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Dissertation Assignment – Jane Muncaster

MA Historical Research – Birkbeck College 2003

TITLE: 'Six Foote of Shop Roome': women as subjects in the records of the Royal Exchange in the 1690s.

Table of Contents	page
General introduction	2
Plan of the dissertation	4
The Gresham Repertories in context	5
Review of the historical literature	9
Theoretical framework	20
Research findings	25
Conclusions	49
<u>Tables and charts</u>	
Women's joint tenancies	27
City Freedom admissions: single female leaseholders	38
Marital status of female tenants	29
Bibliography	63

Appendices

1. Methodological approach (not included)
2. Plan of the pawns of the Exchange (not included)
3. Names of women leaseholders in the 1690's sample
4. Lease data transcription form (not included)

Abbreviations

GR 1678 -1722	Gresham Repertories Volume 1678-1722
CLRO	Corporation of London Records Office
PRO	Public Records Office
GH MS	Guildhall Library Manuscripts Section
BL	British Library

General Introduction

The Royal Exchange has a special place in the history of the City of London. Sir Thomas Gresham established the first Exchange in 1569. Built as a meeting place for City merchants it constituted a focal point for the commercial community of the early modern capital and was a grand addition to the city's architecture. ¹ Artistic representations of merchants gathering at the Exchange have endured as definitive images of life there. This is as true for the second Exchange, built on the same site between Cornhill and Lombard Street after the Great Fire of 1666. ² Another group of Londoners, however, was also intrinsically associated with the Exchange. These were the retail traders who occupied the shops situated on the upper floor of the building, an area known as the 'pawne'. ³ It is the single women who are known to have run businesses there at the end of the seventeenth century who are the subjects of this research.

A considerable amount is known about the shops and shopkeepers of the first Exchange. As the most significant source of information on The Royal Exchange, the Gresham Repertories are full of detail about the trades that people kept there and the physical environment in which they operated. ⁴ Far less factual information is available to historians about the retail businesses at the second Exchange. What the Gresham Repertories do contain, however, is a body of information about the leasing of the shops there and about the tenants themselves. As the main source material for this research, the Gresham Repertories will be introduced in more detail shortly.

This project was inspired by Pamela Sharpe's study of the life of Hester Pinney, a single woman who traded lace out of the Royal Exchange during the 1680s. She went on to become a highly successful businesswoman and financier. Sharpe thus argues that "Hester serves as a significant exception to the caution that historians have exhibited in discussing the business prospects of unmarried women".⁵ The research that will be discussed here has been an exercise in overcoming this caution. In doing so it challenges the prevailing view that an independent career in the retail trades was barely an option for single women in this period.⁶

It has not been possible to answer the question of how representative Hester was of businesswomen at the Exchange. However, it has been possible to establish the popularity of the shops in this location to single women traders and to explore why this might have been. It has also been possible to investigate the strategies that women employed in pursuing a commercial career. The primary proposition in this dissertation is that far from having to swim against the tide, single women from the middle ranks of seventeenth-century London society were able to follow conventional routes to establishing their own retail businesses. This involved completing a formal apprenticeship or joining a livery company by other customary means. They were then able to take up a legitimate place in the business community through entry to the Freedom of the City of London. In having them adopt this route middling families prepared their daughters for the future, as they did their sons.⁷ This was a future in which independence was a distinct option.

Plan of the dissertation

The discussion begins with an introduction to the Gresham Repertories, from which the core data series for the project was derived. Selected literature that reflects on the subject of women in retail business in the early modern period is then discussed. This is followed by details of the theoretical framework employed in the study. The methodology adopted in data management is described in Appendix 1.

The research findings are divided into two sections. The first section details the results of an analysis of the data from the Gresham Repertories. This addresses the proportional significance of single women as tenants at the Exchange, placing this in a broader context. The second section addresses the subject of ‘citizenship’ and the place of single women in the livery companies of seventeenth-century London. Using evidence from additional contemporary sources, this part of the discussion is structured around the case histories of individual women identified as tenants at the Exchange.

The Gresham Repertories in context

The Gresham Repertories are the minutes of meetings held by the *Joint Committee for Gresham Affaires* and they form part of the archives of the Mercers' Company of London. The purpose of the Gresham Committee was to manage the Royal Exchange and Gresham College. They took up this task 1597, following the death of Thomas Gresham and then his wife, Ann. The Repertories contain a wealth of information about the day to day running of the Exchange, from repairing the windows to appointing the watchmen.⁸ They are also a rare source of information on shop tenancies. They do not, however, constitute a register of shopkeepers at the Exchange and no such document is known to exist in either the archives of the Mercers' Company or the Corporation of London.⁹

It was in the nature of the early modern City of London to be managed 'by committee'. Like the Gresham Repertories, the Journals of the City Lands Committee reflect this process.¹⁰ These sources resemble each other in their documentary layout and show that both committees managed estates and buildings for the purpose of income generation. The financial responsibility of the City Lands committee was, however, much greater. The nomination of a sub-committee to take on specific functions was also common to both. The Gresham sub-committee looked after the routine maintenance of the Exchange and had a major role in letting the shops. The scope of its responsibility was to deal with the renewal of tenancies to existing leaseholders and to grant leases to shopkeepers who were already running a business under a sub-tenancy agreement. The majority of leases that were granted in the 1690s were to such

tenants.¹¹ The ‘joint’ structure of the Gresham Committee, however, is a highly distinctive feature that reflects the history of the Royal Exchange.

Thomas Gresham had secured the input of city authorities from the outset of his project to build the Exchange. He thus offered to finance the building if the Corporation would contribute the land. Underpinning the financial strategy was the intention to let out shops on the upper floor of the building. The exact layout of the shops is not known, but an indication of what this area was like can be found in Appendix 2.

Gresham received income from the shop rents during his lifetime, followed by his widow Lady Ann. The Corporation expected to take over running the Exchange, using income from the shops, once Sir Thomas and his wife were gone. In his will, however, he declared that the Exchange would ultimately be left as a joint legacy to the City of London and the Mercers Company. It is for this reason that the Gresham Committee operated as a joint committee with senior representatives from the company and the corporation.

¹² According to Doolittle, “No account of the early years of the Gresham foundation can fail to grapple with the question of its financial viability”.¹³ Once widowed, Lady Ann’s financial management was not oriented to the long-term viability of the Exchange. Rather, she sought to secure maximum cash benefits from her husband’s investment. Shortly before her death low rents had been agreed with leaseholders. In return they paid high ‘fines’ (one-off payments, similar to a non-returnable deposit) to which Lady Ann was entitled. This significantly reduced the forthcoming rental income.¹⁴ The

fundamental and ongoing problem, however, was the cost of maintaining Gresham College.

In his initial plan Gresham had not declared his intention to establish a College with income from the Exchange. This was also announced as part of his will. From the perspective of the City and the Mercers' company, Gresham College was never anything other than an impossible financial burden.¹⁵ At the end of the seventeenth century, the situation had become critical. The "vast losses" that the City and company had incurred as a result of the Gresham legacy were evident to the committee.¹⁶ The immense costs of rebuilding after the Great Fire compounded this and many of the shops had never been let.¹⁷ By 1702 the college lecturers were owed two years salary and the Exchange building had deteriorated. Support was thus sought at the highest level of City governance for the shedding of the college from the Gresham estate and for its recommissioning by Act of Parliament.¹⁸

The financial stresses endured by the Gresham committee in the 1690s need to be seen in the context of the wider economic circumstances of the City of London. The Corporation and companies are thought to have faced continual financial embarrassment and the recurrent threat of bankruptcy.¹⁹ A vast metropolitan area offering alternative commercial opportunities now surrounded the City. Businesses there were largely beyond the control of the guilds, which had not kept pace with developments. The prevalence of unregulated trade within the City further undermined their authority.²⁰ With the country at war, city residents and businesspeople faced a high tax burden.

The ‘clipping’ of silver coinage, a common practice, eventually crippled the currency. The collapse of the Corporations finances in 1694 was the most dramatic expression of the prevailing financial problems. ²¹

The discovery that City officers had misappropriated £700, 000 from the Orphans Fund speaks volumes. This was not money for the parish poor, but the proceeds of an endowment fund identified for the maintenance of children of freemen. It comprised of a portion of the estate of all freemen who had left children behind on their death, administered by the City on their behalf. The fund was used as a legitimate credit base by the Corporation and by eligible citizens. In continuing to draw on these funds, with no means to pay them back, the City had effectively stooped to taking from its own in attempting to mask its debts. ²² It is against this backdrop that the Gresham Committee’s routine work of letting the shops of the Exchange needs to be seen.

Review of the historical literature

Single women in business as a subject

The literature discussed here reflects upon the history of single women who engaged in independent trade in the late seventeenth century. Only a handful of studies directly address the business activities of early modern women. This lack of attention is associated with an ongoing neglect of women's work in mainstream economic history. There has also been an assumption that commercial activity, with the exception of street-trade, was largely a 'masculine' affair.²³

In recent years, historians have been revising assumptions about the lives of single women. The demographic significance of spinsters in the seventeenth century has long been recognised. The term 'spinster' came into common usage as a title for single women at this time.²⁴ It is clear that spinsters in this period can no longer be viewed as women who simply failed to find a husband. It is also clear that an understanding of the means by which spinsters supported themselves is central to an appreciation of female singlehood itself.²⁵ Sharpe's study of Hester Pinney shows that single middling women could be personally and economically autonomous. They could forgo opportunities for marriage without ending up forlorn and lonely. Also their business activities had the potential to be far from marginal and insignificant.²⁶ This study remains unique in detailing the experiences of a single businesswoman in seventeenth-century London. Research into the business activities of women in other contexts is therefore highly relevant here.

