

The practice of concealment

Developing social history from physical evidence:
a detailed exploration of artefacts hidden within
a Victorian chaise longue and an interpretation of the
significance of the contents

Volume 1

By

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***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
University's requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy***

April 2017

**Buckinghamshire New University
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ABSTRACT

The removal of a top cover from a Victorian chaise longue, in preparation for restoration work, revealed that the chaise had been stuffed with an assortment of Victorian clothes and tightly bound bundles of textiles rather than the traditional filling of horsehair. Amongst this stuffing was a label with a name and address which appeared to point to an association with the town of Leamington Spa and to the name of the person who may well have been the original owner of the chaise – one Miss Smith - and the opportunity to research this hidden cache proved irresistible.

When handling the artefacts there was a very strong awareness that the last person to touch them had probably been Miss Smith, over one hundred years before me, and this provoked curiosity about what led her to create this cache. I have attempted to portray the contents of the cache as a narrative by taking a multi-disciplinary approach to try to put them into a context. This research explores methods of interpreting objects in order to make connections with human history and investigates a middle class provincial life through Miss Smith. It is positioned in the fields of textile and furniture upholstery history and attempts to contribute to the fields of material culture and social history by exploring new knowledge surrounding the practice of concealment and its association with ritual and symbolism.

In order to begin to understand and interpret the significance of the discovery it was important to gain a thorough knowledge of the contents of the cache and this prompted the formation of an inventory – the Miss Smith Archive - which provides a detailed written and photographic record of each item in the cache and is provided in digital format as volume 2 of the thesis.

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List of abbreviations

CSI	The Concealed Shoe Index at Northampton Museum
DATS	Dress and Textile Specialists
DCGP	The Deliberately Concealed Garments in Buildings Project
GFS	Girls' Friendly Society
HWeFA	The High Wycombe Electronic Furniture Archive
MSA	The Miss Smith Archive
MGC	Museums and Galleries Commission
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
TCC	The Textile Conservation Centre, Winchester ¹
TCF	Textile Conservation Foundation
VADS	The Visual Arts Data Service
VAM	Victoria and Albert Museum (website)
V&A	The Victoria and Albert Museum, London
WoW	Windows on Warwickshire

¹ Now the *Centre for Textile Conservation* and part of Glasgow University

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to many people who have helped me over the course of this research; all of whom have readily engaged with the project and, through their interest, have prompted various lines of enquiry which might not have occurred to me otherwise. In particular ...

My initial approach was to 'the owners' at the address identified in the cache, explaining the research and asking about the history of their house. Rather than consigning this unsolicited mail to the bin 'the owners' turned out to be Jo Crozier and Alan Wilkinson who spontaneously invited me to stay and whose hospitality and company I have since enjoyed.

My thanks also go to Dr Andi Robertson, who was Head of Textiles at Bucks New University, and whose insistence that the artefacts should be catalogued resulted in the creation of the *Miss Smith Archive* and who also facilitated help from somebody with a background in the history of textiles – Karina Thomas. Karina's expertise, guidance, involvement and enthusiasm during this process was invaluable. Emy Circuit and Daniel Tilbey came to the rescue at the eleventh hour with photographic help for the archive just when all else had failed.

Particular support within the university came from research librarian Elik Borrill, whose response has been unfailingly friendly and helpful, and registrar Laura Bray whose support and friendship over the last few years has smoothed the way considerably.

Maria Skorupska provided a link and assistance with the Evesham part of the study and Judith Harridge, the local history librarian in Leamington gave useful direction. I am grateful to my friends for their various input, as well as their understanding and patience and particularly for staying in touch whilst I have largely ignored them.

My profound thanks go to my supervisors Professor Jake Kaner and Professor Neil Brownsword: Jake for sticking with me through thick and thin (with quite a lot of thin) and Neil, who arrived in the later stages, for (metaphorically) getting me by the scruff of the neck and hauling me up to the finishing line.

My sincere thanks to you all, I am deeply indebted.

Author's declaration

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1. Introduction

‘The problem with learning history by key dates and moments is that it gives us a spot lit view of the past – bright stars of major events twinkling against a giant – but dark and mysterious – night sky of history. As a result we lose sense of the context of major events, and the ways in which our history – and our world – has been, and still is, connected.’¹

The purpose of this study is to put the spotlight on to something less tangible – the practice of concealment – a phenomenon that has apparently been carried out since prehistoric times but about which little has been written (Merrifield, 1987). Combined with this, the research explores the relationship between the practice of concealment with material culture and social history.

This introductory chapter offers an overview of the research subject setting out the background, rationale and scope of the study. It explains the structure of the thesis, the methodology used and provides a review of the key literature which has informed and supported the research.

1.1 Background

The subject of this research is the practice of concealment which was prompted by the discovery of a cache of clothing and textiles found in the back of a Victorian chaise longue during restoration work. The chaise longue in question dates from around 1850 and my connection with the piece came when I was looking for projects to work on for the final year of a course in furniture conservation and restoration. Structurally and upholstery-wise it was in poor condition and there was nothing to indicate there was anything unusual about it; it was mid-Victorian, mid-quality, of a kind that was made by the thousand. Horsehair is the traditional stuffing used in upholstered furniture and whilst occasionally you might find the odd item of clothing this piece was highly

¹ Michael Scott, BBC News Magazine, 12 November 2013, *Spin The Globe*. BBC Radio 4 programme, 1600 hours on Tuesday 12 November 2013. Michael Scott is an assistant professor in classics and ancient history at the University of Warwick.

unusual in that the whole of the back of the chaise longue had been stuffed with hand-sized bundles of textiles and Victorian clothing rather than horsehair.

Research has not unearthed another example like this which would appear to make this method of upholstery unique. The process used must have been painstaking and the fact that such care had been taken seemed to indicate a certain ritualistic significance; moreover, some of the stuffing contents appear to have been 'special' because they had been placed inside cotton bags or other receptacles before being added to this unusual form of stuffing. The evidence suggested that this was a hidden cache, or deliberate concealment, which potentially had intense personal significance for the person who had carried out the work. A clue to the identity of this person was one of the last items found; the inclusion of a piece of brown wrapping paper with a store label attached and hand written for delivery to 'Miss Smith' at an address in Leamington Spa (fig. 1 below). This had been folded and placed in a cotton bag before being added to the cache and this provided the starting point for the research.

Fig. 1

The label forming part of the cache inside the chaise longue, addressed to:

Miss Smith
20 Russell Terrace.



It is difficult to articulate the feeling experienced when handling all the textiles for the first time but Roger Cardinal describes the sensation perfectly when he wrote:

... once we have recognised a situation, an object, a text or an artwork as harbouring a secret, we tend to be intrigued and even to cherish our bemusement as a special kind of pleasure. ...we feel drawn to confront a challenge. We half know that riddles without clues could drive us mad. We sense that secrecy is addictive and ultimately dangerous.

Risk likewise is hard to resist. There may be no earthly chance of deciphering the code or piercing the disguise, and yet we press forward, as if something as precious as life itself were secreted in the tell-tale detail ... (Grayson et al., 2006)

and there is a subconscious acknowledgment that the thing in front of you has a history and it has to be investigated further.

The thesis brings together three themes: the practice of concealment, material culture and social history, and explores methods for investigating objects in order to make connections with human history. Although these genres are discussed separately there is a close relationship between them and by intertwining these disciplines it is hoped to bring back to life a seemingly forgotten person and in so doing shed light on a life that was lived and, through that, the practice of concealment and the meaning we attribute to things.

1.2 External rationale for the research

History is often recorded through the lives of monarchs and the aristocracy or, conversely, with the poor. Although the greater part of the population in England could be classified as middle class, the lives of this social group have been much less well chronicled than those at either end of the scale (Branca, 1975 cited in Draznin, 2001). Perhaps this is because they appear to be mundane and familiar to the majority of the population, and this lack of investigation is also acknowledged by social historians such as Judith Flanders who researched domesticity room by room in the Victorian house (Flanders, 2003). Apart from domestic interiors, research on middle-class food and diet is also limited and this was the subject of research carried out by historian John Burnett who maintains that the lack of contemporary accounts has 'generated a series of myths about food of the past' (Burnett, 1979) and this statement could be applied to other areas relating to the Victorian middle-classes. Therefore this study aims to address this apparently under-researched area to an extent by researching the artefacts from the chaise cache to offer a profile of a provincial life in the nineteenth century.

Whilst the rise of the middle classes is perhaps symbolic of the changing times in Victorian England the dearth of published literature relating to middle-class

domesticity has also been addressed by academic Jane Hamlett² whose own research explored the importance of domestic spaces and personal possessions to middle-class families in the nineteenth century (Hamlett, 2016). Hamlett maintains that by concentrating on the way objects are used it is possible to gain an understanding not only of the public face of the original owners or users of the belongings but also their personal sensitivities. The stuffing from the chaise has the potential to add to our knowledge of Victorian life by researching the artefacts found and putting them into the context of their original purpose and their original owner. The middle-class emphasis pinpoints the population segment emblematic of the Victorian era and was synonymous with the massive changes of the period.

Using Miss Smith³ as a case study this investigation offers a gateway into a life that has been lived in the past, to establish what daily life would have been like for a person in Miss Smith's situation and to ascertain what social activities would have been open to her and how she would have fitted into society. This study draws on a range of disciplinary approaches and adopts methods from fields including: archaeology, social anthropology, ritual and folklore, material culture, object biographies/ interpreting and representing objects, museums and galleries, archives and photography, traditional practices in upholstery, dress and textile history, genealogy, social and local history. One of the difficulties of multi-disciplinary research is that it embraces such a diverse range of specialties that it can appear not to have much depth to it. Furthermore, that you are reliant on the expert knowledge and previous research of people who have often made it their specialism, and are therefore accredited authorities in their particular field. These are issues acknowledged by design historian Dr

² Jane Hamlett is a Senior Lecturer in Modern British History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

³ Genealogical research identifies Miss Smith's full name as Sarah Henrietta Haynes Smith but throughout this thesis she will be referred to simply as 'Miss Smith'. The reason for this is two-fold: firstly she has been historically recorded as 'Miss Smith' on the address label found in the cache: secondly, publications contemporary with the period show that 'Miss' was the accepted and polite form of address at that time for an unmarried woman. Reinforcing this, Adelaide Pountney, in her diary, only ever refers to her family or her closest friends by their first name, everyone else is called 'Miss', 'Mrs' etc., noticeably her future brother-in-law is recorded as Mr Purton until after her sister is actually married, and someone she has contact with at least once a week she always referred to as 'Miss Blackwood' (Pountney, 1998).

Ray Batchelor (2004) whilst undertaking research work using a 'broad brush' technique.⁴ He asserts that previous studies have invariably focussed on a particular aspect of the physical environment, each discipline having a fairly narrow approach and claims, for instance, 'There has been little systematic effort on the part of archaeologists to extrapolate much that can contribute to our understanding of our contemporary relationship with artefacts' (Batchelor, 2004) and maintains that the strength of the all-encompassing approach is that it draws together several different disciplines thereby offering a new perspective. Following in his footsteps, all the disciplines embraced in this study are loosely applicable and the aim is to combine relevant elements from the individual fields to offer a viewpoint from a new angle.

There are many different forms of concealment but very little has been written about the phenomenon, perhaps due to the secretive nature of the practice and the associated personal and psychological motivations, and what information there is tends to be specific to one type of concealment and seldom links with other forms of the genre. Museum archaeologist Ralph Merrifield suggests that concealments frequently display signs of symbolic significance. He has shown that simple rituals have been carried out since prehistoric times and believes their survival is due to the sense of comfort and security derived from them. He maintains that ritual should be acknowledged as being even more rudimentary than needs such as those satisfying hunger, providing shelter and protection against enemies (Merrifield, 1987).

This research aims to establish a relationship between the different forms of concealment and to reinforce Merrifield's hypothesis that the link between concealment and ritual fulfils a basic human need. It does this by exploring concealments which have been discovered and recorded, the choice of items and the locations where they tend to be found. The research also encompasses concealments in the form of hidden messages – for example through embroidery and other stitched work which often uses symbolism to

⁴ Batchelor, R. K. (2004) *Evolution, artefacts, meaning and design: The extent to which evolutionary theory can explain how and why humans attribute significance and meaning to the material world and the consequences of this for understanding design*. Ph.D. Thesis, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, Brunel University. p.5.

convey a cryptic message. The final part of the research is centred on social history, in particular on the place where the chaise longue and its cache started out – Leamington Spa – and surveys the social mores which may have influenced the concealment and the motivations for doing so. By exploring historic influences of ritual and symbolism this research considers the importance as advocated by Merrifield on behaviours relating to concealment.

Archaeological evidence exists of deliberate concealments dating back to prehistoric times with many instances suggesting a connection with ritual and magic (Merrifield, 1987). Quite often there is no obvious reason for a concealment even though considerable effort must have been made in order to carry it out. The primary aim of this research is to explore the practice of concealment in Victorian England and the motivations behind it. Artefacts are remnants of 'historical experience available for direct observation' (Lubar and Kingery, 1993, p.ix); people leave traces of their lives, wittingly and unwittingly, as do the everyday objects we leave behind (Briganti and Mezei, 2012). Miss Smith's cache provides a fascinating illustration of this behaviour and this study encompasses an archaeological approach in order to shed light on the practice, on material culture and on the associated social history.

This research attempts to contribute to the fields of material culture and social history by exploring new knowledge surrounding the practice of concealment and its association with ritual and symbolism. It offers the perspective of a practitioner who has been involved in the practice of furniture restoration for over sixteen years. Apart from adopting a mixed method approach to the research, a core of analysis and reflection has derived from practical engagement which has been critical in achieving greater understanding of the gathering and preparation of the materials which became the cache, the subsequent use of the artefacts as stuffing in the re-upholstery of the chaise, the eventual removal of that stuffing for another restoration over one hundred years later, then the handling, identifying, cataloguing and research which has formed this study. Therefore, it offers a different voice from this intimate insight and understanding of material knowledge embedded in my practice as a furniture restorer, recognising that this was not a normal way to reupholster a piece of furniture, questioning why the work was carried out in the way it was and exploring the possible significance of the items included.

1.3 Personal rationale for the research

The desire to embark on this research grew out of an undergraduate dissertation which was prompted by the discovery of the cache of artefacts hidden inside the Victorian chaise longue and believed to have been concealed by one Miss Smith of Leamington Spa. Despite her having a common name, with the benefit of an address it was possible to trace her relatively quickly via on-line genealogy websites which were available in the Leamington library. The internet has changed considerably since 2003 but at that time most of the research involved trips to London and Kew to scour the records at the Family History Centre and the National Archives and journeys to Leamington Spa for first-hand experience of the streets and many hours spent trawling through the street directories in the family history section of the library there. I initially wrote to 'the owners' at the address in Russell Terrace, explaining my research and sending them some photos of the chaise longue and its hoard of textiles and they responded by inviting me to stay at the house. My focus at that time therefore became the person – Miss Smith – researching her family history. It seemed important to get to know the person to begin to understand her behaviour and the motivation behind the creation of the cache.⁵ However, as the research progressed, finally I saw that the textiles were fundamental to the research and it was the textiles which could tell us about the person and her way of life and not the other way round. This practice was employed by artist and author Edmund de Waal who created a biography of a collection of inherited netsuke and, in so doing, was able to learn about the lives of the family members who had previously collected and owned the objects (de Waal, 2011).

⁵ When I embarked on this second stage of the research for the PhD I was challenged on this 'fixation' of Miss Smith by Dr Andrea Robertson who was Head of Textiles at Bucks New University (BNU). She maintained that without the textiles there would be no thesis and therefore they had to be the core of the research. She was also adamant that the textiles should be properly catalogued; again without them, if they were lost or damaged, there would be no thesis. I initially resisted this new angle because my obsession was still with Miss Smith and her family history, however, Dr Robertson facilitated a textile technician (Karina Thomas) with a background in the history of textiles to work with me to create the inventory.

