowes was evidently so satisfied with his performance that he was given a £50 gratuity, the equivalent of sixteen weeks salary. It marked a project very differently concluded from James Wyatt's at Henham, costing some 70 per cent over the estimate, or the litigation surrounding his nephew's work at Sherborne.

Oddly, the remuneration of good clerks of the works does not seem to have matched their usefulness. It was variable but often little in advance of the skilled workmen on site.³³ Hay at Heacham in the 1770s was paid a guinea a week, whereas the London based mason who came to fix two statuary marble fireplaces was paid 3s a day (with 1s a week lodging allowance) and the better-paid joiners and bricklayers 2s to 2s 3d. Marsden at Henham, a local man again, received 3s 6d, no more than the other highest-paid men on site, the bricklayers and joiners whom James Wyatt sent from London. During the inflationary period of the French wars, when skilled labour was scarce, Humphrey Repton recommended a clerk of the works at Laxton in 1806 at 2gns per week, little more than his estimate of 7s per day for top tradesmen, although he may have exaggerated the latter, as he did most things, to push the clerk

of works he proposed. By the 1840s the real contribution of clerks of the works was being recognised by thoroughly competent architects like Edward Blore. Armstrong at Haveringland was clearly distinguished from the other workers there. He received 3gns a week, over 10s per working day, when the highest-paid tradesman received only 3s 6d per day, a rate no higher than that paid at Henham fifty years earlier. Armstrong's total remuneration, as the man on the spot, masterminding the smooth running of the whole project and effecting significant economies, was £778, not far short of the £894 fee earned by the architect. Richard Armstrong received much more support from Edward Blore, a conscientious attender at Haveringland, than did Rufus Marsden at Henham. The latter was paid far less for a more difficult job. It is doubtful whether James Wyatt ever visited the site. Lewis Wyatt, although criticised for neglect at Sherborne, was there on ten occasions.

Clearly, a good clerk of the works saved considerable sums of money for his client. He ensured that men paid by the day did not spin out the work, that piece-work was not skimped, and that materials were of good quality, reasonably priced, and delivered on time. By good management the clerk of works also relieved the client, and his steward, of time-consuming and stressful involvement in the resolution of disputes. He was also in a position of considerable trust with a high proportion of the cost of building a house passing through his hands. In a labour-intensive activity like building, in addition to keeping labour costs down, maintaining the productivity of the workforce alone offered considerable potential savings. Completion on time, and the avoidance of subsequent repairs due to the use of poor materials or faulty construction, were other obvious advantages for a country house builder who employed a skilled clerk of the works. Given the expenditure on a house of the equivalent of five or more year's rental income, saving 10 per cent of the cost would keep a six month's portion of this sum in the builder's pocket.

The clerk of the works's traditional role changed around the middle of the nineteenth century, with the emergence of the general contractor and building to a fixed price.³⁴ The function of course survived within contractors' organisations, with their clerks 'expected to be fully competent to fulfil the several duties of architect, builder and artizan, to be thorough draughtsmen and accountants and yet be practically acquainted with work'.³⁵ Thomas Cubitt trained men as clerks of the works, his pupils paying a premium of 300 guineas. For the country house owner, the focus of the supervisory role performed on his behalf shifted from the customary involvement with labour and the acquisition of materials to the overall supervision of the contractor's perfor-

mance, under the guidance of the architect.³⁶ The client's interests, once the contract was signed, were now less concerned with cost (unless he indulged in the expensive business of changing his mind) and more with the design and quality of the building. The nature of the professional support he required therefore changed, and the always elusive clerk of the works becomes increasingly difficult to find in estate accounts for country house building.