So too is the important part that historians of the ‘middling sort’ have played in bringing the businesswomen of seventeenth and eighteenth century London to light.²⁷

Questions about the rights of women to engage in independent trade at this time are highlighted in much of the work discussed here. Single women had rights in common and customary law to trade independently, as did widows. Although wives were denied this right in English common law, customary provisions existed in London for married women to trade as if they were single. They could also set up their finances as a ‘separate estate’, enabling them to trade on their own account.²⁸ The treatment of women by the guilds and municipal authorities of early modern cities has received attention from historians of civic history and those with a particular interest in women’s participation in the skilled trades. A consensus has not been reached, however, about the way that the regulation of guild membership and ‘citizenship’ impacted on the trading rights of women during the course of the early modern period.²⁹ Some of the debates and issues will be outlined here. The discussion now turns to individual studies of women in business. This begins with an acknowledgement of the first detailed study of women’s work in the early modern period, Alice Clark’s *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*.³⁰

Studies of women in business in the early modern period

Although written in 1919, Clark's study remains essential reading. Her general thesis was that the status and productivity of women's work in England gradually declined between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Clark recognised that the technical processes of production changed little during this period. However, she believed that women became disadvantaged as the locus of men's work increasingly moved away from the household. This robbed married women of opportunities to work alongside their husbands in complementary ways and to fulfil other vital, although unwaged, tasks in contributing to a family economy.³¹ Considerable attention was paid in this study to the position of women in the skilled crafts and trades. For Clark, adult women in this sector were by definition married and many still worked alongside their husbands. Single women, she thought, were likely to end up as life-long servants. However, she argued "in the Middle Ages married women also engaged in business frequently on their own account".³²

According to Erickson, Clark does not succeed in substantiating her 'pessimistic' view of the impact of economic development on women in relation to the crafts and trades.³³ Indeed, she seems to struggle with a body of evidence that married women held on to a degree of economic independence in this sector, not least in the retail trades. She argues, "Though examples of the separate trading of women occur frequently in the seventeenth century, no doubt the more usual course was for her to assist her husband in his business". She also notes examples of girls in regional towns being apprenticed to the retail trades and gaining the freedom of the borough.³⁴

The most fundamental criticism which is made of Clark's work is her insistence that there had once been, as Vickery puts it, "a pre-capitalist utopia, a golden age, for women".³⁵ Not only is this impossible for her to evidence, but it establishes a deterministic dynamic in the work which comes to overwhelm it. Judged against the 'good times' of the middle ages, virtually every aspect of women's work is viewed as a pale shadow of what women once had. It remains the case that this study has formed the foundation of much of the research into women's work, if only in attempting to revise it.³⁶

In London Consistory Court records, Earle found a source that enabled him to overturn Clark's argument that women commonly worked alongside their husbands in the seventeenth century.³⁷ He discovered that only about ten percent of married women worked in their husband's businesses. Indeed, a high proportion of London's women, married or otherwise, were dependent on making their own living. In doing so they mostly occupied 'feminine' occupations such as making clothes or domestic service. However, he also found spinsters, wives and widows making an independent living as shopkeepers.³⁸ In subsequent work he discovered the significant potential that English women had in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to run their own businesses.³⁹ The problem of discerning just how many women may have run businesses, however, was considerable.

Using bankruptcy records and insurance registers, Earle suggested that about one third of 'better-off' women would have been running a business. By the 1720's women's businesses were thought to make up five to ten percent

of all of those in London. This would have included many widows who were important as creditors and in property rental. Significantly, Earle discovered that spinsters made up a much higher proportion of women in business than had previously been recognised. His suggestion was that single women would have run more than ten percent of all the businesses in the capital in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Hunt presents evidence of a “substantial” body of middling women who were supporting themselves as independent traders in the towns of England at the end of the seventeenth century. This included single, married and widowed women.⁴¹ Nonetheless, as Pullin noticed, an idea has persisted that married women were deterred from conducting their own business in the eighteenth century because of legal barriers. As well as exposing the problems with this idea she also challenged the notion that when women did engage in trade their businesses were “generally unprofitable and undercapitalised”.⁴²

Pullin’s study focuses on married tradeswomen, and the common law principle of ‘coverture’. Her question was whether coverture, by which married women were legally constrained from trading independently, prevented them from doing so in practice. She found that the “pluralistic” English legal system left considerable space for married women to carry on trading.⁴³ She then found evidence of women, including married women, operating as “fully integrated members of local trading networks, exchanging money, credit, property and trade with male traders on a regular basis”.⁴⁴ She concludes that the key determinant for women in being able to set up and continue in business was the availability of credit and not marital status.⁴⁵

Pullin takes her findings as evidence of the ‘ordinary’ place of business activities in the lives of women at the end of the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ This study shows that women at this time appear to have encountered a range of relatively benign attitudes towards their business activities, as well as some barriers to it.⁴⁷ The next study shows that there were towns in early modern England, however, where women were severely constrained in their business activities.

Prior studied the participation of women in the crafts and trades of early modern Oxford. In doing so she uncovered details of the way that the town council and the guilds actively prevented single women from entering into legitimate business activity. The prohibition of all women from gaining the freedom of the town meant that they lacked the necessary qualification for independent entry into the trading community. Wives could work as subordinates in their husbands businesses and widows could be granted a concession to carry on their husband’s trade by the guilds, for the customary fees. However, in the face of pressures to remain self-supporting, widows who could not exercise this privilege, together with single women, had no option but to attempt to create viable employment opportunities for themselves.⁴⁸

According to Hunt, historians have long been preoccupied with “the obstacles that deterred women from becoming independent traders”.⁴⁹ However, the situation in Oxford genuinely seems to have limited the opportunities for women to trade legitimately, especially single women.⁵⁰ What Prior does demonstrate is the tenacity of the single women of Oxford in

overcoming the barriers they encountered. In the 1670s, single women made the most of the demand for mantua-makers, resulting from the arrival of this new fashion. “Here we have an example of women seizing an opportunity to insert themselves into the interstices of the changing occupational structure”, says Prior.⁵¹ Likewise they defied instructions to join the Tailors’ Company in 1770, arguably an attempt to control them by inclusion rather than exclusion, and just carried on trading. When the Company pursued prosecutions, the side of the female milliner was supported in the press, suggesting certain sympathy with these townswomen.⁵² The next study demonstrates that not all single businesswomen in this period were presented with such challenges.

Sanderson’s study of women’s work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh takes in women who kept small shops in the Edinburgh exchanges and similar locations. Many of these women were single and ran their own businesses. Her sources included the minutes of the Merchant Taylors’ Company, who together with the Town Council controlled retail trade in Edinburgh. These sources allowed her to gain a picture of the way that the business activities of women were legitimated in this context and how they gained appropriate skills. She reaches the conclusion that there was little objection to single women running their own retail businesses in Edinburgh as long as they were properly ‘qualified’ to do so. Also that daughters from middling families routinely gained the skills to run a business through apprenticeship.⁵³

Like Oxford and London, Edinburgh operated established mechanisms for the legitimisation of business activity. The primary necessity for all traders

was to have the freedom of the burgh, to be a burghess. The opportunity to acquire freedom was open to all women in Edinburgh, demonstrating a willingness to accept their business activities. Freedom would be gained by completing an apprenticeship or through 'patrimony', that is by virtue of having a parent who was free. It was also possible to pay for this, a process known as 'redemption'.⁵⁴ In the eighteenth century the burgh introduced a system of licences and warrants to trade. This was an attempt to curb the significant amounts of trading activity by 'unfree' traders. Many women who could not afford to acquire freedom took the opportunities that a short-term licence presented. By the 1730s, the town council had entirely waived trading fees for the daughters of burghesses.⁵⁵

The situation in Edinburgh therefore stands in contrast to Oxford. Not only were businesswomen formally accepted as part of the commercial community, but local regulatory processes potentially facilitated their business activity. Women in Sanderson's sample were concentrated in the 'female' trades, including millinery. It is argued, however, that such women would not have been regarded as having an inferior occupation. This perception comes about, according to Sanderson, because of the tendency of historians to downgrade the value of 'women's work'. She notes the distinction commonly made between the great 'merchant' who is presumed to be male and the little 'shopkeeper', presumed female. This apparently does not reflect the contemporary use of these two terms in early modern Scotland.⁵⁶

The failure of historians to recognise that the ‘feminine’ trades were skilled occupations is also condemned by Sanderson. Prior is guilty of this, suggesting that it was possible for women to corner the mantua-making market primarily because these garments were “more or less blown together with as little cutting and stitching as possible”.⁵⁷ Whilst most women sewed in this period, Sanderson argues that the more advanced skills required commercially had to be taught. Her argument is that it is impossible to overstate the contemporary importance of such skills in an age before the sewing machine.

58

In demonstrating the way that apprenticeship, freedom and licensing created opportunities for single women to run businesses in Edinburgh, Sanderson offers invaluable comparative material for the study of businesswomen in London. The picture is one in which single women ran small businesses in a gendered economy, but nonetheless had a legitimate place in the commercial community.⁵⁹ We turn now to the London context and a discussion of the way that businesswomen have been represented as part of the history of the guilds and the Corporation in the early modern period.

Guild control and female business opportunity

Historical research into the guilds and companies of London has focused on the degree to which they were able to retain control over the crafts and trades. This involved the regulation of apprenticeship, company membership and ‘quality control’. As already noted, the companies

experienced a decline in control as the metropolis expanded over the course of the early modern period. ⁶⁰

The historical treatment of women's involvement with the guilds has been to emphasise their highly conditional and marginal place in these male dominated organisations. Apprenticeship is most often presented as the province of boys. The main argument has been that the widows of company freeman were alone for much of the early modern period in being able to exercise independent rights to a skilled trade. ⁶¹ Rappaport cites the exclusion of women from weaving in the sixteenth century and notes the prosecution of master weavers when they employed them. Denial of apprenticeship by this company effectively barred women from becoming citizens, even though they had rights to trade in common law. ⁶²

Ben-Amos has argued that an over-cautious attitude has been adopted by historians with regard to the entry of women into the crafts and trades. This has prevented them from developing questions and methodologies that would broaden the debate. In her study of female apprenticeship in Bristol, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, she challenges the notion that apprenticeship was a male preserve. Rather she found evidence of the participation of girls in formal apprenticeship, but that this was subject to significant variation during the period she studied. The limited opportunities that had existed for female apprenticeship, in a range of skilled trades, disappeared in this period as the demand for male apprenticeships increased. The greatest increase in demand was from sons of the gentry and yeomanry.

Conversely, it was the daughters of this class who lost out most in this process. Furthermore, those girls who continued to serve apprenticeships started to occupy a segregated and feminized sector. This possibly explains why the majority of girls taking apprenticeships in seventeenth-century Bristol were poor children placed by the parish. ⁶³

Ben-Amos also argues that when formal training opportunities dwindled for girls, more pursued training through informal routes, for example through paid service in a retail business. This route may have robbed skilled women of civic recognition, but the level of experience was probably similar to apprenticeship. ⁶⁴ This means that although girls may have been edged out of the market for formal training, their skilled labour continued to be in demand.