The starting point of the thesis was therefore the analysis and cataloguing of all the contents of the cache. This took place over a period of two years and resulted in the formation of the Miss Smith Archive (MSA) which forms volume 2 of the thesis. However, Art historian and academic David Prown asserts that whilst the cataloguing process records a moment in time, it fails to capture the true feelings and emotions of what it was like to be living in a period of the past and raises more questions than answers (Prown in Lubar and Kingery, 1993). I would challenge this view to an extent and believe that close observation of the artefacts can reveal a lot about feelings and emotions; for instance, in the case of the cache by the care (or otherwise) taken in the making or repairing of items, although I agree that it does raise more questions than answers. Prown maintains that to fully engage with the history of the artefacts they should be portrayed as a narrative (Prown in Lubar and Kingery, 1993) and this is what I have attempted to do by taking a multi-disciplinary approach and putting the artefacts into a context.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this piece of furniture has changed my life. The initial research took place under a very tight time-frame and did not do justice to the subject. Having destroyed the cache in its original manifestation it seemed important that it lives on in some form and the creation of the archive and the production of this thesis is part of that process. When starting this project I had little or no knowledge in most of the areas to be investigated but carrying out work as a research student offers the opportunity of access to people and places that might not normally be accessible, and has enabled a more detailed insight into what has been a preoccupation since the first discovery in 2003. This thesis aims to pull together the different strands of research and ultimately is positioned in a unique place in furniture upholstery history, and aims to make a contribution to knowledge surrounding the practice of deliberate concealments.

1.4 Scope and limitations

The subject merits study because this particular method of concealment appears to be unique and by combining different fields of research it is hoped to gain a new understanding of the Victorian middle classes through this most personal of human behaviours. It draws together expert voices from the fields

of archaeology and social anthropology; material culture; oral and social history; archivists, museums and galleries; dress and textile history; furniture history; traditional upholstery and genealogy where they are relevant to, and support, this study. It does not offer an in depth study of Victorian life which has been covered by many cultural commentators⁶ but whose works have enabled plausible insights to be made where tangible evidence is missing.

As detailed in chapter 4.2 Miss Smith is being used as a case study to explore a provincial middle-class life in Victorian England. To do this Miss Smith's family history – within particular contexts relevant to the cache - has been researched but in order to contain the study the scope of the chapter is limited to those family members where there is evidence to show she maintained contact throughout her life.

1.5 Aims and objectives

In order to more fully consider the meaning that can be attributed to this hoard and to demonstrate new ways in which knowledge of social history can be developed from evidence embedded within this cache of artefacts, this research sets out to:

1.5.1 Chapter 2: The cache

- establish that the cache was indeed a deliberate concealment and not just a cost-effective way to re-upholster a piece of furniture.
- explore what the artefacts can tell us about the way they were used and the life of the person who concealed them.
- examine how the garments amongst the contents of the cache raise interesting questions of gender and intimacy to provide an opportunity to develop new and significant connections between furniture, textiles and social history.

⁶ In particular social historians such as John Burnett, Geoffrey Best and Asa Briggs whose works encompass issues such as the social history of housing, education, diet and the political and industrial background of the period. In addition, television documentaries such as the BBC2 series *Victorian Farm* offer an insight into life in the nineteenth century.

1.5.2 Chapter 3: The practice of concealment

- examine the psychology behind the practice of concealment to understand the primary reasons why human instinct is driven to create a cache.
- consider numerous sites and approaches to deliberate concealment through various historic case studies with particular reference to meaning, ritual and symbolism.
- examine the research of other cultural commentators⁷ to establish what parallels/commonalities exist in relation to the cache to aid better understanding of this period of social history.
- explore the subject of material culture and the meaning attributed to possessions by examining examples of ritualistic practices, exploring examples where fabrics have been used in symbolic ways, and considering the importance of memento mori.

1.5.3 Chapter 4: A study of provincial life: the middle classes in Victorian England

- examine the social and family history perspectives surrounding the research to gain insights into what life was like for a single, middle-class woman living in middle England during the Victorian period.

1.5.4 Volume 2: The inventory

- to create a comprehensive written and photographic record of all the items found in the cache which will form the Miss Smith Archive (MSA).

1.6 Research background and structure

This research explores the liminal space between public and private, seen and unseen and the apparent human need for ritual and symbolism. With Miss Smith's cache at the core of the work it aims to mediate a broader

⁷ For example, Eastop (2006), Eastop and Dew (2003), Swann (1996), Thompson (1979).

understanding of the practice of concealment and thereby enhance knowledge of this phenomenon. Using documentary and physical evidence it explores the relationship between people and possessions and in so doing attempts to create a portrait of a particular life that was lived. Whilst each chapter focusses on a specific aspect of the research the practice of concealment is the focus of the study, linking the different strands of the study and providing a common thread running throughout.

The structure of the thesis is given below:

1.6.1 Chapter 2: The cache:

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the way in which Miss Smith's chaise longue had been upholstered was a highly unusual method of stuffing a piece of furniture; and possibly unique. It does this by comparing and contrasting traditional upholstery techniques with those found in the chaise. This is followed by an interpretation of some of the examples of clothing from the cache, in archaeological terms those which would be classified as 'small finds', putting them into their original historic context and considering the way they would have impacted on the wearer's life in order to try to understand what it would actually have felt like to have been alive at that time. Norwegian textile artist Kari Steihaug writes 'Of all the materials that accompany us throughout our lives, cloth is the one that most accurately records our passing: we stain it, rip it, tear it – leave behind the stories of us being here. So it's a very, very positive material in which to think about ideas concerned with memory'.⁸

1.6.2 Chapter 3: The practice of concealment:

This chapter is in two sections, the first of which examines and compares different forms of concealment and questions the motives behind such behaviour. It sets the context for this research and to do this other practices of concealment have been explored to establish whether or not there is a common

⁸ Memory Makers exhibition: 18 Aug – 3 Nov 2013, Salts Mill, Saltaire Village.
Curator: Professor Lesley Miller

link within the different genre. It considers obvious forms of concealment – such as secret compartments in furniture, and deliberate concealments such as shoes and clothing which have been hidden within the fabric of buildings. The latter forms of concealment could have had multiple purposes, perhaps as part of a ritual, for protective purposes, or maybe as a sort of time capsule, or for a mixture of reasons. A further, more oblique, form of concealment is explored which includes tie-on pockets and quilts. Sewing was an integral part of women's lives in the 18th and 19th centuries and was sometimes used to convey hidden messages by means of symbolic references.⁹

The second part of the chapter is concerned with the meaning of things and the psychology of concealment. This aspect of the research considers the importance of myth, ritual and symbolism as it relates to concealment and, in particular, how threads and fabric are sometimes interwoven to convey subtle or hidden meanings. This section explores material culture and the importance we attach to possessions; why we buy things, how artefacts take on different meanings at different stages of their existence. The clothing and textiles in the chaise cache clearly had different uses and lives before they were hidden away, but what made Miss Smith select those particular items? This leads on to an interpretation of spiritual middens and memento mori and analyses how people make sense of their lives through their possessions. The research for this chapter is based on information extracted from previous research projects, published literature and film and, in particular, exhibitions which proved to be a valuable source of information.

This chapter opened-up questions around the phenomenon of concealment and, through that, issues around the human condition, and explored possible explanations for Miss Smith constructing the cache.

⁹ DVD produced on the stumpwork casket at Sudeley Castle. Presented by Helen McCrook, Researcher: Gaye Dopson.

1.6.3 Chapter 4: A study of provincial life: the middle classes in Victorian England:

Using Miss Smith as a case study, this chapter sets out the social and cultural background of a middle-class single woman living in a provincial town in the second half of the nineteenth century. It defines what constituted a middle-class family, what sort of home they lived in, what they did both inside and outside that home. It explores factors and community life in her early years which may have been influences as well as family and other associations and includes a biographical history of her brother, William Borthwick Smith; an engineer and entrepreneur in a period which saw England as the world leader in the market place. Overall it aims to gain an insight into a real life and what that actually felt like, but at the same time keeping this in relation to aspects of the cache.

1.6.4 Chapter 5: Conclusion:

This chapter summarises each area of the research, evaluates the methodology and structure of the thesis and the results. It identifies further research potential and future opportunities for the cache.

1.6.5 Volume 2: The inventory:

In order to begin to understand and interpret the significance of the discovery it was important to gain a thorough knowledge of the contents of the cache and this prompted the formation of the inventory which now forms volume 2 of the thesis. The inventory provides a comprehensive written and pictorial record of each item found in the cache and details of this and the methodology employed are given below in section 1.7.1. This inventory will form the MSA and, in addition to providing detailed information on each item found in the cache, it constitutes a useful and unusual primary source for researchers and historians and as such offers a valuable repository for scholars; the interest for a person working with textiles is mainly the way the fabrics had been 'stored' and found, but they are also quite rare objects because of their ordinariness.

Due to the magnitude of the archive – over four hundred records – entries are mainly restricted to just one side of A4 which necessitates the size of the

images to be kept relatively small. To retain the required definition of the images in order for them to be meaningful volume 2 is provided in a digital format.

1.7 Research methodology

The development of the inventory (volume 2) provided the starting point for the research and therefore will be discussed first. It has been key in the organisation and analysis of the materials and provides a basis which, combined with literature, enables possible/probable scenarios to be suggested with some degree of credibility. The inventory involved systematic documentation, both written and photographic, and the methodology used is identified below in section 1.7.1.

Owing to the multi-disciplinary nature of this study, the research has encompassed a range of mixed methods and takes an inclusive approach as listed below and detailed in section 1.7.2.

Archaeological/detective recording: retrieving the artefacts from the cache, recording and analysing.

Historical method: historiography of social history and material culture: literature which records people's memories, experiences and opinions: diaries: discussions with local historians and people with an extensive knowledge of textiles and dress history.

Contemporary textiles: backstitch methodology providing the process of reflection.

Analysis of published sources: Analysis of published sources including books, journals, published articles, research papers, the media, and other PhD research relating to traditional upholstery techniques.

Scholarly method: University of Southampton MA Museums and Galleries/ Textile Conservation module.

Archival: a substantial amount of work was carried out which entailed visiting established archives, accessing on-line repositories as well as researching the most appropriate archival system for the cache, followed by the creation of the system for cataloguing the cache.

1.7.1 The inventory

The production of volume 2 is the culmination of the documentation process and was a lengthy procedure. It provides the foundation for the research, and accordingly the thesis, but it is also designed to be a stand-alone document providing an accurate and detailed record of the cache thus preserving it in a written and photographic form. The creation of the inventory has been key, enabling the analysis and organisation of the materials and thus allowing informed speculation to be made about the purpose of some of the contents of the cache. The contents of the cache are primary historical material and the dismantling of the cache has parallels with an archaeological dig.

The following sub-sections describe in detail the methods involved in managing the artefacts, setting-up the inventory and formulating methods for analysis. The design of the inventory was based on acknowledged standards of practice for cataloguing collections.¹⁰

Archaeological/detective recording

With archaeological digs it is acknowledged that ‘archaeology is destruction’¹¹ and it is recognised that whatever is being excavated is very often almost completely destroyed in the process. For this reason detailed site recording systems are in place to ensure that the site is preserved albeit through a collection of written and photographic records including drawings and scale

¹⁰ These included guidance given by the Museums and Galleries Commission, the Collections Trust Spectrum system and examples of cataloguing methods used for on-line archives including *Deliberately Concealed Garments* (<http://www.concealedgarments.org>), *Pockets of History* (<http://www.vads.ac.uk/collections/POCKETS>), the *High Wycombe Furniture Archive* (<http://www.hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk>), and the VADS (Visual Arts Data Service) image collection (<http://vads.ac.uk/collections>).

¹¹ Excavation recording (undated), Oxford University for Continuing Education.

plans. One benefit of archaeological digs is that, mostly, they are planned projects and therefore there is an expectation, or hope at least, of finding something. There is a general awareness of material buried underground with links to the past and consequently an understanding of the way such excavations should proceed. With the chaise cache there was no known such precedent and so the find was totally unexpected with the consequence that, as acknowledged in chapter 2 (section 2.2), some information has been lost. Although some notes were made and photographs taken, a comparison with archaeological excavation guidelines highlights the failings (but also the successes) in the approach taken with the cache. Archaeological excavation recording employs numbering systems, not only to identify finds but to enable different records to link together, thus providing enough information on the relationships between location, materials and finds which would allow a reconstruction if required. Whilst detailed examination of materials takes place following a dig and interpretations made, it is stressed that these interpretations are subjective and may well be reviewed in the future, whereas the records made on site are irreplaceable which is why they aim to record as much information as possible and to be as accurate as possible. This methodology operates along similar lines to detective work and has parallels with police investigations¹² where the thorough examination of the scene of an incident, identifying and preserving evidence and record keeping is paramount to ensure that valuable information is not lost. A diagram for the police *Process of Investigation* is included in appendix 1, as well as a drawing outlining excavation recording for an archaeological dig, and the development of the cache archive followed a very similar process as outlined below.

With archaeological digs universal systems are employed with guidelines stressing that recording is key and everything is important.¹³ The guidelines emphasise that items should be recorded in the order they are first seen; whilst

¹² College of Policing, *Managing Investigations* document referring to the Criminal and Investigations Act 1996 Code of Practice under Part 2 which details standard method, investigative actions and investigative strategies (<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/introduction/>).

¹³ Christopher John Baumber, trustee Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and statutory consultee for Council of British Archaeology.

acknowledging that they may not be in true chronological order and their relevance may only be realised later. An example of this methodology is shown in an Oxford University document for recording archaeological digs¹⁴ and their diagram for excavation recording is attached as appendix 1, but fundamentally the set procedure is as follows -

- photographic record
- written notes
- analysis of finds
- writing-up
- archive/publication

Photography plays a key role in this recording process with the guidelines stating that every aspect should be photographed three times (and on three different cameras – colour slide film for lecturing purposes, black and white film for future publication purposes and for the archive, and digital for immediate viewing and loading on to the database) pre-excavation, half-sectioned and post-excavation. This is an area where the chaise cache is very poorly recorded; only digital photographs were taken, many of inferior quality due to the inadequate lighting conditions, and nowhere near enough pictures taken. Moreover, digital cameras were in their infancy and the quality of images has improved considerably and rapidly in the decade since the discovery of the cache. On archaeological digs the location of finds is deemed more important even than the finds themselves because it provides a context on which to assess dating and interpretation. With the chaise cache, the location of most of the pieces had to be done in retrospect by perusal of the photographs taken as so few notes were made at the time of discovery.

Any finds on archaeological digs are divided into two categories: 'bulk finds' and 'small finds'. The category of bulk finds covers items that frequently occur on excavations, such as animal bones, clay-pipes and pottery. Whilst pottery can reveal a lot of information it has been in common use for most periods and is found in such large quantities that for practicality it is normally not classed as a small find. Items are classed as small finds if they can be dated fairly

¹⁴ Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (2007) *Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project: Excavation recording*. Oxford University: Kellog College.

accurately or if they can reveal specific details about the lifestyle or culture of the occupants of the site being excavated. For this reason the clothing in the chaise cache would be classed as 'small finds' and as such is interpreted in chapter 2 (section 2.6) which focusses on the small finds category of artefacts, elaborating on the lifestyle and culture with which they would have been associated and detailing the historical background. The textiles which form the bulk of the cache are informative in many ways but are less easy to interpret or date and therefore would be classed as 'bulk finds'. An account of the discovery of the cache and the manner in which the find was handled is recorded in chapter 2.

The creation of the archive provides a comprehensive record of all the items found in the cache in addition to offering a primary source of material for historians and researchers as proposed in the introduction to chapter 2 (section 2.0). The artefacts have all been photographed, categorized and given a unique number and the referencing system is explained below. Where individual items are specifically identified in the thesis the corresponding archive reference number is given in brackets.

In creating this archive one of the first decisions to be made was the method of recording the information in the most effective way whilst adhering to current standards for archiving this type of material and reference was made to procedures followed by specialist practitioners in the field of textiles as detailed above. Following an initial survey of the stuffing contents it was estimated there were several hundred items to be categorised and inevitably textiles formed the bulk of the contents, but within this group many of the pieces had obviously previously been part of a garment. The initial intention was to separate everything into five categories – clothing, garment pieces, textiles, people, ephemera - but as work progressed the archive devolved into just three – clothing (C.), textiles (T.) and ephemera (E.) - as this simplified the categorisation and avoided unfounded speculation. The selection criteria are explained below.

- Clothing (16 items)

The intention was to include only complete garments in this category, or ones that were sufficiently intact to be able to be identified as something specific.

This section has remained and probably has the most impact visually.