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NOTES

- 1 Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire County Record Office, D/FR 22/1/1, letter from Henry Wilson to Sir Thomas Fremantle, Stowlangtoft, 16 September 1864, quoted by Jill Franklin in *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan 1835–1914*, London, 1981, 121.
- 2 Detailed estimates were a late development. Nash told the 1831 Select Committee on Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace that architects never made that sort of estimate in the first instance [H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, London, vi, 1973, 145].
- 3 '[The] clerks of works . . . importance in the history of architectural practice cannot be too highly emphasised. The role of a responsible clerk on site was worth more than any number of young gentleman pupils back at the office in London' [Margaret Richardson, 'John Soane: The Business of Architecture', in Giles Worsley (ed.), *Georgian Architectural Practice*. Papers given at The Georgian Group Symposium 1991, London, 1992, 66].
- 4 The evolution of the clerk of works's role in royal service is discussed in Colvin, *op. cit.*, i, 1963, 164–201, and iii, 1975, 5–24.
- 5 William of Wykeham became a clerk of the works in 1356. By 1367 he was both chancellor and bishop of Winchester. Chaucer was clerk of the works from 1389 to 1391 [Colvin, *op. cit.*, i, 166, 194, 200].
- 6 It is not certain that Nedeham was appointed for his technical knowledge, but under Henry VIII there was a clear shift away from churchmen to the employment of paid laymen. Nedeham's successor, Richard Lee, may have come from a family of masons, advancing himself socially and financially in the post [Colvin, *op. cit.*, iii, 11–14].
- 7 R. T. Gurlther (ed.), *The Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt, Charles II's Commissioner for the Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire: now printed for the first time from his note books*, Oxford, 1928, 47.
- 8 H. M. Colvin and J. Newman (eds), *Of Building. Roger North's Writings on Architecture*, Oxford, 1981, 22.
- 9 Worsley's reward for his amateur enthusiasm for architecture came in 1760, when he was appointed by his old friend and Prime Minister, Lord Bute, to the Surveyor Generalship of the Office of Works [Giles Worsley, 'Hovingham Hall, Yorkshire', *Country Life*, CLXXXVIII, September 15 1994, 90–3 and, September 22 1994, 56–61].
- 10 Gordon Smith, *Cusworth Hall*, Doncaster, 1968, 6.
- 11 D. R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords and People*, Cambridge, 1992, 236–50.
- 12 D. R. Hainsworth and Cherry Walker (eds), *The Correspondence of Lord Fitzwilliam of Milton and Francis Guybon his Steward 1697–1709*, Northampton, 1990.
- 13 Joan Wake and Deborah Champion Webster (eds), *The Letters of Daniel Eaton to the Third Earl of Cardigan 1725–1732*, Northampton, 1971.