The theory behind the Bristol study is that there might be a direct relationship between changing levels of male apprenticeship in a community and the availability of apprenticeship for girls. Her study charts a decline in the volume and types of opportunities for female apprenticeship as male demand increased. She proposes that over the longer term reversals in this trend may have occurred. Significantly, she suggests that this model might be expressed in the changing proportions of male and female apprentices in sixteenth and seventeenth century London. When male apprenticeship levels were high, up until the middle of the seventeenth century, female apprenticeship was very low. When the proportion of male apprentices dropped in the last decades of the century, Ben-Amos argues that women apprentices began to appear again in company records. ⁶⁵

The literature discussed here reveals that a range of scholarly opinions prevail about the place of businesswomen in the early modern town. The experiences of women in different locations and at different points in this period evidently varied. Nonetheless it is clear that women, as a rule, participated in trade.⁶⁶ Prior's single businesswomen in Oxford continued their trades regardless of the prohibitions upon them. The Edinburgh study shows the potential for single women to thrive in business when integrated into the commercial community.⁶⁷ There is one point of agreement in this work, whether explicit or implicit. This is that women who generated their own income in this period did not spend their lives confined to a separate domestic sphere. Whether they had to struggle to follow their trade or were accepted and facilitated, their working lives were public lives. This leads us to the theoretical considerations that have informed this project, which address the issue of women's participation in the 'public sphere' of seventeenth-century London.

Theoretical framework

‘Women’s history’ began as a project to expose patterns of female oppression in patriarchal societies and women’s efforts to resist this.⁶⁸ Feminist historians also advocate the adoption of research practices in which the historical presence of women is routinely accepted as empirically and theoretically significant. It is argued that the integration of such practices into mainstream history has the capacity to urge new historical questions and to lead to insights that have previously been overlooked.⁶⁹ The theoretical problem encountered in this research project has been to apply feminist thinking to the study of women who were relatively advantaged, relatively independent and who may have enjoyed tolerant attitudes to their presence in a particular historical context. Above all the study has demanded a theoretical framework that accommodates the public nature of women’s business activities.

It has been argued that the gendered distinction between the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ and the definitive link between femininity and the domestic realm have ancient origins. These ideas have been repeatedly expressed in didactic literature, leading to their subsequent re-emergence in cultural and political ideologies. The notion of domestic space as private space is understood as a more modern idea. The study of the commercial activities of urban women in the early modern period lends little support to the notion that they were confined to a domestic sphere. Nor was the home the only context within which womanhood was defined in this period.⁷⁰

Vickery has criticised the widespread application of the theory of 'separate spheres' in women's history, dependent as it is upon an acceptance of gendered distinctions between the public and private. She argues that this has led to specific misassumption about gender relations in the early modern period and a failure to appreciate the range of economic and social locations that women occupied.⁷¹ Gowing argues that a distinctive urban femininity was evident in mid-seventeenth century London. This identity reflected women's work practices and their social relationships and was forged in the streets and public spaces of the city.⁷² Cowan endorses these criticisms of the theory of separate spheres, developing an alternative theory about the gendered nature of experience in the seventeenth-century city.⁷³

It is Cowan's assertion that women were accepted in public locations like the coffeehouse, commonly understood as men-only. Their place there, however, was highly conditional. He notes that Hester Pinney felt able to frequent the coffeehouses and taverns of London, going there like her male contemporaries to do business. She is thought, however, to have been exceptional. Women and men in these locations, Cowan argues, most often met as female proprietor and male client. The exception was when women were welcomed to the auctions and sales that went on in coffeehouses. This leads him to argue that: -

Entirely 'separate spheres' for men and women did not exist in post - Restoration London, but neither was there one gender-neutral social world in which both men and women had an equal place. Perhaps then it would be better to imagine two interlocking spheres of masculine and feminine activity, rather than two separate ones.⁷⁴

This affords women a place in the public sphere as a location defined by notions of both masculinity and femininity.

According to Cowan, the public sphere in the late seventeenth century is best understood as having distinct ‘normative’ and ‘practical’ elements, as it does now. These had the potential to contradict each other. He thus challenges the Habermasian view that the public sphere in this period was defined by the convergence of these elements. In this framework, the normative public sphere was a discursive space in which prescriptive ideas circulated. Cultural representations, such as published literature, contributed to this process. The practical sphere revolved around the “messy everyday realities of public life”. This means that notions of where men and women ought to have been, in prescriptive terms, differed from the actual locations in which they were found.⁷⁵ In considering whether Cowan’s theory can be applied to the experiences of those at the Royal Exchange, the normative context that surrounded it needs to be considered. According to prescriptive discourses, we might ask whether the serious businesswoman was supposed to have been there at all?

Defoe penned one of the most enduring representations of the typical English trader. He was by definition male and had been schooled in the masculine tradition of small business. For Defoe, the appropriate role for a woman in retail trade was as a capable supportive wife.⁷⁶ The pawns of the Royal Exchange, however, were associated in print with the pretty young female shopkeeper, exemplified by some as the potentially ‘loose’ milliner. These particular cultural representations offered women a place at the

Exchange, but one that alluded to the association of the needle trades with sexual trade. This association certainly had some basis in fact for many poor women.⁷⁷

Steele commented on the ‘disadvantages’ of pretty young women in retail trade, teased and taken advantage of by male clients. Often, he argued, men would frequent their shops with no intention of making a purchase. In his journalistic challenge to this effrontery, Steele suggested that the female trader deserved the same respect as her male counterpart. Not only does this author represent the commonplace presence of young women in trade, but he also acknowledged their status as respectable independent businesspeople with a living to make.⁷⁸ These representations reflect a range of views about single women *per se* in circulation at this time. There were those who idealised the single independent life for women, openly criticising marriage. At the same time a range of maligning stereotypes existed. Lanser cites Dunton’s vicious attack, in 1697, on ‘old maids’ as ugly, smelly and deceitful.⁷⁹ This normative framework seems to have reflected a mixture of ideas about the place of single women in the public sphere of commercial London. Clearly not everyone believed that they were out of place there, but some attitudes were potentially profoundly discrediting. Issues of rank, wealth and politics would also have mediated the places of both men and women in the public sphere.⁸⁰

With this normative context in mind, a modified version of Cowan’s theory has been applied in this research. This has been possible because the research finding shed light on the ‘practical public sphere’ as it was

experienced in that location. These findings tell us virtually nothing, however, about the relationships between women tenants and their customers. Instead they offer insights into the public experiences of women and men who worked alongside each other in the pawns. Whilst the findings cannot show how their gendered experiences 'interlocked' in this location, although they probably did, there is certainly evidence that their experiences 'overlapped' in many ways. What will become evident is that these points of overlap show the pawns of the Royal Exchange to be part of a public sphere in which both women and men had a recognised, formalised place. The negotiation of these places by male and female tenants, including the following of routes to their take-up, shows some surprising similarities.

Research findings

Women as Exchange tenants

Between 1689 and 1700, ninety-one men and sixty-one women were granted leases for shops at the Royal Exchange. This means that just over 40% of all of those who were named as leaseholders were female. The committee granted a total of 140 standard leases in this period. There were no discernible differences in the basic terms and conditions of the leases granted to men and women. Women were named as tenants in fifty-two of the leases, thirteen of which were taken as a joint tenancy. The proportion of leases that women were associated with is therefore a little over 37%. The names of all women leaseholders are listed in Appendix 3. These figures reflect what is already known about the participation of women in retail business at the Exchange.

It has been estimated that women owned no more than 7% of shop-based businesses in London in the 1690s. Thousands of other women, of course, were involved in street trade or had a market stall.⁸¹ When Spence calculated the proportion of women shopkeepers at the Royal Exchange he found a different picture. 46.6% of all shopkeepers there were women, a figure that is close to the figure for women who took leases out in this period. He based these calculations on assessments for the 1693-4 'four shillings in the pound' Aid. This led him to suggest that the London Exchanges offered a "sheltered" retail environment which facilitated the kind of small retail businesses that women ran on their own.⁸² The figure for the proportion of leases taken by women is, at 37%, somewhat lower than the actual number of female shop proprietors found by Spence. Joint tenancies and the running of

shops on a sub-tenancy, which appears to have been quite common, probably accounts for Spence's higher figure.⁸³ Differences in the data, however, should also be acknowledged.

Spence's figures are based on live data generated at a particular point in time by the tax assessors. They happen to indicate that women were the proprietors of just under half the shops at the Exchange. They could have been tenants or 'under-tenants'. The body of data derived from the Repertories, however, does not actually indicate how many individuals were running shops at any particular point. It only reveals how many leases were granted. The Gresham Committee, however, recognised that most of those who petitioned for leases used the shops for their own businesses. They referred to tenants as 'inhabiting', 'occupying' or being 'in possession' of a shop and not just having a lease. There is also evidence that many of the leases granted in the 1690s would have been renewals or leases granted to existing sub-tenants.⁸⁴ Therefore, as a potentially 'rolling' figure, the proportions of male and female leaseholders for the period 1689-1700 probable give a fair indication of the proportions for each year in that period. The figures associated with the Gresham Repertory data, therefore, give a reasonable indication of the actual levels of shop occupancy by both groups.⁸⁵ When it came to the joint tenancies entered into by women, there were both expected and unexpected results.

Women tenants and their business partners

The formation of partnerships is recognised as one of the characteristic features of female business strategy in this period. This was often associated with the perpetuation of businesses by female members of a family, as in the case of the Pinney sisters and with Gertrude Rolles and her daughters who also kept shops at the Exchange. ⁸⁶ Table 1. shows that related spinsters were well represented amongst those who had joint tenancies in the 1690s sample.

<u>Marital status</u>	<u>Number of partnerships</u>	<u>Partners to lease</u>
Spinsters	8	Rachel and Katherine Brett Sarah and Ann Davis Mary Ludlow and Elizabeth Harrison Bethiah Paradise and Mary Baker Francis and Elizabeth Pemberton Susanna and Rebecca Way Sarah and Elizabeth Willis Mary Nyat and Theophilus Boughey
Widows	2	Alice Guidot and Joseph Alder Mrs Cooper and Mr Compere
Wives	2	Jacomin Brackly and husband Joseph Brackly Sarah Patching and husband Elisha Patching
Not know	1	Charity Needler and Margaret Clarke

Table 1: Women’s joint tenancies by marital status and partnerships.