- Garment pieces

Initial investigation unearthed many pieces that had apparently been garments of some sort in a previous existence. However, as the sorting continued it became clear that the vast majority of the textiles had had previous uses and it was difficult to know where to draw the line between garment pieces and 'just' textiles. It was therefore decided not to have this as a separate group, so items such as the silk dress sleeve (C.09) have been included in the 'Clothing' section because it is immediately recognisable as part of an item of clothing, whereas the neckband or collar of a garment (T.74) was not so complete or decipherable so became part of the 'Textiles' group. Observations are made on individual inventory sheets where items show significant signs of what they might have been.

- Textiles (c. 800 items)

This is by far the largest group totalling eight hundred pieces made up of 400 different textiles. Originally it was intended to separate this category into upholstery and clothing material, but there was less of a distinction in the 19th century than there is now and as many of the pieces could have been used for either purpose the decision was made not to sub-divide but to give as much specific information as possible on each entry.

- People

Items which clearly stated a name would have formed this section; of which there are only four – brown wrapping paper showing the name and details of the store *Burgis and Colbourne*, General Providers (now ref. MSA E.02), address label fixed to it with Miss Smith's name and address (E.02), draper's sample (Alfred Baker, E.03) and the hand-made paper inscribed 'Baileys....' (E.10). As with the other categories, it was considered preferable to have fewer sections containing more items, so the 'People' section has been included in 'Ephemera'.

- Ephemera (10 objects)

This is for 'everything else' and includes samples of the bundles made for the stuffing (E.04 and E.05), a cluster of feathers (E.07) which could have been a hat decoration, and cotton bags (E.01 and E.06) which held other items which appeared to have special significance – such as the address label. This section also includes two items which, technically speaking, do not form part of the cache – a page from a newspaper dated November 12, 1909 (E.08) and an advertisement for a stove (E.09). These two artefacts were found under the floorboards in the house where Miss Smith was living between 1889 and 1919 when evidence suggests the cache was created, and covers the date of the newspaper, so it seems relevant to record and include them.

Having initially surveyed the artefacts, three options were considered for managing the inventory following discussions on data management with experts¹⁵ in various computer packages. The first trialled was a spreadsheet system, Microsoft Office *Excel*, for its ability to visualize data and analyse information, but this package could not handle the large number of photographs efficiently, slowing the system down to an unacceptable speed, and so was deemed unsuitable.

The next consideration was to use a relational database. This would allow detailed analysis of data which could be manipulated in relation to other files and could be presented in various formats – text, graphs, tables, charts. An additional benefit of this route would be the lack of repetitive inputting necessary which could lead to discrepancies. However, one drawback was that, at the time, these databases took an enormous amount of work to set up which was considered disproportionate to any advantages.¹⁶ After some deliberation it was felt that the archive would not benefit from such a sophisticated process at this stage although it may be a useful tool to consider if any further analytical work is undertaken in a future project. After some trials

¹⁵ Dr L Chatworthy, Textile Conservation Centre, Dr C Warren, University of Southampton, E Garofalo, Bucks New University.

¹⁶ With technological advances in the interim period this would be a fairly straightforward process now.

and critical assessment the conclusion was that a flat word processing file would adequately store and present the data. Microsoft *Word* is such a package in which documents are easy to create and edit and importing photographs is fairly straightforward. It had the additional benefit that I was already familiar with the system.

Following this decision a template was devised using Microsoft *Word*. In order to identify current cataloguing formats and fields being used reference has been made to a number of existing archives.¹⁷ Initially it was intended to show dimensions in the inventory in imperial measurements, as this would be contemporary to the objects and the period in which they were hidden. However current practice, in most cases, is to use metric measurements, English measurements being used only when they are the standard measuring convention for a particular object, and so in order to conform to this standard it was decided to show metric measurements. Overall this method of recording seems to give a clear account of the artefacts found and is a simple and straightforward system to work with.

During the cataloguing process each item has been identified and details noted such as type of yarn, weave, colour, pattern and any other interesting features. Guidance and assistance with material identification and dating was given by specialist textile professionals.¹⁸ As far as possible the items have been sifted and ordered to create a logical structure to the inventory but because of the large number and variety of the items this was sometimes necessarily subjective. This work took place over a two year period working on batches of twenty to thirty items at a time.

¹⁷ These included the Constance Howard Resource (<http://www.vads.ac.uk/collections/CHM.html>) in addition to those included in Footnote 10 above.

¹⁸ Mrs Karina Thomas MA (RCA), BA(Hons) Senior Lecturer, The Faculty of Design, Media & Management, School of Arts & Creative Industries, Department of Art & Design, Bucks New University was the specialist authority for the bulk of the textile identification process. Additional assessments were given by staff at the Textile Conservation Centre, the V&A Museum and members of DATS.

Once this stage was complete a large seminar room was booked for a week to enable all the artefacts to be laid out together in order to ensure consistency in



Fig.2

The images above show a stage in the categorisation process – selecting textiles for use as standards for colour, texture and finish. For example, all colours referred to as ‘mid-brown’ should correspond to each other.

the descriptions. A control group of samples was selected for use as colour standards for both neutrals and dark colours (fig.2), similarly for finishing treatments applied to some of the fabrics, and criterion set for descriptions of condition. A glossary of terms used is given at the beginning of volume 2 along with reports relating to conservation work carried out on some of the clothing (vol. 2, appendix 1).

Use of images:

Whilst photographic documentation in the early stages of discovering the cache was not thorough, the process for recording the cache for archival purposes has been rigorous. The images of the textiles are essential not only for identification purposes but also to support the written descriptions and to preserve a visual representation of every item. Each artefact from the cache has been photographed from the face side and, in some instances, both sides of the object have been photographed where there are interesting features on the reverse. Close-up images have also been taken when appropriate to record details such as trimmings, patches and darns – examples of which are shown in fig.3 below.



Fig.3

These close-up images show a patch repair (face and reverse side, left and centre images) and the application of a decorative trim to a cuff (right).

The guidelines for archaeological digs identify the need for rigorous recording and these have proved to be a useful benchmark, albeit with hindsight, in the creation of the MSA. The process of detailed written and photographic records, analysing and writing-up for archives and/or publication has been followed in the creation of the inventory. The contents of the cache are primary evidence of a life lived and through the analysis and organisation of the materials can be used to aid interpretation of the past. The creation of the inventory is the groundwork which underpins this research and provides a permanent detailed written and photographic record to preserve the details of the find. The inventory is also designed to be a stand-alone document which could provide a resource for dress and textile historians, the particular value of which is the rarity of the items and the fact that they can be located to a specific person and a specific place.

1.7.2 The thesis

Established disciplines have frameworks for data collection and analysis and this research has drawn from a range of fields, using mixed methods and adopting relevant guidelines from different methodologies where appropriate.

Historical method

There is inevitably an element of speculation in this research but the work has been carried out with rigorous inquiry and supported by a wide range of literature and archival work. In his book *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875*

Professor Best uses historical methodology¹⁹ with the aim of writing the history of society through traces left behind by people and things by those who have left behind little in the way of written documentation. He uses literature to 'produce plausible generalisations and judgements' on areas that would otherwise remain ill-defined (Best, 1979, p.14). Whilst using Miss Smith as a case study strident claims are not being made that she would have behaved in a certain way, or lived in a certain way, but by using the primary material evidence, combined with a wide-range of available literature including, on occasion, mid-Victorian novels, it is possible to make 'plausible generalisations' regarding certain aspects of the life of a woman of Miss Smith's social standing.

Archaeologists develop narrative based on the material finds themselves creating object biographies including not only descriptions and classifications, but also potential material, social and symbolic meanings (Wylie and Chapman, 2015). The study of material culture has progressed from the study of museum exhibits to focus on everyday life as lived by ordinary people through their belongings, with the belief that this paints a more honest picture than studies based just on historical events and texts (Wylie and Chapman, 2015).

Narratives are personalised by oral histories, diaries and photographs. The DCGP conducted a series of interviews as part of an oral history programme to record the stories of people who had found deliberate concealments and also conservators who had carried out remedial work on the objects, and reference is made in the study to the reaction of some of these people along with diaries and photographs to support the research.²⁰

Practice led methodology - Contemporary textiles

Judy Attfield (2000) questioned why material possessions have become so important to us and suggested it may be due to a feeling that we are being overtaken by technology. She queried what the life of everyday objects can tell

¹⁹ Historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence, including the evidence of archaeology, to research and then to write histories in the form of accounts of the past.

²⁰ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/category/oral-history/>

us about the people who buy them and the lives they lead and wrote that the only way to undertake this line of enquiry is to 'adopt a style of tacking back and forth between rhetorical questions, theoretical devices, items taken from the personal minutia of everyday life, and illustrative case studies' (Attfield, 2000, p.xiii). A similar process is one used by artist and senior lecturer Danica Maier²¹ which she refers to as *back stitch* methodology. This developed as part of the Spode *Returns* project which is linked to a wider research project *Topographies of the Obsolete*.²² The concept is described by Maier as being like sewing where the forward movement is made by a series of looping returns and all the strands of the research are secured to a single starting point, tethered together by a single thread. She likens the forward movement of the thread, which is largely unseen beneath the fabric, to the way developmental research evolves – the thread is visible when it comes into the light but the backwards momentum provides a time of reflection. This type of methodology is relevant to this study which has a central theme of the practice of concealment which links the different strands of the research. During the Spode project, Maier focussed on the enormous quantity of decorative transfers which were produced in bulk but have now been abandoned. She observes that they can no longer be used for their original purpose and that they now inhabit an interesting space where they are simultaneously valuable and worthless which is the same position as the contents of the cache. On the one hand they are worthless because they are generally fairly utilitarian, worn-out rags. Their interest and value lies in the fact that they have survived.

Analysis of published sources

The process of the search ranged from books, journals, diaries, published articles, research papers, the media, and other PhD research relating to deliberate concealments, myth and ritual, material culture, social and local history.

In order to demonstrate that this upholstery was a deliberate concealment chapter 2 compares and contrasts traditional upholstery practices with those

²¹ Senior Lecturer, Fine Art Department, Nottingham Trent University.

²² <http://topographies.khib.no/>

employed by Miss Smith and published manuals on upholstery techniques were used to corroborate this along with other PhD research²³ and books and journals on furniture history.

Scholarly method

The Textile Conservation Centre,²⁴ which was part of the University of Southampton, offered a Masters programme for Museums and Galleries and Textile Conservation, to which I was invited to participate. The Handbook outlined the module thus:

The unit explores both the material and symbolic properties of objects in order to analyse why artefacts matter. You will have the opportunity to consider the implications of collecting and categorising objects ... Concepts from material culture are introduced as 'working tools' for interdisciplinary research by those involved in preserving and interpreting objects.

This module brought together students from related disciplines aimed at wide-ranging interdisciplinary discussions and debate and provided an excellent foundation for the work with the cache and the opportunity to explore future options for its life history. Furthermore, two research projects led by members of the TCC – the *DCGP* and *Pockets of History* – had particular relevance to my research and I was able to benefit from the advice of the project leaders and their interest in my subject.

The V&A Museum holds monthly 'Opinions Days' when specialists are available to offer an opinion on items taken to the museum and these were utilised several times for advice on some of the items of clothing and textiles from the cache.

²³ Brewer, P. J. (2001) *An investigation into significant developments in period upholstery practice – with special reference to the nineteenth century and illustrated by provenance examples*. PhD thesis, Brunel University.

²⁴ This is now known as the Centre for Textile Conservation and is part of the University of Glasgow.

Archival research

In recent years the Geffrye Museum has re-evaluated a number of their period rooms to ensure that everything on display is an accurate representation.²⁵ They did this by researching archives such as wills, probate records and inventories to establish exactly what furniture and possessions would have been owned by a middling-class family in London in a particular period. The social history element of this research was approached from the perspective of a particular type of person, using Miss Smith as the case study, and the information sought was specific to the person, class and town, but all the time being alert to the connection with the practice of concealment and material culture and this section has involved a process of archival research which is in line with that used by the Geffrye Museum. To identify the person believed to be responsible for creating the cache (Miss Smith) government, county and local archives have been utilised gathering information from sources including census returns, wills and probate records, street directories and local papers. The available census returns cover the period 1841 – 1911 but earlier records are accessible via Parish records, many of them now on-line. In this respect the Warwickshire records are well serviced, but Worcestershire, Miss Smith's birthplace, less so. The local Leamington street directories, and local paper, record the movements only of the middle-classes and above so the inclusion of the Smith family confirms their status in that social group.

The digital archives VADS,²⁶ VAM and the National Trust contain thousands of images of clothing and these were accessed for identification and comparison purposes for the items of clothing from the cache.

²⁵ The programme involved the curation and re-display of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century galleries and was led by Eleanor John, Head of Collections and Exhibitions at the Geffrye Museum in collaboration with furniture historian Adam Bowett. For example, evidence was sought to establish the date at which a middle-class person would have owned a clock, or would have had curtains (and, if so, the fabric they would have been made from) and until proof was found the items were not included in the displays.

²⁶ The *Pockets of History* project is preserved on the VADS website and includes the pocket from Miss Smith's cache.

Windows on Warwickshire (WoW) is a project which aims to promote Warwickshire's heritage by providing access to historic collections. The project web site contains over 10,000 items in digital format which includes, amongst other things, thousands of old photographs and rare documents. The project worked in partnership with local museums and collection holders, libraries, archives and art galleries to establish this resource and this has been extensively searched for relevant information and images particularly for chapter 4, the study of provincial life. Other local sources of information include the Leamington Spa Museum and the Leamington Local History Society. These resources have been reinforced by books on local history.

1.8 Literature review

1.8.1 Outline

The literature review brings together some of the written texts relevant to this research and highlights the scope of the thesis. Published sources were identified both for background knowledge in each of the areas being researched and also for more detailed specialisms and in this latter respect journal articles, exhibition literature and conference papers were particularly useful. Whilst there is an element of overlap each chapter has a particular area of focus and these themes are reviewed below, drawing together the different strands of the research.

1.8.2 Review

One of the main aims of this research is to try to gain a detailed knowledge of the daily life of a provincial, middle-class, single woman in the second half of the nineteenth century using Miss Smith and her family as a case study and combined with the artefacts found in the cache. The nineteenth century was a period of enormous change, particularly for women, and the subject of gender has provoked a great deal of research. The focus of this thesis is on the practice of concealment and therefore it is not proposed to venture into further research on issues of femininity, but it has to be acknowledged that there is an element of gender in everything we do and Miss Smith was a woman living in

this period and inevitably her life would have been affected by the vortex of change. With the emergence of the middle classes there was a desire to separate the working environment from the domestic environment and this is reflected in the Smith family's move from Evesham – where home and work took place under the same roof – to Leamington where a change of occupation for Charles Smith enabled this separation. The role of women became that of 'chief beautifier of the domestic environment' (Sparke, 1995, p.16) and what became known as the 'Cult of Domesticity' brought together all the components necessary to provide a 'moral framework for the family' (Sparke, 1995, p.23) and which ensured an appropriate social standing. Women increasingly took over the role of home-maker and with the emergence of department stores²⁷ they also entered the domain of 'consumer'. With technological advancements in manufacturing processes it was no longer practical for women to combine work with childcare but, in addition, the socio-political situation meant a potential loss of status for a middle-class woman involved in paid work outside the home.

Whilst the Victorian era has been extensively written about it is probably true to say that past research into *history* has been just that – a record of wars, rulers, the economy and major innovations but not experiences of ordinary people, with insights into daily life often coming from novels of the time. Probably the best well-known writer of the period, Charles Dickens, has been described as an observer of life and a social critic and his novels include references to morals and manners as well as customs and rituals which help to create an image of what life was really like. Dickens' literature in particular is almost social history by sleight of hand with small, descriptive comments highlighting customs and rituals.²⁸ George Eliot is another author of the period whose descriptive works add a human element to our understanding. Moreover, Eliot

²⁷ Such as Burgis and Colbourne in Leamington Spa which has been identified as a store where Miss Smith did some of her shopping by the inclusion of the address label in the cache (MSA E.02).

²⁸ An example of this comes from *A Christmas Carol* (1843) when Dickens described Mrs Cratchit (the wife of Bob Cratchit, a poorly paid clerk) wearing 'a twice-turned gown, but brave with ribbons' which highlighted the practice of the poor of re-making their gowns when they became shabby so that the inside, and less worn side, became the outside. Ribbons, too, could be bought cheaply to trim an otherwise plain outfit.

lived in Warwickshire which makes her narratives 'local' to the Smith family rather than being set in a city where the way of life would perhaps have been more formal.