- 14 Alan Mackley, 'Building Management at Dyrham', *The Georgian Group Journal*, vii, 1997, 107–116.
- 15 For example, William Atkinson at Lowther Hall in 1694 [Hainsworth, *op.cit.* 238]. Samuel Popplewell, Edwin Lascelles's steward when Harewood House was built from 1755, found himself bewildered by the multiplicity of duties expected of him when adding the role of clerk of the works to his other tasks [Mary Mauchline, *Harewood House*, Newton Abbot, 1974, 30].
- 16 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* New Haven and London, 1995, 818–20; James M. Rosenheim, *The Townshends of Raynham*, Middletown, 1989, 185.
- 17 Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, *cit.*, 354, 721, 1124; Derek Linstrum, *West Yorkshire Architects and Architecture*, London, 1978, 31. The process continued from father to son. When William Etty, clerk of the works at Castle Howard, died in 1734, his son John (who was to die in 1738) was recommended by Hawksmoor to Lord Carlisle as 'sober, carefull, ingenious, and industrious' [Geoffrey Webb, 'The Letters and drawings of Nicholas Hawksmoor relating to the Building of the Mausoleum at Castle Howard, 1726–1742', *The Walpole Society*, xix, Oxford, 1931, 148]. James Paine employed his own son as clerk of the works at Thomdon Hall (1764–70) [Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, *cit.*, 726]. Malcolm Airs, *The Tudor and Jacobean Country House*, Stroud, 1995, 72, discusses the emergence of surveyors from craft backgrounds in the seventeenth century.
- 18 Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, 'Founding a landed dynasty, building a country house: the Rolfs of Heacham in the eighteenth century', in C. Rawcliffe, R. Virgoe and R. G. Wilson (eds), *Counties and Communities: Essays on East Anglian History Presented to Hassell Smith*, Norwich, 1996, 307–25.
- 19 Alan Mackley, 'The Construction of Henham Hall', *The Georgian Group Journal*, vi, 1996, 85–96. For Henham there is the rare survival of a near complete set of clerk of the works's reports [Ipswich, Suffolk County Record Office, HA1 1, Rous family papers, c7/1–2]. The Marsdens appear to have been an estate family. An Elizabeth Marsden travelled the 21 miles to Great Yarmouth in January 1795 to buy a feather bed, blankets and a coverlet 'for the greenhouse', the cost being charged to the building account [*Ibid* c7/2/3]. A Rufus Alexander Marsden began work in April 1796 at the boys' wage of one shilling per day [*Ibid.* c7/2/4].
- 20 Leeds, University of Leeds Library, ms4 17/7, Mathew Wilson's Day Book 1823–1825, entry for 24 December 1824.
- 21 Northampton, Northamptonshire County Record Office, x.2830A, Freke Evans (Laxton) collection.
- 22 The building of Sheringham Hall is described in a journal kept by Abbot Upcher, [Norwich, Norfolk County Record Office, UPC55] The building accounts are in *ibid* UPC27 and 38, 640×4. Extracts from the journal have been published by Susan Yaxley (ed.), *Sherringhamia. The Journal of Abbot Upcher 1813–16*, Stibbard, 1986.
- 23 Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, *cit.* 1121–3.
- 24 Gloucester, Gloucestershire County Record Office, Sherborne Muniments, Sherborne Family Settlements, D678/322.
- 25 Lord Sherborne compiled a long list of defects in the structure and its finishing and asserted that for at least two years he and his family had been harrassed and 'kept in a state worse than houseless'. The arbitrators were London architects Thomas Allason (for Lord Sherborne) and Joseph Kay (secretary of the London Architects' Club) with recourse to Sir Robert Smirke if they failed to agree [Sherborne Family Settlements, 6678/322, *cit.*, letter dated 27 July 1835 from R. R. Bailey to Messrs Lawrence and Newmarch, and undated [1835] report of inspection by arbitrators of work at Sherborne]. The awards against Wyatt covered remedial work up to 24 December 1835. Lord Sherborne was still pursuing Wyatt for compensation in 1837 and details of the arbitrators' final judgement do not seem to have survived. Wyatt's habitual detachment from his projects is further indicated by his writing about Oulton Park (Cheshire) which he altered from 1817 for Sir John Egerton. In 1821 he stated that he had very little information about what had been done in the previous twelve months, and in 1822 he could not calculate his commission because he lacked information about expenditure [Chester, Cheshire County Record Office, DEO 200/4].
- 26 Nicholas Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, 11 1660–1830*, Chichester, 1992, 154; David Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire*, Harmondsworth, 1976, 385–6; Jill Allibone, *Anthony Salvin Pioneer of Gothic Revival Architecture 1799–1881*, Cambridge, 1988, 165.
- 27 Chester, Cheshire County Record Office, D2781; see also Peter de Figueiredo and Julian Treuherz, *Cheshire Country Houses*, Chichester, 1988, 233.
- 28 Chester, Cheshire County Record Office, D2781/152, letter dated 1 February 1828, from Lewis Wyatt to G. C. Antrobus.
- 29 Norwich, Norfolk County Record Office, ms 8595 20B, Haverlingland Hall Building Accounts. A complete set of clerk of the work's reports has survived, supported by numerous account books.

30 When an architect was also building contractor the clerk of the works could find himself under fire from the client, as did Richard Matthews and James Cook with the tiresome and interfering Colonel Thomas Horner, for whom John Soane completed alterations to Mells Park in Somerset (1810–24) [Richardson, *op. cit.*, 66–9].

31 Richard Armstrong was also alert to the value of a discount. Samuel Thomas, a Birmingham locksmith, wrote to him on 9 January 1843:

In answer to yours of the 6th inst. that an allowance of 5 per cent will reduce my slender profit very seriously but for prompt cash payment I will make the sacrifice feeling grateful for your kindness . . .

The net sum was £67 15s 6d, for goods supplied between 25 April 1841 and 12 November 1842. Thus the ‘prompt’ payment was, in part, for goods supplied nearly two years before [Haveringland Hall Building Accounts, *cit.*, Box 2, suppliers’ vouchers, 1842–3].

32 Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Add 3949, 3950 and 3958, Edward Blore’s accounts for Ramsey, Shadwell and Merton.

- 33 Specific references to the remuneration of clerks of the works, when the job was done by men holding a salaried position on an estate, are rare.
- 34 Richard Price, *Master, Unions and Men*, Cambridge, 1980, 23; M. H. Port, ‘The Office of Works and Building Contracts in Early Nineteenth Century England’, *Economic History Review*, 2ser., xx, 1967, 94–110; Hermione Hobhouse, *Thomas Cubitt Master Builder*, London, 1971. At the time that Robert Kerr wrote *The Gentleman’s House*, London, 1871, he concluded that it was the norm for country houses to be built by general contract.
- 35 *The Builder*, 9 October 1852, 647, quoted by Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, 265.
- 36 G. G. Hoskins (revised by H. P. Hoskins), *The Clerk of Works*, 8th edn, London, 1914.