As can be seen, women also chose other kinds of partner, some of whom probably started out as friends or acquaintances. Bethiah Paradise and Mary Baker took out their joint lease in 1698. According to the 1695 ‘Marriage Duty’ assessment for St Mildred Poultry Ward, they were both living in the household of Elias Pledger, apothecary, and were described as

‘servants’.⁸⁷ The assumption cannot be made that these particular women were in domestic service in this household. Records show that Bethiah was in apprenticeship in 1695, although probably not with Mr Pledger. This issue will receive further attention later.⁸⁸ What is significant in the context of joint tenancies is that Bethiah and Mary probably met whilst in apprenticeship or training of some kind. Sanderson highlights the opportunities which apprenticeship gave young women in Edinburgh to identify future business partners.⁸⁹

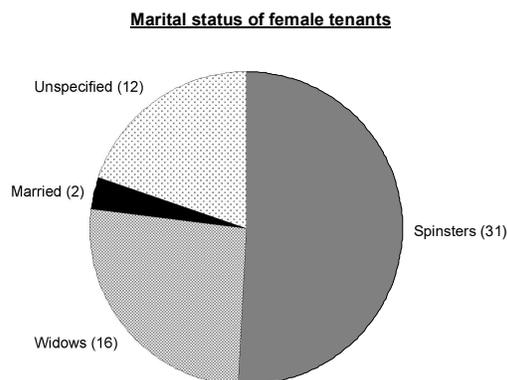
Also of note is the fact that two other women who lived as lodgers in the Pledger household were tenants at the Exchange in the 1690s. Mary Scargill, spinster, took a lease in 1700, but was probably running a shop there already. Ann Towse, whose marital status is unknown, already had a lease in 1691.⁹⁰ This is not an example of “spinster clustering”, as described by Hufton. This was where single and other lone women, who might well have worked together, would pool limited resources to run one household.⁹¹ Rather this collection of existing and prospective Exchange tenants under one roof represents the high numbers of single women who lived as apprentices, servants and lodgers in the middling households of London at this time.⁹² There is the possibility that the business plans of the younger women could have been influenced by their relationships with existing female tenants at the Exchange.

Without information on the individual businesses at the Exchange, it is difficult to suggest any specific reasons why some of the women chose men to

run their businesses with. For the two sets of married co-tenants this arrangement might have been an alternative to them both running separate businesses. It is recognised that a businessman's wife brought with her the possibility of an extension to the credit network at his disposal. The financial support of friends and family was essential to cash flow in trade.⁹³ As to the other partnerships in which men and women were involved, this may have been a way of bringing a wider range of skills into a retail outfit. Sanderson notes that unrelated women sought out those with complimentary skills to increase the chances of business survival. Gender, therefore, may or may not have been an issue in the partnerships between women and men in this sample.⁹⁴ There is also the possibility that one partner was 'senior', either in terms of investment or experience. In the case of the widows who set up with men, joint tenancies may have been a way of retaining direct control over capital investment whilst making the most of the advantages which men still had in the commercial world. As co-tenant the high number of single women stands out. We will now turn to the large proportion of single women in the sample as a whole.

Single women tenants at the Exchange

Although the number of women involved is quite small, the chart below shows the proportional significance of spinsters in the sample of female



tenants.

These findings were unexpected because the privileged position of widows in business is emphasised in so much of the literature. Widows were clearly amongst those who could do well commercially even in the most hostile of circumstances.⁹⁵ They did not, however, outnumber other women at the Exchange. Single women were in fact almost twice as likely to take out a lease than widows were.

Only two married women were party to a lease, which upholds the orthodoxy that relatively few married women worked alongside their husbands at this time. The Repertories are silent, however, on the issue of wives who may have assisted in their husbands businesses but not as joint tenants. Also, some *feme sole* traders (married women who exercised customary rights to trade as a single woman) might lurk in the group of women whose marital status is unknown.⁹⁶ In such cases women would not necessarily have had to declare that they were married when petitioning for a lease. Earle, however, argued that when the marital status of women was unspecified in documents, this probably meant that they were single.⁹⁷ As the data stands, over 50% of female tenants have been confirmed as spinsters. The question is whether we might have expected to find this number of single women in the sample. Also, whether an increased numbers of spinsters essentially accounted for the higher than average proportions of women shopkeepers at the Exchange, in comparison with London-wide figures.

Earle suggested spinsters made up a minimum of 10% of all women in business in London. In theory, the proportional significance of spinsters at the Exchange might be exaggerated by an under-representation of widows. Could the modest opportunities and ‘little’ shops there have been too small to attract more widows? This would not seem to be a very satisfactory explanation. London’s widows, as elsewhere, were a large and economically diverse group.⁹⁸ Also, for those who wanted to invest in a substantial retail business, there was scope for this at the Exchange. Holdings of a variety of sizes were available and it was possible to rent more than one shop. Widows were amongst those who took out leases on larger and more expensive premises as well as some of the smallest.⁹⁹ It seems better to approach this situation as one in which single women were genuinely well represented.

Sanderson was not able to put a figure on the proportions of single women in the shops of the Edinburgh Exchange, so a direct comparison is not possible. She, nonetheless, argues that they had a significant presence, showing the importance of merchandising to middling and upper class women from the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁰ Single women are known to have been in business at the Exchange from the beginning.¹⁰¹ Spence’s suggestion that the shops of the Exchange were particularly suited to the small-scale retail activity of women trading on their own is probably important here.¹⁰²

There is no evidence in the Repertories that the Gresham Committee sought to promote the Royal Exchange as a business environment especially suited to women, but it is possible that single businesswomen and those who

supported them considered the Exchange a suitable place for them to trade. The concentration of women from a middling background may have been one attraction. The main factors, however, were probably economic. The most consistent feature of spinster's leases is that they were almost all for relatively small individual holdings. By the 1690s, the notional unit size of a shop in the pawns was eight feet in width (depth unknown). The partitions between the 'basic' shops could be moved somehow to create bigger spaces.¹⁰³ Only five of the leases taken by spinsters were for shops bigger than nine feet wide and the majority were for shops between six and eight feet. This committed them to an annual rent of somewhere in the region of twenty pounds. Co-tenants were amongst those taking these modest sized holdings. Elizabeth Maidstone leased the biggest shop of any spinster, which was twelve feet wide.¹⁰⁴ By comparison, over half of the widows took leases on shops bigger than eight feet and the biggest holding for a widow was eighteen feet. The spread of holdings amongst the women whose marital status was not specified is similar to the spinster group.

Some single women took leases of the "little shops" or stalls tucked into arches and columns of the building at ground level, which must have been tiny indeed. Hester Pinney's shop was probably one of these.¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Hope had a shop in the north portico, paying only £6 rent per annum.¹⁰⁶ Adam Levingstone also had one of these very small shops, in the south portico, but paid three times this rent indicating a prime position. Harris found that this tiny shop, advertised as selling fruit, was also an outlet for patent medicines.

This lucrative business appears to have supported not only Mr Levingstone, but two associates as well. ¹⁰⁷

The Gresham Committee had responsibility for other rental properties, including those on the outside of the Exchange building itself. These were large expensive shops, noted by Glaisyer as housing services used by the visiting business community, such as scribes and notaries, stationers and perriwig makers. ¹⁰⁸ No spinsters were found to be renting there. Indeed, Elizabeth Kingly and Sarah Caske, both widows, were the only women who did. ¹⁰⁹ Neither did any of the female leaseholders rent the properties in adjacent streets, which commonly had cellars below and rooms above. ¹¹⁰

The data from the Gresham Repertories therefore suggests that the discursive association of single women with the shops in the pawns of the Royal Exchange is borne out in practical terms. These small shops were probably suited to the capital resources available to women, especially single women. What must be remembered, however, is that the overall majority of leases granted in this period were for shops in the pawns. Most male tenants rented in the pawns and at least twenty-four of them rented shops that were only six or eight feet wide. It appears that for these men a single small shop in the Exchange was as appealing a business proposition as it was for single women. What sort of businessmen might have been attracted to this particular location?

The Repertories reveal little more about individual male leaseholders than their female counterparts. The exception is that entries often contained explicit references to guild affiliation and ‘citizenship’. We cannot, however, draw any conclusions from this about what trades they kept at the Exchange. Diversification of trade after apprenticeship had long been a common practice. This right was accepted by the guilds after a legal challenge at the beginning of the seventeenth century and later made common law.¹¹¹ What is known, however, is that the retail sector absorbed increasing numbers of young men setting up in business in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These new recruits were drawn both from London middling households and from the minor gentry.¹¹² Brooks argues that a Haberdasher’s apprenticeship was popular with the latter because it could offer a step-up to wholesale trade.¹¹³ Nonetheless it is possible that a proportion of male tenants, perhaps especially those taking out leases on smaller shops, were cutting their teeth in the safer business of retail. There is evidence, too, that some of the single women at the Exchange would have been relatively young and just starting up in business.¹¹⁴

There is nothing controversial about suggesting that young businessmen might have been amongst the Exchange tenants. They are certainly depicted in representations of this sort of retail environment.¹¹⁵ The suggestion here is that they might have chosen the Exchange for the same economic reasons that motivated single women. Start-up costs were the first hurdle to be overcome in establishing any business. The costs of fitting out and stocking a shop was followed by the immediate need to offer customers credit. Contemporary

estimates of the minimum start up costs for a haberdasher, for example, range between £100 and £500 pounds, rising to as much as £2000.¹¹⁶ Although the first Royal Exchange may have been a highly decorated place, the impression from the Repertories is that the pawns of the second Exchange had seen better times.¹¹⁷ It was still possible to rent a unit in the pawns for somewhere in the region of £20 a year, although an initial fine of the same amount also had to be found. These were the rent levels set in 1670 and presumably had not been raised because of the problem of getting tenants. Nonetheless, on several occasions the committee agreed to temporarily reduce rents and waive fines to try and boost occupancy. Structural maintenance, major decoration and ‘security’, such as it was, was included in this rent.¹¹⁸ Shelving may also have been provided. This means that the Exchange, although not the ‘glory’ it had once been, probably represented a good deal.