When Miss Smith was born in 1848 the family were living in rural Evesham and at this time the agrarian community still numbered the largest part of the country's population but was changing rapidly as the industrial revolution progressed. Professor G E Mingay's (1990) study *Rural Life in Victorian England* describes the transition to an urban society and the challenges which had to be faced by the rural communities, gathering data from diaries, reports and letters of the time. As the numbers of people moving from rural areas to the towns rapidly increased one of the problems encountered was the provision of food. The increasing numbers of people living in the towns were reliant on the diminishing numbers remaining in the countryside for their food and this eventually became untenable, resulting in food having to be imported and the rural areas becoming almost invisible. This research extends Mingay's study and follows the Smith family as they moved to Leamington Spa, which was virtually a new town, with Miss Smith's father changing his occupation from baker to a proprietor of property.

More recently there has been an increasing interest in *social history* with the belief that this more closely reflects what life was really like in a given period. This has led me to the work of social historian John Burnett²⁹ who approached this subject from a new perspective, researching topics such as housing, diet and education and linking them to the more traditional methods of recording history. In his publication *Plenty and Want: a social history of diet in England from 1815* (1979), Burnett discusses the different aspects of people's lives – what they ate and drank, schooling, housing, what they spent their money on – and subsequently instigated a collection of oral histories of working people from the 1820s to the 1930s. What is particularly significant in *A Social History of Housing 1815 – 1985* (1986), is that Burnett's writing is specifically about the middle-classes and he defines what made a person middle-class, what sort of

²⁹ Professor of Social History at Brunel University from 1972 – 1990.

house they would have lived in and how they behaved. This has enabled a picture to be built-up of Miss Smith's social standing, combining Burnett's definitions with physical buildings and locations with a connection to the Smith family.

Probably one of the most respected and authoritative authors was the historian Asa Briggs who, amongst other appointments, was President of the Victorian Society for over thirty years. His 'trilogy' – *Victorian Cities* (1964), *Victorian People* (1970) and *Victorian Things* (2003) – provides an excellent framework on which to build this research, focusing on a fairly narrow timeframe – from 1851 to 1867 – when he claims there was a plateau between periods of upheaval and Victorian England found its social balance. Geoffrey Best's work *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75* (1987) adds to this data with information included on the environment – including public health, in particular water technology, and amenities – work and incomes, and education and religion.

Joining Burnett's focus on the middle-classes is academic Jane Hamlett (2016) who claims that if we study objects closely it is possible to learn not just about society in general but about the emotions of the people who used the objects. In *Material Relations* she discusses the domestic interiors of the middle-class home and also discusses death in the home (Hamlett, 2016) something that Miss Smith would have encountered several times. The above approach is one taken by Judith Flanders (2003) in *The Victorian House*, which uses a combination of diaries and letters, advice books, magazines and paintings to provide domestic details in relation to social history. Each chapter concentrates on a particular room in the house with details of what it contained, how it was laid out and an account of daily life as it occurred in that room. This methodology provides another slant on which to build on the context of the contents of the cache and an understanding of the behaviours of the inhabitants of a middle-class home.

To gain an insight into what Leamington was like during this period key texts have been *Royal Leamington Spa: A century's growth and development* by H G Clarke (1947) who focussed on the growth and development of the town between 1800 and 1900, and Lyndon Cave (1988) whose *Royal Leamington Spa: Its history and development* builds on a publication written by T B Dudley

in 1896. Cave's book aimed to give a full account of the origins and development of the town using a combination of official records and plans and a meticulous diary kept by one of the large landowners from 1805 to 1826; much of this information would not have been available to Dudley. A particularly informative source on the local history of Leamington and the daily life of a middle-class family comes from the reproduction of a diary written by Adelaide Pountney *The diary of a Victorian lady* (1998). Pountney was a (deceased) clergyman's daughter the same age as Miss Smith's brother and living in Leamington Spa. The diary covers the period 1864 to 1865 and records her day-to-day life such as walking to the butchers to buy a fowl and her sister having her hair brushed by a machine. Perhaps naturally, it tends not to explain or elaborate on situations, presumably because it was just written for herself so didn't require full descriptions. However, what makes this volume particularly useful is the fact that Pountney has drawn detailed little sketches for each day, thus providing a visual record of fashions, rooms and furniture and the vicinity in which she (and the Smith family) lived and, unlike the often stiff and posed photographs of the time, the drawings appear to provide a natural and authentic record. In fact, close scrutiny of the drawings probably provides more information than the writing. Interestingly, when apparently important occurrences happen, for instance the death of her brother,³⁰ she doesn't record the event in writing – merely writing (in French) that all the world had called but she didn't see anyone because she was having dinner - and leaves her drawings to tell the story. A second pertinent publication is *Passages from the English Notebooks* written by Nathaniel Hawthorne³¹ (Woodson and Ellis [eds.], 1997) with several entries recording stays in Leamington. He reports on a visit to Coventry by train,³² how long the journey took and going to the *Red Lion* where he had luncheon of cold lamb and cold pigeon-pie. Hawthorne expresses the view that there is a better variety of food available when ordering

³⁰ Confirmation of his death was found in the Death indexes held at the National Archives.

³¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne was the American Consul in Liverpool between 1853–1857, but remained in England until 1859.

³² Miss Smith's brother lived and worked in Coventry for a number of years, as did her cousin Margaret Janette Ryley and family, so it is very possible that Miss Smith also took the train to Coventry on many occasions.

luncheon in an English hotel than if it were a dinner, and also half the cost. He describes the town which he obviously didn't find as enchanting as Leamington due to its narrow streets and overhanging houses. On one of Hawthorne's visits to Leamington he gives details of his train journey from Liverpool and how they went about renting lodgings on arrival and other such details. For Hawthorne the English way of life seemed to be a novel experience, prompting him to make detailed notes on what would have been routine matters for an English person, and thus supplying additional information on Miss Smith's environment and potentially her way of life.

Whilst much has been written about social history, conversely the practice of concealment has not been well documented and, apart from Ralph Merrifield's seminal work which explores ritual and symbolism from an archaeologists point of view (Merrifield, 1987), this thesis draws from previous research projects - in particular the DCGP which records details of deliberate concealments, and publications associated with exhibitions³³ to gain an understanding of this phenomenon.

This section sets out to address the practice of concealment and subsequently the value and meaning we attach to our possessions. The reason why so little has been written about this phenomenon could be due to the air of secrecy that surrounds this practice and a fear that any disturbance or publicity might revoke any protective powers the concealment might have; a suggestion made by archaeologist Ralph Merrifield (Merrifield, 1987). Merrifield also believed that archaeologists are reluctant to acknowledge the possibility of activities which show no obvious signs of material purpose, often preferring to account for these finds as accidental losses. Merrifield's professional background was in museum archaeology and his authoritative book *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* explored different kinds of practices involving ritual, superstition and magic and sought evidence of these customs. His research found that simple rituals have been practiced for centuries with very little change which he believed was due to a perceived sense of protection afforded by them and

³³ In particular, *Quilts* at the V&A, *The Fabric of Myth* at Compton Verney and *Threads of Feeling and Found* at the Foundling Museum.

argued that they have survived because they fulfil deep human needs (Merrifield, 1987).

Merrifield wrote that one of the principal reasons for his book was to highlight common patterns of ritual activity to enable easier recognition of this practice by archaeologists. He acknowledged that his research had asked more questions than it had provided answers and maintained that much more research was needed, emphasising the necessity for fully recording and publicising any examples encountered so that comparisons can be made with similar finds. He maintained that until a pattern emerged through the evaluation of several instances a custom could not be confirmed (Merrifield, 1987) and whilst no records have been found relating to ritualistic practices/deliberate concealments contained within the upholstery on furniture this research presents documentation for any future discoveries and provides a benchmark.

The lack of reporting, and therefore literature, on the subject may be that people, on finding a concealment, either don't realise the significance of what they have found or don't know where to report it and one enthusiast, Brian Hoggard, who has been researching the history of folk magic since the 1990s has established a website to encourage interest in the subject.³⁴ On a professional level, the *Deliberately Concealed Garments Project* (DCGP) was set up in 1998 at the Textile Conservation Centre (TCC) with one of the objectives being to try to address this lack of reporting and offering an explanation on such matters as what a deliberate concealment is and what to do if one is found.³⁵ The main aims of the project were textile and conservation related as summarised:

- to advance conservation techniques and practices in order to sensitively preserve such finds
- to use the garments to learn more about textile and dress history and folk traditions

³⁴ Brian Hoggard, www.apotropaios.co.uk

³⁵ The project was set-up and led by Dinah Eastop, Senior Lecturer at the Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton.

- to raise awareness of this folk practice and to encourage any finds to be reported and documented.³⁶

Furthermore, the Masters programme run by the TCC for both Museums and Galleries and Textile Conservation professionals included a unit on *Interpreting and Representing Objects* with sessions covering such topics as the DCGP, *Object Biographies* and *Material Culture in Action*; the wide-ranging weekly reading list mainly comprised journal articles and conference postprints relating to these topics. Through participating in this module I was able to associate with specialists from these areas which provided both an introduction to their fields of practice and also prompted some interesting and informative dialogues with the cohorts.

The DCGP has relevance to, and has influenced, this research and moreover some of the items of clothing from the cache were conserved by students at the TCC. From a layman's point of view the DCGP offers interesting details of concealments, promotes awareness of the practice and encourages reporting of any finds. However, it has not addressed the personal or social context of deliberate concealments in any depth, hence this study aims to add to the work initiated by the DCGP and will:

- explore what the artefacts can reveal about the way they were used and the life of the person who concealed them
- establish a relationship between different forms of concealment
- reinforce the hypothesis that there is a link between concealment and ritual and that it fulfils a basic human need
- explore material culture and the meaning attributed to our possessions at different stages of their lives
- research the family history of the person believed to be responsible for creating the cache and combine this with local and social history relating to a study of provincial life and the middle-classes in Victorian England.

A forerunner of the DCGP is the Concealed Shoe Index held at Northampton Museum which was started by curator June Swann in 1959. Swann, like

³⁶ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/information/>

Merrifield, acknowledges the lack of information surrounding the ritual and practice of concealments. Whilst working in the museum she slowly came to the realisation that the number of shoes which had been found in highly unusual places within buildings, and were being taken into the museum for identification, was more than a coincidence and probably due to a superstition or ritual that she had previously been unaware of. The register records each find with as much detail as possible, including the location where it was found and if anything else had been hidden with the shoe but it does not try to interpret the items or the behaviours associated with this practice.

An area of research which has been increasingly creating interest in recent times is that of material culture and leading exponents of this genre include Daniel Miller and Judy Attfield with the historian John Styles bridging the gap between the fields of history and material culture. Anthropologist Daniel Miller has led several research projects relating to artefacts and the meaning of things – the concept of material culture, which is a primary objective of this thesis - and has published extensively on the subject. In his publication *Stuff* (2010) he argues that ‘things’ have a close connection with our identity relating not only to who we think we are but also the way we are seen, or wish to be seen, by others. He puts forward the view that things take on a different meaning for different people, we order things to give meaning to our lives, but we in turn are ordered by things; they are the way we make sense of our lives. Miller’s ‘micro-ethnographic’ study of thirty people living in a London street, *The Comfort of Things* (2008), considered the psychology associated with the relationship that we have with our possessions and explores not only how people express themselves through the things that really matter to them - their possessions - but also how objects are used to create ‘themselves’; the person who is presented to the outside world.

There is an argument that artefacts provide a way in which the past can be directly re-experienced with our senses and is a way of exploring historical beliefs. Furthermore there is a recurring hypothesis that artefacts have a lineage and that placing objects into ‘the context of related activities and behaviours’ we can begin to read what they are telling us (Lubar and Kingery, 1993, p.xvi). Art historian Jules David Prown summarises this suggestion by saying that ‘artefacts are historical evidence’ (Prown in Lubar and Kingery,

1973, p.3) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's essay complements Prown's by focussing on why people want and need things to objectify the self, organize the mind, and demonstrate power (Csikszentmihalyi in Lubar and Kingery, 1993).

In *The cultures of collecting* (Elsner and Cardinal, 1994) the psychology of the urge to collect, to classify, to arrange and to display objects is explored and it is proposed that gathering and collecting things is instinctive behaviour (Windsor³⁷ in Elsner and Cardinal, 1994) and the Sir John Soane museum in London and the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford are two well-known examples of this compulsion being put into practice. Both of these collections are the result of a person's perhaps obsessive collecting behaviour which offers a glimpse into a previous world.

In her book *Wild Things* (2000), Judy Attfield drew from a range of fields: from social history, anthropology and archaeology to sociology, geography, psychoanalysis and general cultural studies in order to explore what *things* actually mean to us in the context of everyday life. She considered that the broad range of academics involved with studies related to material culture confirmed the enthusiasm for this field of study and conceded that whilst the focus of her work was on objects her research was really about 'how people make sense of the world through physical objects' (Attfield, 2000, p.1). She maintained that:

Clothing and textiles have a particularly intimate quality because they lie next to the skin and inhabit the spaces of private life helping to negotiate the inner self and the outside world (Attfield, 2000, p.121).

The styles of clothing in the chaise span several decades and include items which would have been worn by a child, by a woman and by a man, and would appear to be a collection of Miss Smith's most personal memories. In relation to this Attfield (2000) suggested that many people keep items of clothing long after they have served any practical purpose because they are imbued with memories of the person who wore them, and the memories transform an object from a commodity to a personal possession. This concept was also addressed by John Styles in *Threads of feeling* (2010) when describing the tokens left by

³⁷ Interview with Robert Opie, 3 August 1993.

mothers whose babies had been accepted by the Foundling Hospital. He describes them as 'beautiful, mundane and moving scraps of fabric' (Styles, 2010, p.6) and says that many of the mothers were probably illiterate and the only way they could express their deepest, most loving feelings was through the use of cloth. Other examples of cloth being used to tell a story featured in an exhibition at Compton Verney in 2008, *The fabric of myth* and two of the exhibits were particularly relevant to this research: the first was a presentation cape created by a Brazilian man, Bispo Do Rosário who spent most of his life in mental institutions. This had been created using any materials he could lay his hands on, including threads from his blanket, to tell the story of his life; a memento mori (chapter 3, section 3.2.3.2) (Young in Compton Verney, 2008). The second item had been created by artist Leonid Tishkov and featured a swaddling suit which had been crocheted from textiles unravelled from garments connected to his family's past. Tishkov is from the Urals which has a tradition of making rugs using worn-out textiles in memory of deceased family members, and these are also believed to have protective properties. Tishkov's piece echoes this practice (Harrison in Compton Verney, 2008).

By presupposing that objects lead social lives Arjun Appadurai in his text *The social lives of things* (1986) examines the value and meaning that people attribute to things from how they are used and re-used. In the same volume Igor Kopytoff makes the point that commodities 'can usefully be regarded as having life histories' although the commodity is neither one thing nor another but rather a phase in its life (Kopytoff in Appadurai, 1986, p.64). The items forming the cache had nearly all had previous lives such as underwear, clothing, furnishings and curtains. As the majority of the pieces were such small samples it may be that they were used as a representation of something, or someone. It is interesting to consider that in their first life they were probably on display in some way; the net curtains for instance would be hanging at the window and in sight of the inhabitants of the room as well as passers-by in the street. At some stage they were hidden away under the top cover of the chaise, then buried even deeper on two occasions when new top covers were placed directly over the first one.

Edmund de Waal maintains that stories are a kind of thing just as much as artefacts because they share a characteristic – which is a patina. He suggests

that 'perhaps patina is a process of rubbing back so that the essential is revealed' (de Waal, 2011, p.349) but adds that objects also gain something through years and years of handling. *The hare with amber eyes* is the story of de Waal's mission to discover the biography of a collection of 264 netsuke which he had inherited from a great-uncle – 'a very big collection of very small objects' (de Waal, p.10). He worried that he would never get beyond an inventory of his uncle's apartment but what he really wanted to find out was where the netsuke had been, who had handled them, what they had seen, and he wanted to be able to feel the environment they had lived in. He writes that there are so many netsuke that you can never be sure that you have seen them all but they all live together in their vitrine and 'that is the point ... they are a complete world' (de Waal, 2011, p.170).