The economic factors which probably contributed to the presence of men alongside women in some of the most modest sized shops is one of the ways in which their worlds ‘overlapped’ in this context. Small shopkeeper John Vandersprite might have had no more in common with tenants like the audacious Mr Puckle, a big stakeholder at the Exchange, than one of the spinster traders would have. Vandersprite’s shop was just six feet wide. Mr Puckle, who already had innumerable leases and was often in debt, took a lease in 1693 on a shop on the west side of the Exchange at a rent of £120, attracting a £40 fine.¹¹⁹

To summarise thus far, spinsters made up at least half of the female tenants at the Exchange, exceeding expectations. The conclusion is that they made a significant contribution to the higher than average proportion of women shopkeepers in this location by comparison with London wide figures. Nonetheless, they were still outnumbered by men. It has been argued that the practical experiences of female and male traders overlapped in several ways. The modest retail opportunities that were available at the Exchange probably made it attractive to women. Yet they were not confined to a segregated zone in the pawn, because of their gender, but shared it with the majority of men who took leases. Over a quarter of these men took shops of the same size as those taken by single women and both groups could expect to be offered leases with the same basic terms and conditions. Economic necessity, or expediency, was probably the main reason that the Exchange shops attracted both single women and men with similar means.

Until more is known about the businesses which individual people ran in this location, it is possible to only speculate about the relative likelihood of business success for these two groups. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing whether Elizabeth Hope derived anything like the income from her little shop as Adam Levingstone did from his. The discussion turns now to the issue of how female tenants prepared themselves for a life in independent retail trade.

Apprenticeship, citizenship and the single businesswoman

The meaning of Citizenship

The term 'citizen' has a specific meaning in the context of the City of London. The title indicates that the individual has the 'freedom' of the city, an ancient privilege associated with the right to conduct business there. Historians accept that being 'free' was still a necessity in the seventeenth-century for those who wanted to engage in legitimate business in this location, especially in the skilled trades. One of the common routes to becoming a freeman was through the completion of a formal apprenticeship. The progression from becoming a member of a livery company to becoming a freeman of the city was then almost automatic. Becoming a member of a particular company by 'patrimony' (by virtue of being the child of a company member) conferred the same rights to claim city freedom. Finally it was possible to pay for freedom, a process known as 'redemption'. The process for gaining the freedom of the City of London was substantially similar to the process in Edinburgh for gaining the freedom of the Burgh.¹²⁰

According to Rappaport, possession of the freedom of a city or town was the most important criterion by which commercial and political privileges were distributed amongst members of the urban community.¹²¹ As already discussed, it has been widely assumed that opportunities for single women to gain the freedom of English towns was limited because of problems with access to apprenticeship.¹²² A somewhat different picture emerges from data gathered about the citizenship of tenants at the Royal Exchange. There is evidence that female tenants had the freedom of the City and also that they had taken the apprenticeship route to achieving this.

Female citizens in the Gresham Repertories and the Freedom Archives

Alongside the name of the individual who petitioned the Gresham Committee for a lease, the clerk often entered details relating to their civic status. Robert Rodway was described as ‘Citizen and Clothworker of London’ [see end of Appendix 1]. Those present would have recognised Rodway as a member of the Clothworkers’ livery company and as having the freedom of the City of London. No women in the main Repertory sample, however, were referred to like this. Elizabeth Hope was referred to only as being ‘of London’. Twenty single women in the sample were referred to in this way. No reference to guild affiliation was made. The reverse is true between 1679 and 1689, although the numbers are low. Three women were referred by their full civic title, including references to guild membership. The rest were referred to only by their marital status.¹²³

The term ‘of London’ applied to women in the 1690s seemed to indicate that they had the freedom of the City. A question remained as to whether this meant that they had also undertaken apprenticeship. The City Freedom Archives hold indexed registers of those who were granted freedom, but they only exist in this comprehensive form from 1681.¹²⁴ Information from before this date is very sparse. Manuscript documents have survived for most of those named in the indexes. These indicate the means by which individuals gained their freedom. If this was by apprenticeship, the documentation is usually in the form of their apprentice indenture. The indexes were searched for the names of all the single female tenants, whether or not they were referred to as being ‘of London’ in the Repertories. The

search ran from 1681 up to the date that each woman took her lease. The results of the search are shown in Table 2.

Name	Method of admission	Date	Company affiliation	Master	Father's origins/ civil title
Agnes Blennerhassett	Servitude (apprenticeship)	1692	Mercers	John Spillett	London Merchant Taylor
Bethiah Paradise	Servitude	1698	Haberdashers	Henry Duke	Origin illegible Tallowchandler
Elizabeth Hope	Redemption by Petition	1690	Loriners	Not applicable	n/a
Mary Ludlow	Servitude	1689	Girdlers	Ralph Brooks	London Merchant
Bridget Flowerdew	Servitude	1689	Weaver	Ann Flowerdew	Norfolk Gent
Rachel Calandrine	Servitude	1681	Scriveners	Elizabeth Billingsley	Essex Clerke

Table 2. City Freedom admissions: single female leaseholders. ¹²⁵

The low number of freedom confirmations is likely to be associated with the absence of citizenship data before 1681. The case of Susanna and Rebecca Way reveals that some women in the 1690s sample would have gained their freedom before this date. They took out their first lease in 1679, renewing this in 1689. ¹²⁶ There was no reference in the Repertories to their citizenship in the first entry, but there was in the latter. There are, however, no entries in the freedom registers for these women suggesting that they were already free by 1681. It seems likely that they already had their freedom when they took their first lease. Omissions are a fact of life with the Repertories. Agnes Blennerhassett was not identified in the Repertories as having freedom,

but was registered as gaining this in 1692.¹²⁷ This means that other women who were not referred to as having citizenship could still have been ‘freemen’.

The freedom papers that were found for female tenants show that businesswomen were involved with a number of different companies in this period. Although this must be interpreted with caution, textual variations in these sources may indicate that some companies were more willing than others to apprentice women were. Even with the limited data available, it is possible to consider some of the experiences these women might have had as apprentices and to explore the motives of women in joining one company or other.

Exchange tenants and their apprenticeships

Agnes Blennerhassett’s apprenticeship indenture shows that she was apprenticed to John Spillett.¹²⁸ From company records, Saunders identified Agnes as the third of four female apprentices to have served with this particular master between 1679 and 1698.¹²⁹ This is probably the John Spillett who was granted leases on two shops in the Exchange, which he already occupied, in 1689.¹³⁰ It is possible that Agnes and the other women apprenticed to Mr Spillett saw out some of their time in the pawns of the Exchange. Research has shown that once they had proved themselves, apprentices in retail trades could actually be left to run their master’s shops for significant periods of time, offering invaluable experience.¹³¹ Six months after finishing her apprenticeship Agnes took a lease on a shop in the east inner pawn of the Exchange.¹³²

It is impossible to know whether the choice of John Spillett as her master was linked to aspirations on Agnes's part to become an 'Exchange-woman', or whether this prospect opened up during her apprenticeship.¹³³ It does not seem that Mercers received preferential treatment when petitioning for leases and they are not numerous as male tenants. There is no indication either that the company had policies that would have made it particularly attractive to women members. As one of only a handful of women to join the Mercers' in this period, her indenture suggests that the company had not anticipated enrolling many girls. Her enrolment was clearly recorded on documents designed to enrol boys. This pre-printed parchment, with spaces left for names and dates, contained only male personal pronouns. The Clark was thus required to scrub out and amend instances of 'his' and 'him' in the text in order for Agnes to be enrolled.¹³⁴ By comparison, Bethiah Paradise's Haberdashers' indenture suggests they may have been more open to female apprenticeship and membership.

This indenture was similarly recorded on a partially printed manuscript document. Like the Mercers' indenture it seems to be a standard form for enrolling apprentices. Both contain the customary description of the duties and responsibilities of both master and apprentice in this contractual arrangement.¹³⁵ The Haberdashers' indenture seems to have been designed, however, to enable the enrolment of both boys and girls as apprentices and to masters who could be either men or women. All of the points in the printed text where a personal pronoun was required were left as a blank space to be filled in by

hand. An illustration is shown below, using italics to indicate where handwriting has been inserted into a blank space.

During which term the said Apprentice *her* said *Master* faithfully shall serve, *his* Secrets keep, *his* lawful Commandments every where gladly do *she* shall do no damage to *her* said *Master* nor [s]ee to be done of others, but that *she* to *his* power shall lett, or forthwith give warning to *her* said *Master* of the same. ¹³⁶

Although a detailed appraisal has not been possible in the context of this project, this ‘unisex’ form may have been an innovation of the 1690s. In 1688, Humphrey Highgate became a Haberdashers apprentice. ¹³⁷ His enrolment was recorded on a fully pre-printed male-orientated form. Clearly by the 1690s the company had found good reason to make a standard form available that was suitable for the enrolment of girls. This could have been associated with the level of demand from young women for apprenticeship. Ninety-four girls were apprenticed to the Haberdashers’ company between 1689 and 1700. Twenty-three of these were apprenticed to women and one to a husband and wife team. ¹³⁸ This can be compared with numbers of girls apprenticed with the Broderers’. Only nine were enrolled in the same period. ¹³⁹ Further work would be required to ascertain whether changes in administrative practice at the Haberdashers’ indicate a rise in female demand, or simply recognition of existing levels.

The issue of Bethiah Paradise’s place of residence during her apprenticeship has already been noted. This further suggests that there may have been more scope for flexibility in systems of apprenticeship than has been thought. Bethiah was apprenticed in 1691 to one Henry Duke. ¹⁴⁰ Yet in 1695

she was living in a household other than her master's and was described as a servant. It is understood that apprentices were expected to live in their master's household as part of their inculcation into the ways of trade. Their 'servitude' would also have involved doing menial tasks in the workshop and household.¹⁴¹ It has also been noted that it became increasingly common in seventeenth-century Bristol for domestic service to be a distinct element of a girl's formal apprenticeship. From it being merely conventional for girl apprentices to help in the home, it became "a formal and major obligation of their apprenticeship".¹⁴²

It has been assumed that Bethiah's master was the same Mr Duke who probably authored *Londons-nonsuch* and had been an Exchange tenant.¹⁴³ At the behest of the Gresham Committee he was imprisoned for massive rent arrears in 1679. It is unclear if he was granted a lease in the 1690s. Perhaps he was a bad master and Bethiah quit his service. It is possible that Bethiah became apprentice to Elias Pledger. The term 'servant' applied to her could reflect a commercial and not a domestic role and may conceal the fact that she was still in apprenticeship. However, Bethiah finishes her apprenticeship as a Haberdasher and so the assumption is that she saw out her time with a master from that company. Of course if Pledger too was a Haberdasher, although working as an apothecary, this might explain things. This does not seem like a satisfactory conclusion. It is, after all, her indenture that states she served Mr Duke as an apprentice that she presents to the Corporation on claiming her freedom.

Earle notes that apprentices routinely ignored the clauses in their indentures, especially those that stipulated expectations about their behaviour. Could Henry Duke have decided to dispense with some of his formal obligations and duties to his apprentices, farming them out to others? From the striking out of the word ‘apparel’ in this indenture, it seems that he may have refused to pay for Bethiah’s clothing, which was also a routine expectation. Perhaps Duke saw no need to have his apprentices live with him. Offering out their services after they had done their daytime duties may have been a cost-effective way to deal with the accommodation issue. All this, for now, must remain unresolved. The first step in doing so would be to discern Mr Pledger’s guild affiliations. Regardless of what is unknown about Bethiah’s case, we know she was made free of the Haberdashers’ and the City in February 1698/9 and commenced renting a shop in March of the same year? ¹⁴⁴

The three other apprenticeship indentures were completely hand written. Mary Ludlow’s however is a standard ‘male’ form with spaces, but one that had been prepared by hand rather than in print. Clear differences in handwriting within the text indicate this and the personal pronouns have been visibly amended. This is not the case with Rachel Calandrine. The details of her apprenticeship were written up entirely by hand. All of the usual covenants are described, but there is one unique feature. Although she was apprenticed to a scrivener, Elizabeth Billingsley, and went on to be accepted as a member of the company, it is stipulated that she will be taught the skills of a seamstress.

145

Billingsley was single and amongst a group of only four women known to have been made members of the Scriveners up to 1678. One of these was made free by patrimony. All the others were apprenticed to husband and wife teams. The possibility is that these girl apprentices were never destined to learn the skills of a scrivener, but the trade of the scrivener wife. Ben-Amos found evidence from the sixteenth-century for this kind of arrangement.¹⁴⁶ Extant company documents for the Scriveners for this period shed no light on the company's attitude to women members.¹⁴⁷ They were simply not mentioned. Nonetheless, there are at least two different interpretations that can be made of this situation.

The Scriveners' appears to have been a rather exclusive guild. Indentures for male apprentices show that it was not unusual for them to be hand written, sometimes in Latin.¹⁴⁸ As the company of professional scribes this is perhaps not surprising. The freedom indexes also confirm Steer's impression that numbers of scriveners would never have matched those for the craft guilds.¹⁴⁹ It would be easy to interpret the apprenticing of girls to the wives of company men, with the intention of teaching them a feminine trade, as marginalization. An alternative interpretation is that the guild recognised that scrivener's wives had skills in other trades, including the needle trades. In Rachel's case, the company clearly did not feel the need to disassociate itself from the feminine trade in which Billingsley was expert. This reflects on Sanderson's assertion that historians have been over zealous in their assumption that feminine trades were poorly valued in the seventeenth century.

As to Rachel herself, she can now be added to the list of members of the Scriveners for the seventeenth century and appears to have acquired the skills she needed in her apprenticeship to start an independent retail business. She does not do so, however, until some years after gaining her freedom, probably working for herself or others elsewhere in the interim. As the last example of an Exchange tenant who took an apprenticeship, we turn to the case of Bridget Flowerdew, citizen and weaver.

Bridget's indenture for apprenticeship to a weaver was amongst those that were hand written. It is a faithful reproduction of the printed version which was used to enrol William Handes and Adam Seagrove in the same period, but overcomes the problem of the masculine personal pronouns in these.¹⁵¹ Bridget's master appears to have been a female relative. Seagrove was also apprenticed to a woman, Widow Hathaway. The prohibition of women as weavers before the seventeenth century has already been discussed.¹⁵² It would, therefore, not be unreasonable to assume that the special measures necessary to record Bridget's apprenticeship were somehow linked to this. What seems clear is that by this point they were not excluded from this trade. Indeed, it has been argued that women had long had an important place in the weaving industry.

Plummer, using documents from the Weavers' Company from the first half of the seventeenth century, considered the company's attitude to female membership in the context of weaving as a complex craft process. He argued

that the prohibition on women, which endure into this period, was actually highly circumscribed. They were not excluded from membership, but in order to protect male wage levels they were excluded from working at the looms. Girls were therefore apprenticed and had a working knowledge of weaving because they were taught to fulfil a range of essential ancillary tasks upon which a weaver depended. This could include the ‘warping’ of the loom and a range of processes associated with the preparation of yarn. The actual numbers of girls formally apprenticed to weavers remained low during the seventeenth - century and the work practices in this context were clearly gendered. I would not be correct, however, to regard their place of women in weaving as marginal. Plummer’s findings show that the importance of women in this and other trades has been overlooked in recent years. ¹⁵³

Apart from the family connections, we still might wonder why Bridget was apprenticed to a weaver and not to a trade more associated with retailing. Plummer found evidence of women who were freemen of the Weavers training young women in other trades, including millinery. ¹⁵⁴ This situation may be similar to the Scriveners’ case described here. However, these examples cited by Plummer were not from company records so it is not clear if these young women were in a formal apprenticeship. Unlike Rachel Calandrine’s indenture Bridget’s does not mention any other trade. The possibility that she was trained in the skills of a trade other than weaving cannot be ruled out, but it is worth considering what she might have learnt as a weaver’s apprentice.

A retail trader with this kind of background would have been in a good position to judge the quality of cloth and other textile products. She might also have been taught about bookkeeping, sales, stock acquisition and perhaps the management of servants. As a member of a family firm she would certainly have learnt about the importance of kin in the credit network needed by business proprietors.¹⁵⁵ This would have all been invaluable knowledge for someone setting up in retail trade. A background in weaving or other craft trades would not have necessarily been an inappropriate choice for a young woman with retail trade in her sights. Whatever skills Bridget acquired, her indenture shows that she followed a formal apprenticeship. The freedom index confirms that she then took up her citizenship in 1689. In the same year, Bridget took a lease on a shop at the Exchange. This discussion turns finally to the case of Elizabeth Hope, who gained her freedom by redemption.

The freedom records found for Elizabeth Hope indicate that she started an apprenticeship as a Loriner but did not quite finish it. The associated dates are unknown. Nonetheless, she petitioned the City courts and was granted her freedom in 1690 and the documentation suggests that she was also accepted as a company member.¹⁵⁶ It has to be acknowledged that there is no evidence that the papers in the freedom archive are those for Elizabeth Hope, Exchange tenant. Indeed, there are some problems in reconciling the date when freedom was granted and the date from which Elizabeth was known to have been trading at the Exchange. If both sets of evidence were for the same woman, it would suggest that she operated as an unfree trader between 1682 and 1692 and perhaps even before this date. The Repertories give no indication of

whether people's qualification to trade was checked before leases were issued. It is therefore impossible to know if an unfree trader of otherwise good repute could have slipped past Committee members. Their first priority, it will be recalled, was to let as many shops as possible to reliable tenants and not to police the activities of traders as the guilds and companies otherwise did.¹⁵⁷ Sharpe gives no indication, incidentally, about whether Hester Pinney entered the freedom of the City, but she certainly does not seem to have followed an apprenticeship.¹⁵⁸

Regardless of the actual identity of those referred to in these sources, they demonstrate that women in London in the 1690s pursued admission to the freedom of the City by redemption as well as by apprenticeship. This suggests willingness on the part of the City to accept women into the freedom. None of the women in 1690s sample gained their freedom by patrimony. We are reminded, however, that one of the female Scriveners gained company membership by this route. This would have conferred on them the right to apply for freedom. It is widely recognised that women did not join livery companies for the rights and responsibilities of civic office, for these were only visited on men. We can safely presume that these women exercised the right of membership through patrimony for primarily economic reasons, as did those who followed apprenticeship.¹⁵⁹

Women and citizenship in summary

This small survey of women's freedom papers from the late seventeenth century has revealed evidence of formal female apprenticeship and the

membership of single women in London's livery companies. As the conventional next step, it is also a clear that women went on to acquire the freedom of the City. On the basis of so little data, it has not been possible to assess the degree to which women were welcomed as company members and free traders. There is possible evidence, however, of a range attitudes to this.

Patterns of apprenticeship and company membership in the case-study group give only a partial indication of the trades in which women actually trained. The Mercers' enrolled female apprentices to male masters, suggesting that they were taught the skills associated with this prestigious trade. The Haberdashers' case is inconclusive, but it seems that Bethiah Paradise would have at least received a partial training in this trade. As with the Scriveners, however, companies that were strongly male-identified appear to have endorsed the training of women in female trades under the umbrella of the company's ordinances. Also, it is probable that trades like weaving upheld conventions that maintained gendered segregation in skills and work practices. These practices can be interpreted as examples of the marginalization of women in the skilled trades, but it has been argued that a more constructive interpretation is possible. In the context in which these practices occurred, the suggestion is that this was a distinctive form of inclusion, albeit one which maintained gendered differentials in pay, skills and status.

These cases show that women followed established routes to taking up the freedom of the City. Offering the same fundamental right to trades as this offered to men, it does not seem that civic officials saw a need for a separate

system for women. Only an extensive survey of freedom papers would reveal the extent to which they exercised this privilege. The findings on apprenticeship and citizenship indicate that the process whereby male and female tenants at the Exchange gained their rights to trade were fundamentally similar. Their experiences of preparing for a life in trade overlapped in significant ways.

Conclusions

This dissertation has considered the proposition that single women in the late seventeenth-century City of London were able to set up in independent businesses because conventional routes were open to them. This challenges the prevailing view that only widows were routinely able to exercise such privileges at this time. Using evidence for female tenants at the Royal Exchange, the research has shown that single women took up opportunities for apprenticeship, company memberships and City freedom. This indicates that there was a recognised place for single businesswomen in the City at this time. In assuming this place these women would have availed themselves of a legitimate public identity which went beyond the stereotype of the unattached female 'shopkeeper'. Although not synonymous, the circumstances of single women traders at the Royal Exchange seem to show similarities to those in the Edinburgh context. The extent to which the City of London 'embraced' its single businesswomen can be determined only with further research.

A particular theoretical position was adopted here as a way of focusing on the public nature of women's business activities. The suggestion has been that the Royal Exchange could be shown to be part of a public sphere in which both women and men had a recognised place. It has been argued that the take up of conventional routes to guild membership, citizenship and business activity represents one of the specific ways in which the experiences of male and female tenants overlapped. The impression is that girls followed the same process of apprenticeship through the same institutional framework, even if not learning the same trades. If apprenticeship was "a characteristic family strategy for male children", with the primary aim of securing them a place in the commercial world, then a parallel process appears to have been operating for middling girls at the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁰ Further research is clearly indicated to reveal more about the trades in which these two groups were trained and the extent of female citizenship. A systematic study of the apprenticeship indentures of young women, which could be easily identified in the Freedom Archives, would be an ideal starting point. The remote prospect of finding private papers relating to more City businesswomen, as Sharpe did, should not be ruled out.