Alexander Masters is the author of *A life discarded: 148 diaries found in a skip* (2016). When he decided to write a biography about a person whose diaries had been found thrown away in a skip he was asked what would happen if the person turned out to be 'just an ordinary person'. His response was that that would be 'the best result' (Masters, 2016). What made her so interesting was the fact that she was so ordinary, she could be nobody or anybody and this was how Miss Smith appeared to be, even with her name.

1.8.3 Summary

This literature review brings together some key texts which have informed and underpinned the research for this study. In surveying books and journals associated with furniture and furniture restoration there were no specific references to caches being hidden within the upholstery materials of chairs although there is limited information on purpose-made secret compartments in wooden furniture and this is expanded upon in chapter 3 (section 3.1.1). There were however instances where textiles had been used to tell a story through the use of imagery and symbolism both for personal and political reasons. The Sudeley Castle stumpwork casket is a particularly fine example which incorporates this type of hidden history and was created at a time of great political upheaval. Through the use of extensive symbolism it identifies the maker as a supporter of the Restoration of the monarchy (see section 3.2.3.1) and the creator has left her mark by including (probably) her initials in the work.

Whilst relatively small, this casket also contains seven secret drawers capable of hiding papers or other small items. This study also researched the practice of concealment within the fabric of buildings. Merrifield (1987) wrote about the history of such concealments from an archaeological point of view, suggesting a link with ritual practices which he believed fulfilled basic human needs. The DCGP moved the focus from the foundations of buildings to record instances of caches, mainly clothing, which had been deliberately concealed within the structure of buildings and there are parallels with this research in the types of clothing used. Whilst the above undertakings explore the practice of concealment what they fail to do is shed light upon the context of the items in their original life and the meaning that we attribute to things and this research aims to do that. Similarly, whilst Daniel Miller et al consider the biography of things and the meaning we attach to them, their work does not incorporate the practice of concealment.

There is an abundance of published works on history but John Burnett looked at the lives of ordinary people, researching the fundamental needs of everyday life including housing, diet and class structure. More recently authors such as Jane Hamlett and Judith Flanders have taken a step inside the houses of the nineteenth-century middle-classes to investigate the furniture, fittings and other possessions and to explore how each of the rooms were used.

This research explores methods of interpreting objects in order to make connections with human history and investigates a middle class provincial life through Miss Smith. The study combines the disciplines of the practice of concealment, material culture and social history which previously have been mainly independent of each other. The thesis is positioned in the fields of textile and furniture upholstery history and attempts to contribute to the fields of material culture and social history by exploring new knowledge surrounding the practice of concealment and its association with ritual and symbolism.

1.9 PhD submission contents

This thesis comprises of 2 sections –

Volume 1

The main text sets out to research the practice of concealment and explores methods of interpreting objects in order to make connections with human history. It functions as an explanation and contextualisation of the cache of artefacts discovered in the back of a chaise longue and takes a broad-brush approach to try to offer a new viewpoint which has value for future researchers and historians interested in material culture and the social history of the middle classes. The two volumes are complementary and should be read in conjunction with each other: volume 2, the archive, provides a detailed record of the physical attributes of the contents of the cache whereas volume 1 offers supplementary information on the social life of the objects.

Volume 2

The creation of the archive has been integral to developing an analytical framework and to facilitate greater understanding of the practice of concealment, material culture and social history.

It functions as a reference point in support of the main text and it also enables anyone who had not seen the cache in situ to gain an understanding of the way in which it had been used to form the stuffing. Furthermore it serves as a repository for textile and dress historians and provides a primary resource for potential further research work. In order to retain the quality of the images volume 2 is provided in digital format.

2. The cache

Every circle has its centre. To describe a circle one must choose a given point, and radiate thence at equal distances. (Cummins, 1864)³⁸

2.0 Introduction

The unearthing of the cache in the chaise longue, as described in the introduction, was the beginning of this research and the cache is the given point, the centre from which the research radiates. The first purpose of this chapter is to argue that this was indeed a deliberate concealment rather than just an economical way to reupholster a piece of furniture. It begins by describing the discovery of the cache (section 2.2) and gives an explanation of the way in which the find was handled; because the cache was completely dismantled in order to prepare the chaise frame for restoration, a description of the process provides a record of the contents and is a way of preserving the find.

Museum archaeologist Ralph Merrifield acknowledges that with archaeological digs much useful information is lost purely because the finder failed to recognise instances of ritual activity; dismissing the finds as the result of an accident or assuming a rational explanation (Merrifield, 1987). The same could be said of this find and, with hindsight, a much more rigorous record could have been made of the findings but, as with some archaeological digs, the significance of what had been uncovered was not immediately obvious.

A further aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the manner in which the chaise longue had been upholstered was highly unusual and that the work was unlikely to have been carried out by a professional upholsterer, not least because it would have been extremely time-consuming. This is significant because there would have been reasons why the person who upholstered the piece chose the unconventional methods he/she did and these need to be

³⁸ Maria Cummings (1827-1866) popular American novelist, known to be a favourite with some young ladies in Leamington Spa at the time (see chapter 4).

considered; this also raises the question of who did the work and why they used such an unusual process. A comparison between traditional practices in upholstery and the upholstery method used for containing the cache is set out in sections 2.3 and 2.4 in order to highlight the differences in technique. Why the work was carried out in this way, and the cache created, is explored further in chapter 3 which aims to uncover practices of concealment in different forms (section 3.1) and combine that knowledge with research on the values and meanings we attach to possessions (section 3.2). This cache is special because of the way in which it was hidden, which appears to be unique, and as such offers an opportunity to combine different elements of research to explore the phenomenon: the practice of concealment, material culture and social history.

From the perspective of textile researchers and historians³⁹ part of the value of the objects contained in the cache lies in their everyday and used nature. As with most objects, the best quality examples are the ones which are most commonly retained – such as high-status silks and fine embroidery and less-worn garments - and this is very much in evidence when viewing collections at institutions such as the V&A Museum in London and National Trust collections. The fabrics in the cache, with some exceptions, are mostly fairly unexceptional quality. They have been used extensively in their original form, they have been darned and patched. Generally, in the period being researched, once fabrics were past their useful life they would eventually have been used for purposes such as cleaning cloths and then finally thrown away, so there are very few examples of every-day textiles still in existence. The fact that they are so ordinary and were not thrown away is what makes them special.⁴⁰ In addition, the way in which the items were hidden does give them another layer of interest and the fact that they can be linked to a specific person and locality is also significant in terms of dress history.⁴¹ Some of the items in the cache would

³⁹ Conversations with senior lecturers at the Textile Conservation Centre/Textile Conservation Foundation and members of the Dress and Textiles Specialists (DATS).

⁴⁰ This observation about the rarity of 'everyday' textiles being retained has also been noted by historian John Styles in connection with the tokens retained by the Foundling Museum.

⁴¹ Professor Frances Lennard, Senior Lecturer in Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow.

have been used as dress trimmings⁴² and these types of accessories are particularly of interest as it tends to be main garments that survive, so they are valuable on lots of different levels that historians interested in these areas would be pleased to be able to access them, whether that is virtually or in reality.⁴³

Furthermore, as previously stated above, the cache acts as a catalyst for this research and the thesis aims to show that the contents offer an opportunity to understand the practice and habits of a provincial, single woman in the nineteenth-century and a selection of the artefacts found will be used to illustrate this way of life.

2.1 Dating the Chaise Longue

The shape of the chaise as a whole indicates that it was made not in the last part of the 19th century; a late chaise will basically have a rectangular shape with a round end, this chaise still has some shaping to the rails suggesting an earlier date. The good shape to the leg, with a proper carved cabriole, and the delicate carving rather than the plainer, cheaper, more simplified carving seen on the later pieces makes the leg look William IV which usually suggests a date of manufacture of around 1835-40. The main feature though is the carved arms. Cheaper and later work was simplified as mentioned above, however this chaise has a very good sweeping arm with elaborate shaping and all this suggests a date of about 1845 onwards to 1855. This could however have been made before that date or after if someone was continuing to make an earlier style of furniture in a town or workshop that wanted to stay with the old fashion, but a reasonable estimate would be that it was made around 1850.

If a date of c.1850 is accepted as a reasonable estimate of the manufacture of the chaise longue, it would be pertinent to question whether this piece of furniture was likely to have been purchased new by Miss Smith's family. The

⁴² Items such as a lace shawl dress trimming (MSA C.11), a decorative tie (MSA C.13), a pair of cuffs (MSA C.16) and a decorative tab or epaulet (MSA T.78).

⁴³ These claims were validated during discussions with Professor Frances Lennard, Senior Lecturer in Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow.

answer is 'possibly not' and this query is addressed further in chapter 4 (section 4.6) which situates the chaise in its identified home and offers an explanation as to why it might have needed to undergo a complete restoration after a relatively short lifespan.

2.2 The Discovery of the Cache

The commission to restore the chaise was undertaken in 2003/2004 as a final year project of a furniture restoration course. The stripping and preparatory work commenced during the summer holidays to ensure that no time was wasted once university reconvened in the autumn and the restoration work could start immediately. There was therefore a deadline and, in addition, the chaise belonged to a hairdresser and was being stored in a room over his shop so work, which was to take place in situ due to the size of the piece, could only be carried out during shop hours meaning that access to the work was limited. If a piece of upholstery is basically sound it is not unusual to find that a new top cover has been applied over the existing upholstery⁴⁴ - it is a relatively quick and inexpensive way to revive a chair - and this is what had happened to this piece – twice. Traditional upholstery evolved from the squabs and cushions which had been used in seating since the Middle Ages but it was not until the late 16th century that true upholstered furniture came into existence (Edwards, 2000). As upholstery methods developed, horsehair was acknowledged as the ideal material for traditional upholstery fillings because of its natural spring and resilience (Palmer, 1984); alternatives such as straw, grass and alva (seaweed) make quite a firm seat but have the disadvantage that they break down and go very hard, so are not as comfortable or durable as hair (Palmer, 1984). A description of the traditional method of upholstery for an iron-backed chair or chaise longue is given below in section 2.3.

Removal of upholstery from an old piece of furniture reveals years of dust and dirt but the discovery of a cache of artefacts, used as an alternative stuffing to

⁴⁴ This practice is acknowledged by professional upholsterers such as David James, university tutor and published author of numerous books on upholstery techniques, and Giles Bray who tutored the Rural Apprenticeship scheme in traditional upholstery in Hereford and runs his own upholstery business in Gloucestershire.

horsehair, was totally unexpected and the upholstery process adopted by Miss Smith (or whoever carried out this work) and subsequent restoration work is detailed in section 2.4. No other historically cited examples of this form of stuffing have been found and this is what leads to the claim that this example could be unique.⁴⁵

Roger Cardinal writes that 'to stumble upon a secret ... is to be propelled into a state of moral agitation' (Cardinal in Grayson et al, 2006). The initial sensation on discovering the cache was a frisson of shock followed by a feeling that perhaps the items shouldn't really be touched or removed;⁴⁶ this was tempered by the necessity to have the frame stripped in a short space of time.

Interspersed with these thoughts was an uncertainty about the correct way to proceed and not knowing where to seek advice⁴⁷ but through necessity work continued with just a small section of the stuffing left in place for the return to university. The full significance of the find was not immediately obvious, certainly not until a number of the bundles had been unwrapped and, in addition, time was limited so it is perhaps remarkable that the contents were not consigned to the bin without much thought or at best put aside until later. However, despite time being limited the contents exuded an element of intrigue which prompted a temporary diversion from the task in hand to further investigation. With hindsight much more attention should have been paid to the bundles: certainly they should have been counted, maybe each one measured, photographed and recorded individually, many more photographs could have been taken, but at the time the main focus was to complete the preparatory work within a given time frame. In addition, to add to the defence of a less than thorough recording system, there was no natural daylight in the work area so the conditions were not conducive for photography. Besides it was not immediately obvious that there was enough material or information for a

⁴⁵ This has been corroborated by respected furniture historian Professor Bernard Cotton who has discussed the project with other eminent furniture professionals. The consensus is that this is likely to be a one-off occurrence and there are no other known examples.

⁴⁶ Good practice in conservation and restoration work is not to do anything which is not reversible and to retain as much as possible of the original piece.

⁴⁷ Because it was the summer holidays it seemed inappropriate to contact the tutor; although in fact, with hindsight, he would have been hugely interested to see it at that stage.

research project; initially it just looked like a mass of miscellaneous, very dusty, very worn pieces of material with a few garments included. The label with the name and address was in fact one of the last items found and at that point came the realisation that an in-depth investigation might be possible, albeit the person identified was called by the ubiquitous name of Smith. In retrospect the lack of a more thorough approach to recording the artefacts as found is regrettable but in mitigation it appears that it is not uncommon for 'discoverers' to be unaware of the importance or implications of what they have found. An instance of this naivety is reported by Robinson (2012) citing the practice of archaeologists who found canopic jars in ancient Egyptian tombs simply discarding the contents (actually the internal organs of the mummified pharaohs) and just keeping the pots. Merrifield (1987) also acknowledges this failing when connected to archaeological digs. In particular he suggests that evidence of ritual activity is frequently overlooked; mainly because the artefacts are often discovered by casual finders, rather than archaeologists, who just view the objects as interesting rather than attaching any significance to them (Merrifield, 1987, p.184). He also feels that opportunities are sometimes lost because archaeologists haven't questioned what they have discovered at the time when it might be possible for further research to shed light on any ritual or symbolism attached to the objects; there have been instances recorded when the significance of artefacts has been overlooked simply because they dated from a different period (sometimes much earlier) than the one the archaeologists were expecting to find.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Conversation with C R Baumber, Trustee of Wiltshire Museum (Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society) and Chairman of Buildings and Monuments Committee for listed buildings and monuments.

The cache comprised sixteen items of Victorian clothing, ten items of ephemera and over eight hundred pieces of textiles which had been folded, wound and bound into hand-sized bundles (see fig.4). Eventually just two bundles were retained intact: one made up of plain dark coloured textiles⁴⁹ and the second from a variety of patterned fabrics,⁵⁰ all the others were unwound. The

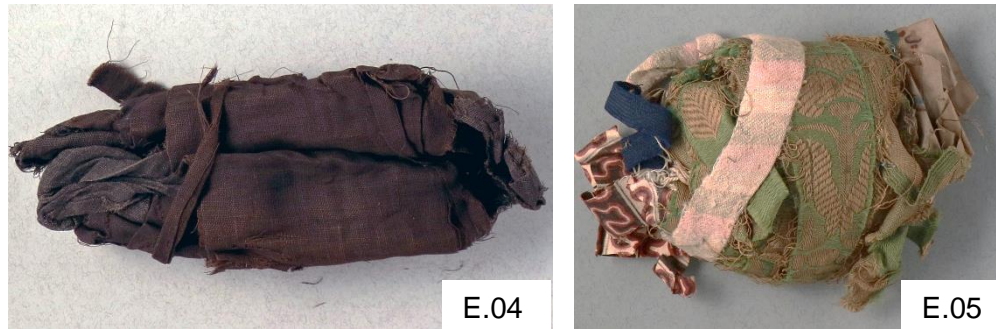


Fig.4

The stuffing in the chaise was formed of hand-sized bundles of textiles, wound tightly together and bound with strips of fabric.

discovery of the cache was extraordinary and exciting but also raised concerns about the ethics of disturbing the contents and the creation of an inventory goes some way towards addressing this issue (see Chapter 1, Introduction, section 1.7.1). There is a dilemma faced by people who discover deliberate concealments during conservation/restoration work in buildings: should the contents be left undisturbed, if removed, should they return the contents to their original hiding place, will it disturb 'spirits' if they don't, are the contents sacred, should they add to the concealment, should they remove them completely, should they substitute the findings with something else? This topic is acknowledged by the *Deliberately Concealed Garments in Buildings* project (DCGP)⁵¹ and is explored more fully in chapter 3 (section 3.1.4) of this thesis.

⁴⁹ Details included in the Miss Smith Archive (MSA), reference MSA E.04.

⁵⁰ Details included in the Miss Smith Archive (MSA), reference MSA E.05.

⁵¹ <http://www.concealedgarments.org> The Deliberately Concealed Garments Project was instigated to encourage people to report finds of deliberately concealed garments in order

The majority of the textiles in the cache are in fairly small pieces and had been wrapped tightly into hand-sized bundles then bound around with another strip of fabric to hold them in place. These had then been lashed on to the metal frame of the chaise back (figs.27-37). What is surprising is that out of around eight hundred pieces of fabric there are very few duplicates and this could be significant in establishing the reasoning behind the creation of the cache; nearly all the textiles show signs of considerable wear, so if this form of stuffing had been used purely as a measure of economy (re-using worn-out garments) one would have expected all the fabric from, say, a skirt to be utilised; because of the relatively small sizes included it seems as though the pieces were just used as samples or perhaps mementoes. To highlight this: the archive entry MSA T.68.1 comprises twelve scraps of fabric which appear to be brand new, unused off-cuts and some so small one would normally have thrown them away. The



Fig.5

MSA T.68.1 and T.68.2 – a comparison of the same fabric: on the bottom is a new off-cut and above it is the remains of a garment/pocket which has obviously had a great deal of wear.

fabric is a cotton lawn, a dark ecru colour with a delicate small purple floral and leaf design. Item T.68.2 includes six pieces of ecru coloured cotton lawn fabric, very well-worn with signs of repairs and with little evidence of a design. The pieces have all been lined, there is a combination of hand and machine

that the items can be documented and to raise awareness and develop a better understanding of this phenomenon.

stitching, and they seem to have been part of a garment; one of the pieces is pocket shaped. It is only on close inspection of the internal seams that it can be seen that it is in fact the same fabric as T.68.1 but so faded that the design has virtually disappeared from the outside (fig.5). This seems to suggest that this was a home-made, maybe much loved dress which had been worn to destruction; the scraps were maybe kept in case patches were required at some stage, but were finally reunited with the garment remnants in the cache.

There are nearly four hundred different materials contained in the cache – some patterned, some plain, different yarns and different weaves and finishes, some furnishing fabrics and some which have obviously been part of a garment. A few pieces look like unused off-cuts (as with T.68.1 above) but the majority appear to have been well used in their previous life – most of them show signs of considerable wear and many of them have darns and patches. Interestingly, rather than the items being cut into smaller pieces for the bundles, the seams have been unpicked which would have been both time-consuming and laborious. Fig.6 below shows the pile of newly unwound bundles and illustrates the abundance of the find.



Fig.6
The textiles from the cache

The clothing in the cache dates from around 1840 to 1900;⁵² nothing seems to be later than 1900 and so one can surmise that this is approximately when the restoration work on the chaise was carried out. As stated in section 2.1 above,

⁵² For example, the style of the dress sleeve (MSA C.09) indicates a date of c.1840 as does a furnishing weight damask (MSA T.15) whilst the men's collars (MSA C.06 and C.07) appear to be later and date from c. 1890.

the chaise itself dates from around 1850 and a small piece of red chenille under a tack on the frame suggests that this was the original top cover (fig.38 below (inset) section 2.3). Top covers last around 30 years but the internal (traditional) upholstery should last a lot longer.⁵³ The original stuffing would almost certainly have been horsehair – which although plentiful in the 19th century has never been cheap, never wears out and is routinely re-used/re-cycled by upholsterers – and far easier and quicker to use as stuffing than winding and attaching countless little bundles. This raises the question of why anyone would throw away a valuable commodity and replace it with worn scraps of material; a suggestion could be that perhaps they had sentimental value.

To return to the chaise, the seat frame had undergone some fairly extensive and inappropriate repairs in the past, most probably in the 1980s when the beige-coloured velvet top fabric was applied. The back rail had been replaced with a straight piece of rough construction timber (rather than being fashioned to reflect the serpentine-shaped front rail) and both ends had been replaced with 'D'-shaped pieces of block board, all nailed together with six inch nails. The original front rail remained but was in very poor condition due to pest infestation and rot. This meant that very little of the original seat upholstery materials remained and the stuffing materials had been replaced with woodchip shavings and foam. It could be speculated that the seat might also have contained a cache similar to the back which could possibly have offered further clues or an explanation for the reason for the concealment, or the person behind it, but unfortunately any such evidence, if it existed, had previously been destroyed.

2.3 Traditional Practices in Upholstery

In practical terms traditional upholstery is a layered structure built up of several different materials, using many different techniques and producing a finished result that is both durable and repairable. Upholstered seats made their first

⁵³ I have worked on good quality pieces from the early 18th century which have only required minimal repair, mostly just a bit of extra stuffing, or sometimes a small repair to the linen scrim.

appearance in the early 17th century during the reign of James I and, as styles developed, influences included politics,⁵⁴ the economy,⁵⁵ available materials,⁵⁶ and fashion⁵⁷ (Hayward, 1924).

Between 1845 and 1875 fashionable seating became curvaceous and heavily stuffed; the style evolving from the development of springing in the 1840s and also the technique of deep-buttoning (Aslin, 1962). The practice of buttoning, or tufting, extended towards the end of the eighteenth century and had a three-fold purpose: to hold the stuffing in place, as a means of attaching and moulding fabrics to shaped surfaces and as a decorative element (James, 1999). Strong and dark colours were also in fashion in this period (Thornton, 1984). However, by the late 1880s deep-buttoning was going out of fashion along with the dark colours and whilst seating continued to be well-stuffed, lighter colours and designs in the *Aesthetic* style were favoured (Thornton, 1984). Interestingly, when new the chaise appears to have had a strong, dark coloured top fabric (MSA T.01) whereas when it was re-upholstered c. 1900 the top fabric used was light coloured (beige with a paisley design) (MSA T.02) and it did not appear to have been buttoned at that time.

An important innovation during this period was the use of a metal frame (referred to as an iron-back) for upholstery in order to achieve complex curves which are problematical when using curved pieces of wood due to the inherent weakness of the end-grain sections. With the emphasis on comfort the iron back chair was very successful in that respect and Miss Smith's chaise was an example of this type of furniture. This form of construction was first introduced during the mid-Victorian era (James, 1999) and employed horizontal iron rods which could be bent in a sweep to form the outline. These rods were held in

⁵⁴ An example of this is the Cromwellian period which was a time of austerity and furniture at that time was generally plain and simple.

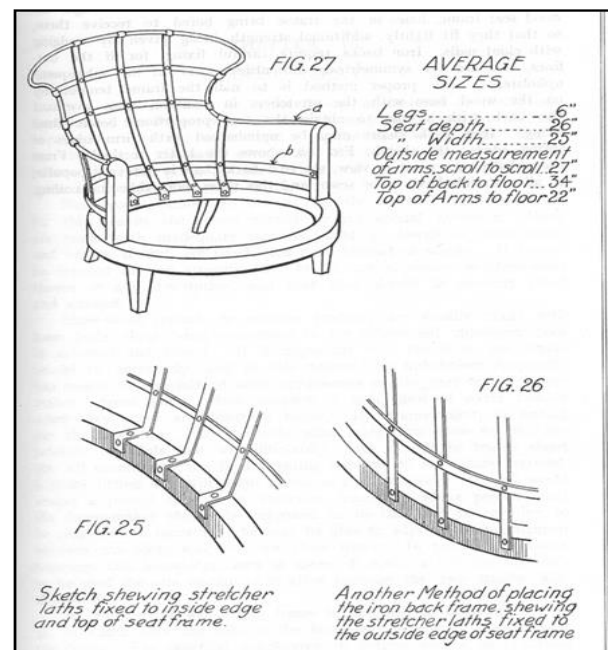
⁵⁵ Hand carving is an expensive process and virtually disappeared from furniture at the time of the depression in the 1930s.

⁵⁶ Oak was the predominant wood used for furniture in England until voyages of discovery introduced tropical woods, such as mahogany, and enabled it to be imported.

⁵⁷ With the huge farthingale style of dress in the early 17th century it would have been almost impossible for a lady to sit in a chair with arms and this prompted the fashion for chairs without arms.

place and supported by metal laths riveted together, the whole being screwed to the seat rails of the chair or chaise – see fig. 7 below. An advantage of this type of frame is that it has a strength and flexibility that heavier timber frames do not have (James, 1999) – offering the scope to be relatively delicate whilst still robust - and enables more complex, curved shapes to be formed (James, 1994). Additionally, it has a certain amount of ‘give’ in it and, when fully upholstered, fits the body shape very well. It also lent itself very well to Miss Smith’s inimitable style of upholstery.⁵⁸

Fig 7
Drawing showing the construction of
an iron-back chair frame.
(Howes, 1950)



⁵⁸ The grid-like structure of the metal frame provided a ready-made framework on which to attach the bundles. The procedure would have been far more difficult on a timber frame because of the lack of any interior supports.

The structure of the chaise longue which contained the cache was an iron-back and as part of the restoration process in 2004 it was re-upholstered using traditional methods and materials. The procedure used for the back is illustrated below (figs.8-18), followed by the 'cache' method in section 2.4 (figs. 19-39) to demonstrate the highly unusual nature of this method of stuffing.



← **Fig.8**

The bare frame of the chaise longue, having been stripped in preparation for re-upholstery.

A small section of the frame (top left) had been bound with linen scrim. This appears to have been left from its first (professional) upholstery c. 1850. This was left in place and for the restoration process the whole of the top and bottom laths were bound with strips of hessian. This provides protection for the tarpaulin (figs.9 and 10) from the metal edges of the frame.



← **Fig.9**

The inside of the frame was covered with tarpaulin (a 15 oz heavy-weight hessian) stretched tightly and attached to the main parts of the frame with diagonal stitches (see fig.17). The tarpaulin provides support for the stuffing.



← **Fig.10**

A blanket stitch was used to attach the tarpaulin to the top and bottom rails of the frame. The areas along the arms were tacked to hold them in place.



← **Fig.11**

Linen scrim was laid over the tarpaulin. Areas for lumbar support and stuffing around the edges were marked, then the scrim stitched down over the lines marked. These areas were then stuffed with horsehair, the scrim stretched over the stuffing and stitched into place. The stuffing was adjusted to create a smooth surface and rounded shape, then top stitched around the edge to hold in place.



← **Fig.12**

Positioning of buttons marked on the inside back using large pins. These positions were then transferred to the outside back and marked using a felt tip pen.



← **Fig.13**

Loops of twine (bridle stitches) were stitched in vertical lines. These hold the stuffing (horsehair) in place.



← **Fig.14**

Handfulls of horsehair packed under the bridle stitches evenly and systematically to provide a comfortable back.



← **Fig.15**

Arms covered with wadding prior to the top fabric and buttoning.



← **Fig.16**

Cotton felt (a soft cotton wadding) laid over the back to create a soft, smooth surface.



← **Fig.17**

Outside back showing diagonal stitches used to attach the tarpaulin to the frame.



← **Fig.18**

The chaise once restoration was complete. It was covered in a cream silky fabric and has now been returned to its owners and is in use once again.

The above images (figs. 8 – 18) offer a brief overview of the re-upholstery process for the chaise which was carried out using traditional skills and techniques. The original name for the upholsterer was ‘upholder’ and the scope of the role encompassed areas including interior design, bed hangings, window and door drapes, wall and floor coverings and lining of coffins as well as the production of upholstered seating and supply of furniture.⁵⁹ Nowadays the role of the (traditional) upholsterer is mainly confined to the creation of upholstered seating and (occasionally) the silking of walls.⁶⁰ The name ‘upholsterer’ therefore had a different, perhaps wider, meaning than it does today.

Before the mid-nineteenth century the choice of domestic furnishings was part of a man’s role (Forty, 1986). However, from this time onwards women were increasingly involved in the decision-making for interior decorations but their role would have been confined to their own homes rather than paid employment and this type of work (upholstery) would have been undertaken by men.⁶¹ Sparke (1995) writes that from mid-century onwards middle-class women devoted their time and energies to household matters but that the feminine involvement with décor led to the abundance of draperies, trimmings, ornamentation and bric-a-brac which became synonymous with Victorian homes and the masculine culture of the time viewed this ‘feminisation’ of the home as ‘bad taste’. As a result numerous advice books were published⁶² (albeit many of them written by women) offering guidance/instruction on interior decoration and general domestic issues in order to maintain ‘good taste’. It is well documented that women were expected to be able to sew; not only for repairing household linens and other articles and making items of clothing but also, for the most affluent women, embroidery was seen as an important accomplishment. Whilst the guidance manuals cover a wide range of subjects

⁵⁹ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/g/goods-and-services-provided-by-the-upholsterer/>

⁶⁰ For instance, in the Royal Household where wall fabric requires replacing the work is carried out by the Chief Upholsterer.

⁶¹ It is interesting to note that, in the 21st-century, there appears to be a higher proportion of men working as professional upholsterers than women. Conversely, there are numerous ‘leisure’ classes on offer which attract mainly women participants.

⁶² For example, Eastlake (1869), Orrinsmith (1878), Panton (1893) and Wharton and Codman (1897) were some of the most influential manuals.

none of them appear to include instructions for re-upholstering furniture which implies that this was a job carried out on a commercial level, and therefore by men, and not something which would be attempted at home: furthermore, the upholstery process requires the furniture to be moved and turned-over at various stages and this can be heavy, physical work particularly if the seating is a large piece and especially if it contains springs. In employment there would be no need for manuals as the craftsmen would learn on the job, most probably through serving an apprenticeship. The first publication found which provided step-by-step instructions for upholstery was written by Frederick Palmer in 1921, entitled *Practical upholstery and the cutting of loose covers*, and whilst many more have been written, particularly in recent years, this instruction book remains a favourite and is regarded as the 'upholsterers' bible'. Perusal of photographs of the period show only men doing this sort of work and where women are featured⁶³ they are making seat cushions and other tasks associated with soft furnishings. Reference is made in chapter 4 to a neighbour of Miss Smith (Mrs Garrett) who was referred to in an 1889 street directory as an upholsteress and whilst she may have been able to give Miss Smith some guidance on re-upholstering her chaise longue, her job would probably have been that of a soft furnisher; making curtains, bedcovers, cushions etc.⁶⁴

The method used by Miss Smith to re-upholster the chaise would have been too time-consuming to be undertaken as a commercial job and, in addition, it would certainly have been buttoned if the work was carried out by a professional upholsterer. The process which utilised and contained the cache is shown in the images below (figs. 19 – 39).

⁶³ For instance the High Wycombe Furniture Archive shows women working in the Ercol factory in the 1960s making seat cushions. (<http://hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk/asset-bank/action/viewHome>)

⁶⁴ In the Royal Household workshops the person responsible for soft furnishings (curtains, fitted covers etc.) is known as the Lady Upholsteress.

2.4 The Upholstery Process used for Containing the Cache

The following section highlights the markedly different 'cache' process of upholstery and demonstrates the highly unusual nature of this method of upholstery compared to the traditional methods detailed above in section 2.3.



← **Fig.19**

The chaise when it was first received for restoration - covered in beige velvet and (too) heavily buttoned. No lumbar support had been created and this, together with the buttoning design, suggests that the upholstery was not carried out by a professional upholsterer. This probably dates from the 1980s.



← **Fig.20**

This shows the outside back once the top fabric had been removed. The hessian had degraded, revealing glimpses of the textiles used for the stuffing – the traditional stuffing material for a piece of furniture of this age would have been horsehair so this is a very unusual practice.



← **Fig.21**

Underneath the top cover was a layer of foam – used to create a soft, smooth surface. This is typical of post 1960 (James, 1999).



← **Fig.22**

Underneath the foam was a previous top fabric – a gold coloured velvet. This had been heavily buttoned and had provided the buttoning design for the later covering (Fig. 19). This fabric dates from the 1960s and there is evidence that at this time the show wood had been painted white.

Following the removal of this top fabric an extraordinary cache was revealed



← **Fig.23**

The wadding used under the gold velvet was rag flock - a poor quality material which goes hard and flat in use. It is made from rags which have gone through a felting process.



← **Fig.24**

Some waddings, such as rag flock, have a paper backing to support the material in handling. This would normally be removed once in place on the furniture but in this case it had been left on the chaise with the wadding.



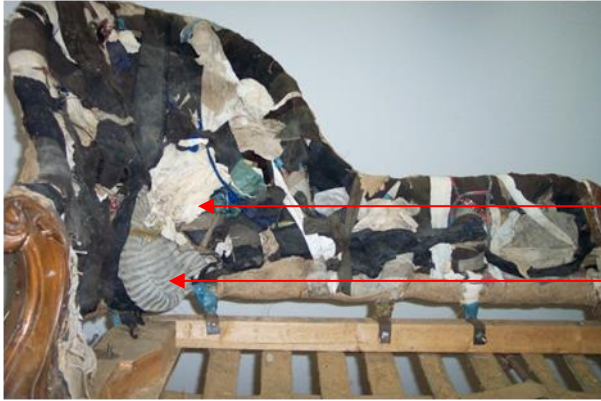
← **Fig.25**

The top fabric covering the cache. It is a cotton plain weave printed with a paisley design (MSA T.02). The chaise does not appear to have been buttoned on this occasion (see section 2.3) which is an indication that this was not the work of a professional upholsterer.