As with all historical findings, we are faced with question of whether those from this project constitute evidence of change or continuity. There is evidence that single female independence, as both a lifestyle and an eventuality, was recognised throughout the early modern period.¹⁶¹ The apprenticeship of girls in the late seventeenth century can therefore be viewed as part of a continuum, as families sought to prepare their daughters with the

option, or fate, of singlehood in mind. Skills and material resources, of course, improved marriage prospects.¹⁶² In recent years, however, historians have accepted that single women with the ability to support themselves had a genuine choice not to marry at this time.¹⁶³

The argument that economic opportunities arose for women in the early modern period when the male population could not fulfil economic demands is compelling. So too is the evidence that they were willing to take these opportunities up.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps pressures on the Corporation and the guilds to adapt and survive in the 1690s, not least in the face of falling numbers of male apprentices, meant that women became more acceptable as apprentices and freeman. Apprentices were a highly cost effective part of the workforce. Also, there were precedents for the liberalisation of entry into City freedom, for example during the population crisis in the post-fire period.¹⁶⁵ The study of apprenticeship indentures undertaken here has shown that even when companies hung on to the notion that male apprenticeship was the norm, they still enrolled young women. Opportunities clearly existed for single women in the seventeenth century to prepare for a life in business. It will therefore be argued that the findings in this research, as in many other studies, reflect both continuities and changes in attitudes towards women, their value as workers and their potential for independence.¹⁶⁶

The theory of ‘overlapping spheres’ is not without its limitations. It could be argued that the study has failed to take into account that fact that differences between men and women may have also contributed to their place

in the practical public sphere. Nonetheless, the experiences of these two groups do seem to show some real similarities, suggesting that both were equally 'at home' at the Exchange. Sanderson argues, for the Edinburgh context, that "men and women not only carried on their activities in the same world but had many common experiences".¹⁶⁷ It seems evident that this could also be applied to the world of traders at the Royal Exchange. The renting of small shops by both men and women also indicates that these were a viable and attractive option for any serious trader. It will, therefore, be argued that single women at the Exchange, like their Scottish counterparts, were probably recognised as bone fide business proprietors and not just as 'petty' shopkeepers.¹⁶⁸

Historians agree that London in the 1690s was an extraordinary place. Caution should be exercised, at least until further research is conducted, in generalising about the place of single businesswomen in seventeenth century society from the experiences of a small sample at the Royal Exchange. The inescapable impression, however, is that the place of single women there was an immensely ordinary one, clearly echoing Pullin's findings about the position of businesswomen at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁹ This then has not been a study of female business pioneers, but a chapter in the everyday history of women's work.

- ¹ Ian Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company, 1579-1959* (Mercers' Company London 1994), p. 31; Ann Saunders, 'The building of the Exchange' in Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (London Topographical Society London 1997), pp. 36-47.
- ² Natasha Glaisyer, 'Merchants at the Royal Exchange, 1660-1720', in Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (London, London Topographical Society, 1997), pp. 198-205.
- ³ Ann Saunders, 'Organisation of the Exchange', in Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (London, London Topographical Society, 1997), pp. 89.
- ⁴ Saunders, 'Organisation of the Exchange', pp. 89-91; Kay Stanisland, 'Thomas Deane's shop at the Royal Exchange', in Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (London, London Topographical Society, 1997), pp. 59-67; Gresham Repertories (GR) vol. 1678-1722, Mercers' Company Archive (London).
- ⁵ Pamela Sharpe, 'Dealing with Love: the ambiguous independence of the single woman in Early Modern England', *Gender and History*, vol.1, no.2, (July 1999), pp.209-232, esp. 218 and 255.
- ⁶ Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort, 1550-1800', in Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks, (eds.), *The middling sort of people* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 52-83; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Women in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol', *Continuity and Change*, vol.6, no.2, (1991), pp. 227-252.
- ⁷ Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort', p. 53
- ⁸ Saunders, 'The organisation of the Exchange', p. 85.
- ⁹ Saunders, 'The organisation of the Exchange', pp. 85 and 89, confirmed by The Mercers' Company.
- ¹⁰ CLRO MS *City Lands Committee Journals*, E8 (1694/5-1698), and E9 (8th April 1695-22nd July 1696).
- ¹¹ GR 1678-1722 (5th June 1696), p. 307; MS *City Lands Committee Journals*, E8 pp.55, 65, 78-9 and 81, and E9, p. 55.
- ¹² Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company*, pp. 28-33; Jean Imray, 'The origins of the Exchange', in Saunders, *The Royal Exchange*, pp.26-35.
- ¹³ Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company*, p. 38.
- ¹⁴ Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company*, pp. 33-36; Saunders, 'The organisation of the Exchange', p. 85.
- ¹⁵ Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company*, p. 31
- ¹⁶ GR 1678-1722 (16th May 1699), pp. 342-343, (4th August 1699), p. 344, (16th November 1699), p. 351, (7th April 1701), p. 360, (12th March 1702), p. 381.
- ¹⁷ Saunders, 'The Second Exchange', in Saunders, *The Royal Exchange*, p. 134-5
- ¹⁸ Imray, 'The origins of the Exchange', pp. 26-35; Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company*, pp. 27-40; GR 1678-1722, (16th May 1699), pp. 342-343, (4th August 1699), p. 344, (16th November 1699), p. 351, (7th April 1701), p. 360, (12th March 1702), p. 381.
- ¹⁹ D.W. Jones, 'London merchants and the crisis of the 1690s', in Peter Clark and Paul Slack, (eds.), *Crisis and order in English towns, 1500-1700* (London, Routledge/Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 316-317; Ian Doolittle, *The City of London and its livery companies* (Dorchester, Gavin, 1982), p. 8; J. R. Kellett, 'The breakdown of guild and corporation control over the handicrafts and retail trade in London', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, vol.10, no.3, (1958), p. 383.
- ²⁰ Vanessa Harding, 'City, capital and metropolis: the changing shape of seventeenth-century London', in J. F. Merritt, (ed.), *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 117-118; Kellett, 'The breakdown of the guilds', pp. 381-394; J. R. Kellett, 'The financial crisis of the Corporation of London and the Orphans' Act, 1694', *Guildhall Miscellany*, vol.2, no.5, (October 1963), p. 220; Doolittle, *The City of London and its livery companies*, pp. 5-8.
- ²¹ Jones, 'London Merchants and the crisis of the 1690s', pp. 311-321.
- ²² Kellett, 'The financial crisis of the Corporation of London', pp. 220-226; Doolittle, *The City of London and its livery companies*, pp.11-12
- ²³ Pamela Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: working women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996), p.6-8; Amy Erickson, 'Introduction', in Alice Clark, *Working life of women in the seventeenth-century* (London, Routledge, 1982), xli; Elizabeth C. Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996), p. 5; Bridget Hill, *Women, work and sexual politics in eighteenth-century England* (London, UCL, 1994), pp.169-170; Linda McDowell, *Capital Culture: gender at work in the city* (Oxford, Blackwells, 1997), pp.18 and 72; Katrina Honeyman, 'Engendering enterprise',

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²⁴ Maryanne Kowaleski, 'Single women in medieval and early modern Europe: the demographic perspective', in Judith M. Bennet and Amy M. Froide, (eds.), *Singlewomen in the European past, 1250-1800* (Penn, Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 51-65; Amy Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England* (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 47.

²⁵ Pamela Sharpe, 'Dealing with Love', pp. 209-232, esp. 216.

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²⁶ Sharpe, 'Dealing with Love', pp. 209-232.

²⁷ Mary Prior, 'Women and the urban economy: Oxford 1500-1800', in Mary Prior, (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500-1800* (London, Methuen, 1985), pp. 93-117; Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, pp. 5-40 and 74-107; Peter Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London 1660-1730* (London, Methuen, 1989), pp. 166-174; Margaret Hunt, *The middling sort: commerce, gender and the family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, University of California, 1996), pp. 125-146.

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³⁰ Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London, Routledge, 1982); Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism*, pp. 6-8 and 11; Peter Earle, 'The female labour market in London in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries', in Sharpe, (ed.), *Women's Work: The English experience* (London, Arnold, 1998).

³¹ Clark, *Working Life*, pp. 1-13; Erickson, 'Introduction' to Clark, *Working Life*, p. xiv; Pamela Sharpe, 'Introduction', in Pamela Sharpe, *Women's work: the English experience 1650-1914* (London 1998), pp. 1-13; Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism*, p. 7; Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, pp.163-4; Earle, 'The female labour market in London', pp. 121-2.

³² Clark, *Working Life*, p. 151.

³³ Erickson, 'Introduction' to Clark, *Working Life of women*, p. xxx

³⁴ Clark, *Working Life*, p.153 and 197-209..

³⁵ Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *Historical Journal*, no.36, vol. 2, (1993), pp. 402-404; Earle, 'The female labour market in London', pp.121-2; Erickson, 'Introduction' to Clark, *Working Life*, xv.

³⁶ Erickson, 'Introduction' to Clark, *Working Life*, viii.

³⁷ Earle, 'The female labour market in London', pp.122-124

³⁸ Earle, 'The female labour market in London', pp.131-2; Hill, *Women, work and sexual politics*, pp.148-173.

³⁹ Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, pp.166-174; Hunt, *The middling sort*, pp.125-146.

⁴⁰ Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, pp. 167-170 and 173-4.