← **Fig.26**

Close-up view of the fabric. (MSA T.02) The material was heavily stained which suggested that the chaise may have been stored in damp conditions prior to its re-covering in the 1960s.



← **Fig.27**

The stuffing in the inside back when first uncovered.

a lace cap (MSA C.01)

a bustle made from crinoline fabric (MSA C.02)



← **Fig.28**

Another view of the inside back illustrating how the textiles were tightly packed and lashed on to the frame.



← **Fig.29**

Close-up view of the stuffing.



← **Fig.30**

Close-up of the right hand side of the inside back



← **Fig.31**

The iron frame had been abundantly bound with a glazed cotton material and net curtains before the bundles were lashed on to it.



← **Fig.32**

Close-up view of the inside back edge once some of the bundles had been removed.



← **Fig.33**

Close-up of the chair section of the back.



← **Fig.34**

This shows the frame once most of the bundles had been removed.



← **Fig.35**

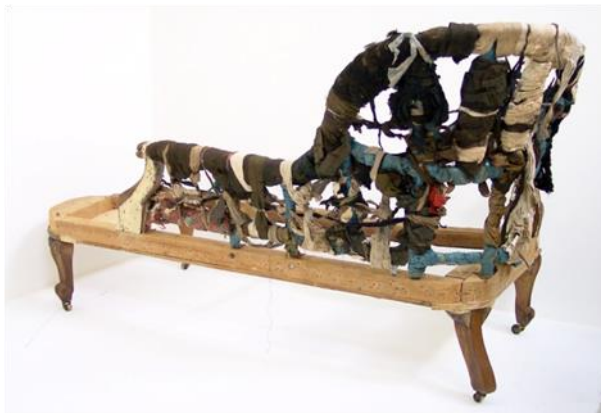
The binding on the back of the frame.

Close-up of the collars (MSA C.06 and C.07) bound to the frame with a fine printed cotton fabric (MSA T.81).



← **Fig.36**

The outside back, bound with blue glazed cotton (T.396.1).



← **Fig.37**

The outside back with most of the bundles removed.



← **Fig.38**

Linen scrim binding a section of the iron frame (T.87). This appears to be part of the original upholstery process when the chaise was made c. 1850. This was left in place for the restoration.

A small piece of crimson chenille was found under a tack on the frame which was probably the original top cover (MSA T.01 shown larger than actual size).



Fig.39

Every piece of the iron frame had been bound with strips of glazed cotton.

Normally just the top and bottom rails would be covered to protect the tarpaulin when it is stretched around the frame. There is no benefit in binding the rest of the frame.

During Queen Victoria's reign there was probably as much furniture made as in all previous English history (Joy, 1962). As a consequence there is still a plentiful supply with many examples, both restored and awaiting restoration, to be found in places such as antique centres, at auction and at fairs – and in people's lofts and sheds. Frequently the unrestored chairs retain their original internal upholstery, 100–150 years later, although they have often had new top covers applied over the years. Depending on use and quality of material, top covers last around thirty years whereas the internal upholstery could remain perfectly serviceable for a hundred years or more; for example, in the Royal Household workshops instances of 18th century seating have been found where the internal upholstery is still in perfect condition or just needing minimal restoration. Apart from the beneficial properties of horsehair as a filling material, outlined in section 2.2, this form of stuffing has the additional advantage that it never wears out and can be reused time and again. Animal hair can be washed, if necessary, but generally the upholsterer would just put it through a carding machine, which is a mechanical process that removes the dust and disentangles the fibres, to revitalize it. Although the supply of horsehair was plentiful until the 20th century, it has always been a fairly expensive commodity and it is common practice to recycle it.

To summarise, the back of the chaise longue was almost certainly originally stuffed with horsehair and is unlikely to have required complete restoration after only fifty years since its construction. In the interests of economy and recycling a professional upholsterer would re-use the existing stuffing materials wherever possible. To stuff a piece of furniture using traditional methods requires sewing bridle stitches (see figure 13 above) under each of which handfuls of hair are inserted. To use the 'Miss Smith' method would have prolonged the task enormously. Whilst handling and sorting all the textiles, after deconstructing the cache, I was acutely aware that the last time they were touched was by Miss Smith, but to unwrap a bundle takes a fraction of the time it would have taken to form it in the first place. The bundles were very neatly shaped, which would suggest that care had been taken in their formation: making the bundles would have been time-consuming and (perhaps) tedious work, in addition to requiring an abundant supply of materials. Each bundle was made up of several small pieces of fabric which have been tightly, and neatly, wound round each other – rather like a ball of wool – and then held together with another strip of fabric which had been tied around the bundle. Fixing the bundles into place and creating a smooth shape and comfortable back would have been very difficult. Some of the items had been placed inside other receptacles (a black toddler's dress inside a sleeve protector being a prime example) which seems to indicate a great deal of thought went into the process.

To upholster an iron-frame chaise longue is not an easy task, especially for someone inexperienced in the techniques, and having given presentations describing the find at meetings of professional upholsterers⁶⁵ the consensus is that this was not the work of a professional upholsterer. Taking all these factors into account I think it is unlikely that the cache method of upholstery was carried out for financial reasons, or at least as the sole motive. It could be that this enigma was created purely as part of a therapeutic exercise; handling the fabrics, winding them together and moulding them into shape whilst musing on their history and past times remembered. It could be that it is constructing a

⁶⁵ The AGM of the Guild of Traditional Upholsterers (October 2012) and the AGM of the Association of Master Upholsterers (April 2013).

form of gossip, a narrative of a life lived⁶⁶ and in order to gain an insight into that life story some of the items of clothing used in the stuffing are studied in some detail in section 2.6. Other explanations for the motivation behind deliberate concealments are explored more fully in chapter 3 using examples of different forms of concealment as illustrations.

Interestingly, a modern day semblance to Miss Smith's work has been produced by artist Katarzyna Józefowicz. Her piece entitled *Games* (2001-03) is formed from hundreds of sheets of paper cut from magazines and newspapers which have been folded into small cubes then assembled into one



Fig.40

An installation by artist Katarzyna Józefowicz entitled *Games* (2001-03) which is formed from hundreds of sheets of paper cut from magazines and newspapers which have been folded into small cubes then assembled into one large sculpture in the exhibition space.
(Galeria Biala <http://biala.art.pl/1642/>)

⁶⁶ Furniture historian and ethnographer Professor Dr Bernard Cotton used this term (gossip) during a conversation about research he carried out in Newfoundland. He relates that there is a very strong Irish influence in the area with a background of fishing communities and boat builders. They brought with them imaginative alternatives to the traditional ways of making furniture. This furniture construction was not traditional, but not wrong – just different. Furniture from different areas are not uniform, in fact quite different but still within recognisable forms. These furniture designs have been interpreted by a Professor of Folklore as a linguistic form; constructing a form of gossip.

large sculpture in the exhibition space (fig.40 above). Grayson comments 'we become aware that we are experiencing only the residue of an extraordinary labour, a labour whose purpose we cannot quite comprehend despite the fact that the outcome is staring us in the face' (Grayson et al, 2006, p.15) and the patience required verges on the obsessive. Józefowicz maintains that the repetitive actions are therapeutic and have a calming effect. Nevertheless Grayson compares the method of working to the tradition of women's handwork, such as patchwork and embroidery. Likewise, Miss Smith must have had almost obsessive patience preparing all her bundles and when all the textiles are displayed together there is an awareness that the cache was the outcome of an extraordinary labour and it is 'a labour whose purpose we cannot quite comprehend despite the fact that the outcome is staring us in the face' (Grayson et al, 2006, p.15).

2.5 Analysis of the Inventory

Artefacts constitute the only class of historical events that occurred in the past but survive into the present. They can be re-experienced; they are authentic, primary historical material available for first-hand study. Artefacts are historical evidence (Prown in Lubar and Kingery, 1993, p.3).

Whilst conscious that the contents of the cache were historical evidence they lived the first few years after their discovery mixed-up together in bags and this behaviour is a trait shown by author Alexander Masters. Masters came into possession of 148 anonymous diaries which had been found jumbled-up in boxes in a skip and determined to write a biography of this unknown chronicler (Masters, 2016). His instinct was to keep the diaries as they had been found in the boxes, taking them out randomly to read one then putting it back into the original box. He felt that the way the diaries had been found captured something about the writer and that keeping them that way preserved something personal – although he didn't quite know what - and this feeling applied to the cache. Arbitrarily taking a textile out of a bag was interesting but there was no cohesion to the artefacts. Masters was eventually persuaded to arrange the diaries in a chronological order and, in doing so, he discovered that several years were missing, or not complete, and he found one book he had overlooked which had been written just a few days before they were thrown in the skip. This analogy also relates to the cache: there were many pieces I had

overlooked, even items of clothing, and these were not apparent until the sorting and categorisation process started for the archive.

There are 400 different textiles – seams have been unpicked and only relatively small pieces of most fabrics have been included, in many cases only one piece of each fabric. If these textiles were being used as an economical form of stuffing surely the whole article would have been included, or at least a substantial part of it; for example there is a sleeve from a mourning silk, very good quality, but nothing from the rest of the dress.

Seeing all the textiles from the cache on display at the same time during the categorisation process was an extraordinary sight and was probably the first time they had been displayed in that manner. It emphasised the abundance of the cache which is difficult to convey in words; ‘the explanation ... never quite fits the sight’ (Berger, 1972, p.7). With completion of the work to create an inventory each piece has been categorised, given a unique number, photographed, measured and details recorded on individual sheets as indicated in the methodology section in the introduction to the thesis (chapter 1, section 1.7.1).

Fig.41

A garment piece with button holes was found to match up with another section with buttons (MSA T.72)



The creation of the inventory was an educational process with small discoveries being made on a regular basis, for instance a garment piece with button holes was found to match up with another section with buttons (MSA T.72) (fig.41)

and another sample which, once disentangled, was identifiable as a vest or chemise (MSA C.14). Many of the pieces had been patched and darned several times; mostly neatly but not always, indicating that they had considerable wear prior to their use as stuffing material. The difference in quality of the repairs could suggest the involvement of different people, or may have been the same person taking more or less care. Some stitching remains intact but, curiously, where things have been disassembled the stitching has been unpicked rather than the pieces just being cut or torn apart and remnants of the thread remain in place in many instances. Many items are hand-stitched but machine stitching is also used, although sometimes the tension of the machine stitching is not set correctly.

Fig.42

Image showing tension test of machine stitching (MSA T.106)



The introduction of sewing machines for domestic use was c. 1860⁶⁷ so the machine(s) used on these pieces would have been amongst the first available and this is expanded on in chapter 4 (section 4.5). Interestingly two of the items (MSA T.105 and T.106) (T.106 shown in fig.42) are scraps of fabric which have been used to test the tension of the sewing machine. It is common practice to test the stitch tension in this way, particularly if a fabric to be sewn is especially fine or, conversely, bulky and is still used by sewing machine mechanics, even

⁶⁷ http://www.sewalot.com/sewing_machine_history.htm

in current times, when a machine has been serviced to check that it is sewing correctly but in this case it is possible that Miss Smith was using one of her brother's inventions and she may even have tested prototypes for him.

2.6 Putting the Cache into Context: The 'Small' Finds

2.6.0 Outline

This section looks at some of the contents of the cache more closely, putting them into the context of the period and considering their significance both to Miss Smith at the time of their concealment and also from the point of view of what they can tell us now. At this distance in time it cannot be stated categorically that all the items in the cache were personal possessions of Miss Smith, nor that she personally made the bundles and/or reupholstered the chaise. However this in no way diminishes the importance of the find and it can reasonably be assumed that she did have a personal connection with the chaise and the cache in some way because her name and address were included in the stuffing (MSA E.02 fig.1). Consequently, Miss Smith is being used as a case study, a person who is representative of a type – a middle-class, single woman residing in middle England during Victorian times and the artefacts are being used to tell that story.

As previously noted the cache is made up of a surprisingly eclectic mix. Garments have been unpicked and only relatively small samples of most of the textiles have been included in the stuffing. This suggests that those items which remained comparatively intact may have had particular significance for Miss Smith and that they were chosen for a reason. The *This is Design* exhibition at the Design Museum in 2011⁶⁸ claimed that our choice of objects (our possessions) helps to contribute to a sense of identity and is the way we define the image of who we are or how we would like to be seen. On a national and cultural level possessions portray an identity: the exhibition highlighted objects such as the red telephone box which became part of Britain's visual identity, the traditional Routemaster bus as being instantly associated with

⁶⁸ *This is Design*, September 2011.

London, and the Eiffel Tower as a symbol for Paris. Possessions specifically portray our identity on a personal level and the fact that the clothing in the cache spanned six decades suggests that they could be representative of different stages of a life.⁶⁹

Interestingly, the exhibition at the Design Museum also encompassed the subject of the lifecycle of commodities: products such as the typewriter,⁷⁰ for instance, were made to last a lifetime and it would have been hard to imagine that they would ever become virtually obsolete. Typewriters have, of course, been superseded by computers and iPhones which have a much shorter lifespan⁷¹ and whilst sustainability has become fashionable in more recent times it is not a new custom. The contents of the chaise demonstrate the reusability practiced during the nineteenth century with evidence of repairs and alterations to many of the pieces (the child's silk dress [C.05] appears to have been cut down from another garment for instance). The cache also contained two bustles – no longer everyday apparel although variations sometimes feature in designer cat-walk shows. The style of the larger bustle (C.02) would have been worn for around a decade: Miss Smith's garment was evidently very well used as it had been patched and darned. As fashions changed the smaller version (C.03) came into being but that lasted only a few years. It is interesting that both these garments remained intact, despite the fact that the hard internal structure would have made them more difficult to incorporate into the stuffing. Even though these items would never have been on view, in use they would have been essential to achieve the latest fashionable shape of dresses and skirts and indicate that the wearer was a follower of fashion to an extent.

⁶⁹ An ethnographic survey carried out by Daniel Miller (2010) included making an inventory of all the objects in the living room of an elderly woman (Dora). Miller likened these possessions to a résumé of her whole life; they were representative of significant relationships which included people, events and particular periods of her life. Miller writes that the number of objects we can realistically keep is limited and the objects which Dora had chosen to keep demonstrated a 'thrift of memory' – which was probably unintentional on Dora's part - which is a result of the way in which we manage our memories, retaining things which are the most meaningful (Miller, 2010, p.149).

⁷⁰ The first typewriter to be commercially successful was invented in 1868.

⁷¹ Personal experience has found they last only around two years.

This is Design maintained that whilst possessions define us, the language through which this is portrayed is design. Forty (1986) corroborates that, claiming that design is used to convey ideals and principles. He argues that when exploring the history of societies there has to be an awareness of how economies are affected by design, and vice versa. One of the illustrations he uses is the sewing machine (Forty, 1986) which has a connection with this research in two ways: firstly, many of the textiles show evidence of machine stitching which would have been carried out during the early days of this invention in a domestic capacity: secondly, Miss Smith's brother manufactured sewing machines and, in fact, won medals at international exhibitions for their design. This subject is explored in more detail in chapter 4 which focuses on the social background connected to the cache.

On that premise the contents of the cache are being used to try to build an image of 'Miss Smith', to identify the sort of life a person like her led on a daily basis, to try to understand what drove her to create the cache - did the contents matter to her and, if so, why? It is possible that she used just what came to hand but the neatly wound and bound bundles belie that; they seem to have been carefully prepared. Some of the garments and the labels were separately wrapped – extra protection for them maybe – but why go to that trouble if it was just 'stuff'. She may have begged materials from friends, bought it from the rag and bone man, even stolen it, but in each of these cases one would expect to find the residue of complete garments rather than just a few small pieces. It is important to consider where the textiles may have come from in order to demonstrate that this was likely not to have just been an exercise in economy but to have a more personal significance. Where deliberate concealments have been recorded it is often just a log of what has been found, but the analysis of these artefacts aims to explore more deeply the motivation behind this practice and to situate it in a particular social context.