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- ⁴¹ Hunt, *The middling sort*, pp. 125-146.
- ⁴² Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', pp. 1-202, esp. 158
- ⁴³ Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', pp. 28-71, esp. 55.
- ⁴⁴ Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', pp. 2, 26, 28-71; Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, pp. 156-160.
- ⁴⁵ Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, p. 112-123; Hunt, *The middling sort*, p. 47.
- ⁴⁶ Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', p. 8.
- ⁴⁷ Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', p. 26.
- ⁴⁸ Prior, 'Women and the urban economy' pp. 93-117, esp. 103.
- ⁴⁹ Prior, 'Women and the urban economy', p. 103; Hunt, *The middling sort*, p. 135.
- ⁵⁰ Prior, 'Women and the urban economy', p. 99
- ⁵¹ Prior, 'Women and the urban economy', p. 111.
- ⁵² Prior, 'Women and the urban economy', p. 111-112.
- ⁵³ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, pp. 5-25, 74-94 and 168-170.
- ⁵⁴ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, pp. 5-16; Caroline Arnold, *Sheep over London Bridge: the freedom of the City of London* (London, Corp. of London, 1995), pp. 8-10
- ⁵⁵ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, p. 7-8.
- ⁵⁶ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, p. 5; Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', p. 8.
- ⁵⁷ Prior, 'Women and the urban economy', p. 111
- ⁵⁸ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, pp. 5 and 74-94.
- ⁵⁹ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, p. 105
- ⁶⁰ Ian Archer, 'Material Londoners?', in Lena Cowen Orlin, *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 2000), pp. 174-178; Kellett, 'The breakdown of guild and corporation control over the handicrafts and retail trade', p. 315; Patrick Wallis, 'Controlling commodities: search and reconciliation in the early modern companies.' in Ian Gadd and Patrick Wallis, *Guilds, society and Economy in London* (London, Centre for Metropolitan History, 2002), pp. 85-100; Roy Porter, *London: a social history* (London, Penguin, 1994), pp. 131-159.
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- ⁶² Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds*, pp. 36-38.
- ⁶³ Ben -Amos, 'Women apprentices in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol', pp. 227-248, esp. 247.
- ⁶⁴ Ben -Amos, 'Women apprentices in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol', p. 242.
- ⁶⁵ Ben-Amos, 'Women apprentices in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol', p. 246; Jones, 'London merchants and the crisis in the 1690s', p. 312.
- ⁶⁶ Pullin, 'Business is Just Life', p. 2.
- ⁶⁷ Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*, p. 168.
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- ⁷⁴ Cowan, 'What was masculine about the public sphere?', p.146.
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- ⁸⁹ Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh*, pp. 27.
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- ⁹⁴ Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh*, pp.27-28.
- ⁹⁵ Prior, *Women and the urban economy*, pp.103 and 106-109.
- ⁹⁶ Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in early modern England*, pp.37-8 and 330; Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, pp.158-179.
- ⁹⁷ Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, p. 169.
- ⁹⁸ Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in early modern England*, pp.174-184, esp.174; A. Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England*, pp.174-186.
- ⁹⁹ GR 1678-1722, (11th March 1690), p.242 and (13th Dec 1689), p.222
- ¹⁰⁰ Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth century Edinburgh*, p.94.

- ¹⁰¹ Saunders, *The Royal Exchange*, p.91 and 106.
- ¹⁰² Spence, *London in the 1690's*, p.127.
- ¹⁰³ GR 1678-1722, (13th April 1693), p.277, (16th May 1699), p.342; Spence, *London in the 1690's*, p.126.
- ¹⁰⁴ GR 1678-1722, (12th June 1698), p.340.
- ¹⁰⁵ Sharpe, 'Dealing with love', pp. 211-2.
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- ¹⁰⁷ Harris, 'Exchanging information', p.194.
- ¹⁰⁸ Spence, *London in the 1690's*, p.126; Glaisyer, *The Royal Exchange*, p.199
- ¹⁰⁹ GR 1678-1722, (13th April 1693), p.277 and (26th April 1693), p.280; GR 1678-1722, (21st July 1693), p.283.
- ¹¹⁰ GR 1678-1722, (26th April 1693), p.180; (21st July 1693), p.282; (19th December 1694), p.293; (19th December 1695), pp.305 and 306.
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- ¹¹⁷ Saunders, *The Royal Exchange*, p.89; GR 1678-1722, (9th October 1700), p.360;
- ¹¹⁸ GR 1678-1722, (7th August 1689), p.200, (9th July 1696), p.314 and (16th May 1699), pp. 342-343.
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- ¹²⁰ Arnold, *Sheep over London Bridge*, pp. 1-15; Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds*, p.24; Kellett, *The breakdown of guild and corporate control*, pp.387-390; Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth century Edinburgh*, pp.7-8; Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort', p. 63; Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, p.85.
- ¹²¹ Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds*, p.29.
- ¹²² Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds*, p.36-42; Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort', p.53.
- ¹²³ GR 1678-1722, (9th Nov 1687), p.185; (18th April 1687), p.163.
- ¹²⁴ CLRO Freedom Indexes 1681-1700.
- ¹²⁵ Source: CLRO MS ELJL/24/46, MS ELJL/62/12, MS ELJL/2/31, MS ELJL/138/78, MS ELJL/23/84, ELJL/36/162.
- ¹²⁶ GR 1678-1722, (13th March 1679), p.31 and (22nd Nov1689), p.218.
- ¹²⁷ GR 1678-1722, (13th April 1693), p.278; Freedom Indexes 1681-1700, October 1692 (B)
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- ¹³⁰ GR 1678-1722, (23rd August 1689), pp.208 and 210
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- ¹³³ Hunt, *The middling sort*, p.143.
- ¹³⁴ CLRO MS ELJL/62/12
- ¹³⁵ Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the Middling Sort', p.53
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- ¹⁴⁰ CLRO ELJL/138/78
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- ¹⁴² Ben-Amos, 'Women apprentices in the trades and crafts', pp.233-234.
- ¹⁴³ Ehver Kynd, *Londons-nonsuch or, the Glory of the Royal Exchange*. (1688), British Library BL 11602.i.25; GR 1678-1722, (7th April 1679), p.19.
- ¹⁴⁴ These dates refer to the old style calendar, being Feb 1699 in the new style.
- ¹⁴⁵ CLRO MS ELJL/2/31
- ¹⁴⁶ Francis Steer *A history of the Worshipful Company of Scriveners of London* (London 1973), p.27; Francis Steer, (ed.), *Scriveners' Common Papers, 1357-1628* (London 1968), pp.27 and 123-127; Ben-Amos, 'Women apprentices in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol', p. 230.
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- ¹⁴⁸ CLRO MS ELJL/76/31
- ¹⁴⁹ Steer, *A history of the Worshipful Company of Scriveners of London*, p.35; Steer, *Scriveners' Common Papers*, p. ix-x.
- ¹⁵⁰ Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh*, pp.74-76.
- ¹⁵¹ CLRO MS ELJL/29/46; MS ELJL/130/108.
- ¹⁵² Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds*, pp. 36-38.
- ¹⁵³ Alfred Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company, 1600-1970* (London, Routledge, 1972), pp.61-64.
- ¹⁵⁴ Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company*, p.63.
- ¹⁵⁵ Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, pp.94, 112-123; Hunt, *The middling sort*, pp.58-62.
- ¹⁵⁶ CLRO MS ELJL/36/162
- ¹⁵⁷ Davies, 'Governors and Governed: the practice of power in the Merchant Taylors', pp.74-75.
- ¹⁵⁸ Sharpe, 'Dealing with love', p.211.
- ¹⁵⁹ Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in early modern England*, p52.
- ¹⁶⁰ Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort' pp.53-4.
- ¹⁶¹ Peters, 'Single women in early modern England: attitudes and expectations', pp.325-345; Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in early modern England*, pp.165-174; Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth century Edinburgh*, pp76-94.
- ¹⁶² Hufton, *The prospect before her*, p.71.
- ¹⁶³ Sharpe, 'Dealing with love', pp. 214-217 and 219; Peters, 'Single women in early modern England: attitudes and expectations' p.326.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ben-Amos, 'Women apprentices in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol', p.246; Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, social mobility and the middling sort', pp. 62-63; Prior, 'Women in the urban economy', pp.111.
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- ¹⁶⁷ Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh*, p.168.
- ¹⁶⁸ Sanderson, *Women and work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh*, p.5.
- ¹⁶⁹ Pullin, '*Business is Just Life*', p.2.

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*Please note that following the completion of this project, all of the records of the City of London Corporation were transferred to the custody of London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Rd, London, EC1R 0HB and have been re-catalogued. Guildhall Library manuscript sources have also been subject to cataloguing amendments.

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Text of Appendix 3: Names of women leaseholders in the 1690's sample

Name	Civic Status	Marital Status	Company affiliation
Antrobus, Francis	of London	Widow	
Baker, Mary	of London	Spinster	
Blennerhassett, Agnes		Spinster	Mercers
Brackly, Jacomin		Wife	Husband/Leatherseller
Brett, Katherine	of London	Spinster	
Brett, Rachel	of London	Spinster	
Brewer, Elizabeth	of London	Widow	
Browne, Mary	of London	Widow	
Calandrine, Rachel	of London	Spinster	Scriveners
Cary, Mary	of London	Widow	
Caske Sarah		Widow	
Chapman, Katherine	of London	Spinster	
Clarke, Margaret		not specified	
Clayton, Mary	of London	Spinster	
Cooper, Anna	of London	widow	
Cousins, Ann		n/s	
Davis, Ann		Spinster	
Davis, Sarah		Spinster	
Dixon, Naomi		Spinster	
Ellerker, Hannah		Spinster	
Ereskine, Rachel	of London	Spinster	
Feilder, Jane		n/s	
Flowerdew, Bridget	of London	Spinster	Weavers
Geary, Sarah	of London	Widow	
Gibb, Elizabeth		n/s	
Gibson, Alice		n/s	
Goddard, Elizabeth		n/s	
Gosnall, Rebecca		Widow	
Green, Prudence		Widow	
Gregor, Ann		n/s	
Guidot, Alice	of London	Widow	
Hanscombe, Anne		Spinster	
Harrison, Elizabeth	of London	Spinster	
Hope, Elizabeth	of London	Spinster	Loriners
Jenkinson, Elizabeth		Spinster	
Kidd, Elizabeth		Spinster	
Kingsley, Elizabeth		Widow	
Ludlow, Mary	of London	Spinster	Girdlers
Maidstone, Elizabeth	of London	Spinster	
Medford, Katherine		n/s	
Mee, Rebecca		Spinster	
Meekins, Rebecca		n/s	
Miles, Elizabeth	of London	Widow	
Needler, Charity		n/s	
Nyat, Mary		Spinster	
Paradise, Bethiah	of London	Spinster	Haberdashers
Patching, Sarah		Wife	Husband/Glasier
Pemberton, Elizabeth	of London	Spinster	

Pemberton, Francis	of London	Spinster
Pike, Mary		Widow
Rolles, Gertrude (the elder)		Widow
Salkeld, Alice		Widow
Scargill, Mary		Spinster
Spencer, Dorothy	of London	Widow
Towse, Ann		
Way, Rebecca	of London	Spinster
Way, Susannah	of London	Spinster
Wilkinson, Jane	of London	Spinster
Willis, Elizabeth	of London	Spinster
Willis, Sarah	of London	Spinster
Yarling, Elizabeth		n/s