The contents of the cache span six decades, from the sleeve of a mourning dress, dating from around 1840, to a man's collar, the style of which indicates a date of around 1900 and this suggests that the items were accumulated over

that timescale.⁷² If the cache was created around the turn of the century the fact that two new top covers had been placed directly over the one containing the cache means that the back of the chaise had not been altered structurally for over a hundred years and consequently the contents had been undisturbed for that length of time.

As previously stated, details of all items found in the cache are recorded in the inventory (volume 2 of the thesis) but some of these items are looked at in more detail below with the corresponding reference number from the inventory given for identification purposes. The rationale for the specific selection of these items is as follows: this is a big collection of mainly small pieces of textiles but with a few complete/partially complete items of clothing. In archaeological terms the textiles would be on a par with pottery found in a dig and would be classed as 'bulk finds' – as outlined in the Introduction (Chapter 1, section 1.7.1). Whilst the textiles could be diagnostic there are so many different materials that in-depth research would be difficult due to the small scale of the pieces and impractical because of the volume. The clothing, which would be classed as 'small finds', has more visual impact, is easier to date and therefore is able to reveal more specific information in areas such as lifestyle, fashion, culture and technology. Anthropologist Daniel Miller argues against the idea that clothing is used merely as a symbol to represent us and is therefore superficial. He maintains that clothing has a much more profound purpose and it actually makes us 'what we think we are' (Miller, 2010). Clothing too can be seen as a transitional object linking our individual self with our public self, negotiating and comforting rather like a child's comfort blanket (Attfield, 2000).

For this reason the emphasis in the following paragraphs is on the clothing category, exploring the relationship between the garments and the people who wore them and situating them in their social context.

⁷² The identification and categorisation of the textiles was carried out with the help and guidance of Karina Thomas, Senior Lecturer in BA (Hons) Textiles and Surface Design who has a background in the history of textiles. Estimations of dates were also given for some of the pieces by textile specialists at the V&A, in particular Lucy Johnson, Edwina Erhman and Sue Prichard.

2.6.1 Cotton Cap (MSA C.01)

The first item pulled from the cache was a lady's cotton cap (fig.43), machine stitched but with a handmade crochet trim. It was probably bought from a shop rather than home-made and although the weave of the fabric and the crochet trim are interesting and attractive the item is not particularly well made.

During the early Victorian period it was customary for caps to be worn by married and older women in the house and under their bonnets when they were outdoors (Gernsheim, 1981). It is sometimes suggested that by covering the hair women appeared more modest but by the 1890s the 'demure' cap had disappeared.⁷³ An alternative idea put forward is that people did not wash their hair very frequently so the cap protected the hair from dust and kept it cleaner – and/or hid the fact that the hair was not very clean - and the cap could also be washed much more easily than the hair.⁷⁴ Pollution was a problem and with coal fires being the only means of cooking and providing hot water and heating, towns all over the country were plagued with fogs. It was estimated that 1.5 million tons of soot was created every year just by domestic fires, with the resultant sulphurous-smelling thick brown miasma making day-to-day life squalid and dirty (Eastoe and Goodman, 2010).

It was the fashion at this time to have a lot of hair (Laver, 1969) which would have taken a long time to wash and to dry, especially without the benefit of running water and electricity. In 1832 a system of filter beds in Leamington was improved which resulted in water being pumped to the town by gravity. However, during the 19th century 'tap' water was not available and up until 1878 the drinking water supply in Leamington was supplied by water carts (Cave, 1988, p.129). There is still a cast iron water pump located in the semi-basement at No. 20, Miss Smith's former home, which probably provided the water for the house for all purposes other than drinking.

⁷³ <http://www.tudorlinks.com/treasury/articles/viewvictorian.html>

⁷⁴ <http://www.dickensfair.com>



Fig.43
A lady's cotton cap with crochet trim. MSA C-01.

Returning to the issue of washing hair, there are people who maintain that hair becomes self-cleaning (or self-regulating) after a certain length of time. Advice given includes rinsing the hair with hot water to wash away any dirt or dust, followed by a cold rinse to leave the hair smooth and shiny.⁷⁵ This should be combined with regular brushing.⁷⁶ However, there is evidence that the Victorians did wash their hair, at least occasionally, because Adelaide Pountney records on 27 April 1864 ‘... went to Cuttings to get a wash for my hair’, (Pountney, 1998) although that is the only reference during the year to washing hair so perhaps it wasn’t a frequent activity, but there is another entry recording having her hair cut which is illustrated below in fig.44.

⁷⁵ www.wikihow.com/Get-Self-Cleaning-Hair

⁷⁶ I remember my grandmother (born 1897) saying that as a young girl she had to brush her hair one hundred strokes twice a day.

Going back to the cotton cap, an alternative use for this garment is put forward by Willet and Cunnington (1992) who state that in the 1850s night caps were worn. These fitted like a baby's bonnet, were tied under the chin and often had trimmings and frills to frame the face. Prior to the 1850s it was usual for undergarments to be home-made but from around this period ready-made garments became available with nightcaps advertised costing 6/- to 10/- a dozen (Willet and Cunnington, 1992). This price equates to £17.56 - £29.27 per dozen in current terms, or £1.46 - £2.44 each⁷⁷ which is the sort of figure one might associate with Primark disposable prices.



Fig.44

Extract from the Pountney diary illustrating a visit to the hairdresser, September 10, 1864. (Pountney, 1998)

The National Trust has a large number of caps in its collections many of which are of a similar style to that found in the cache.⁷⁸ Generally the dates attributed to them range from around 1800 to the 1860s and the style does not seem to change much, as illustrated in their on-line collections.⁷⁹ The organisation is, of

⁷⁷ The National Archives currency converter

⁷⁸ <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk>

⁷⁹ <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk>. Examples include inventory no. 1118931 which shows an embroidered cotton lawn baby's cap with lace trim with a date estimate 1830-1870,

course, likely to exhibit only their best examples and those shown do appear to be of a superior quality to the one found in the chaise, but the shape of the 'Miss Smith' cap is unusual because it has an extension at the back (fig.43 above). Following discussions with textile and fashion historian Edwina Ehrman⁸⁰ an opinion was formed that perhaps the shaping at the back was designed to contain a bun as there are draw strings which would enable it to be tightened as needed (there are also tapes so that the size can be adjusted around the face). Ehrman had never seen a cap of that design before but if the notion about accommodating a bun is correct it would mean that the item would have been worn during the daytime rather than as a night cap. Ehrman also felt that the cap would not have stayed in place as a nightcap, despite the ties, and it was surmised that it would be very uncomfortable to sleep with the hair pinned in a bun and it was more probable that women slept with their hair loose or plaited.⁸¹ The conclusion is that the quality was probably not good enough to be worn in the afternoon, or under the bonnet, when you might be meeting people but was most likely a morning cap and worn to protect the hair whilst carrying out household chores.

The cap is machine stitched (although the trimming is hand-made) so a realistic date would be around 1850-1860 which relates to the introduction of sewing machines on a commercial level. Although there is soiling and staining, probably accumulated during its concealment, the item is structurally sound and, unlike the majority of the cache clothing, does not show signs of extensive wear. Judging by the prices quoted by Willet and Cunningham (1992) these were not expensive items to buy so it is possible that it was the practice to own several at a time and it may be that the wearing of them went out of fashion before this one had had much use.

inventory no. 1350492 made from cotton muslin and dated 1800-1820 and inventory no. 1360505 a cotton lawn cap dated 1860.

⁸⁰ Curator of Textiles and Fashion at the V & A and member of the Dress and Textiles Specialists (DATS).

⁸¹ A practice suggested by television dramas such as the BBC's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, 1995.

2.6.2 Lady's Collar (MSA C.13)

The detachable collar was another practical article of clothing worn during the Victorian period (MSA C.13 shown in fig.45 and illustrated in use in fig.46).



Fig.45

Cotton detachable collar (MSA C.13) – very worn with several repairs and areas of darning.

Fig.46 →

Taken in Warwickshire in 1879 this photograph shows an example of a detachable collar being worn. This is a fairly plain collar, not dissimilar to the one found in the cache. The young woman also appears to be wearing detachable lacy cuffs.

(www.search.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk)



Often dresses could not be washed and those made from silk could frequently not be cleaned at all. A separate collar therefore could be cleaned far more easily than a gown and could protect not only the dress but the wearer's modesty too. Styles of detachable collars varied from very ornate, lacy versions to plain and simple versions such as the one found in the cache. This would give versatility to a garment which could be dressed-up or down as the occasion required. The collar in the cache is made from a fine cotton lawn but

has quite a coarse interlining fabric which would have given it substance. It has a small stand-up collar and is edged with a narrow knitted fabric (braid) which has been hand sewn into place. The lower portion is not lined and has a very small machine stitched hem, which would have been tucked into the neckline of the dress. The neckband of the collar has a machine made buttonhole at either end and would have been fastened with a collar stud. This piece shows signs of considerable wear and is now structurally stable but in a fragile condition. Much of the inside of the collar section is missing and the lower section has torn away at some stage and been hand stitched back together, not very neatly. Whilst it is possible that some of the degradation occurred during concealment, this garment appears to have been worn until it really couldn't be repaired again.

2.6.3 Two crinoline bustles (MSA C.02 and C.03)

One item which immediately caught the eye, and the imagination, when the cache was revealed was the larger of a pair of bustles (MSA C.02) made from crinoline; a textile woven from horsehair and linen. When first salvaged it wasn't immediately obvious what the object was because it had been crushed flat due to its use as stuffing material and the frame had become bent and distorted. The rounded shape suggested a bonnet but the lacing implied otherwise. A visit to one of the V & A's Opinions Days⁸² identified the garment as a bustle and dated it to the 1870s (fig. 47 below).

⁸² The Victoria and Albert Museum offers a service where members of staff are available to give opinions on art and design objects taken to the museum. This service operates on the first Tuesday of each month.



Fig.47

Image shows the inside of the larger bustle (MSA C.02) before conservation work was carried out.

(Image: Textile Conservation Foundation)

In the mid-nineteenth century the fashion was for very full skirts and the steadily expanding skirt 'dominated the social scene' but owed the imposing shape to the substructure (Willett and Cunnington, 1992). In the first half of the 1850s the desired effect was achieved by wearing several layers of petticoats, sometimes as many as ten (Laver, 1969). The fashion for very full skirts continued into the 1860s, when Miss Smith would have been a young woman, and during this period the hooped petticoat came into use to provide the foundation (fig.48 below) (Laver, 1969).

Full skirts still continued to be fashionable into the 1870s but by this time a new garment had been designed to wear under skirts in order to create the desired shape and this was the bustle. The great advantage of this type of garment was that it actually gave women much more freedom of movement than the multiple layers of petticoats and the hooped cages of the 1860s which could be very heavy and cumbersome to wear. The introduction of the bustle, from a woman's point of view, must have been a major break-through. Wearing one for the first time would have given a wonderful feeling of liberation and felt like a significant moment. Perhaps that is why it warranted inclusion in the cache.

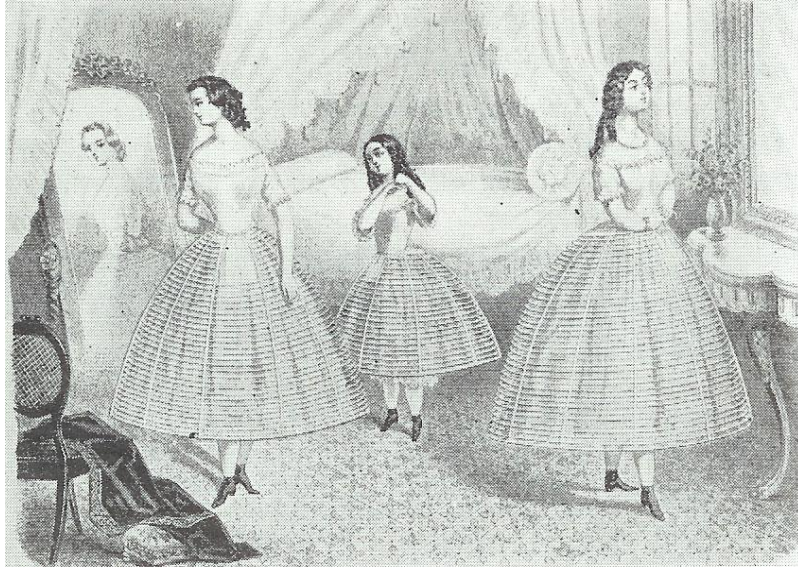


Fig.48

The cage petticoat, or crinoline hoops, worn in the 1860s to create the fashionable full shapes that were in vogue at that time. (Image: Willett and Cunningham, 1992, p.164).



C.02



Fig.49

The left hand picture shows the larger bustle (MSA C.02) after conservation work has been carried out. This dates from the 1870s. On the right is an x-ray image of the bustle which reveals the structure of the garment. (Images: Textile Conservation Foundation)

The larger of the bustles found in the chaise dates from the 1870s and shows signs of extensive use as a wearable object with numerous stitch and patch repairs. The domed shape of this bustle is formed by metal hoops stitched into the fabric (illustrated in the x-ray of the bustle shown in fig.49) and was secured

around the body with lacing. The lacing was still in place and tied when the bustle was found and this has been left undisturbed.

By the late 1870s styles had changed and skirts were fitted close to the body with drapery around the hips, so the bustle went out of fashion. The second distinct appearance of the bustle came in the 1880s and the smaller of the two included in the cache (C.03) is a good example of this type of garment (fig.50). It is smaller and sharper than its predecessor and would have protruded from the back in a shelf-like manner – as illustrated in the fashion photograph below (fig. 51).

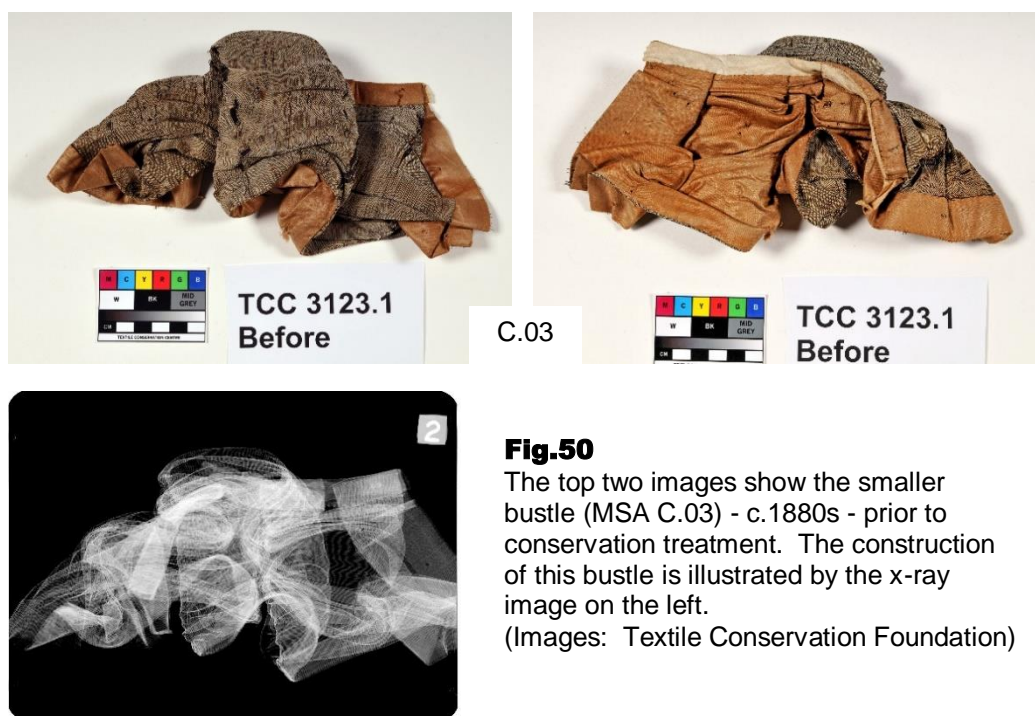


Fig.50

The top two images show the smaller bustle (MSA C.03) - c.1880s - prior to conservation treatment. The construction of this bustle is illustrated by the x-ray image on the left.
(Images: Textile Conservation Foundation)

In 2008/09 both the bustles underwent conservation work at the Textile Conservation Centre. The work was to be non-invasive and the aim was to return the artefacts as close to their original form as possible and to stabilise them to enable occasional display. A detailed report of the work carried out forms appendix 1 in volume 2 but, briefly, both items were surface cleaned and underwent a process of humidification and gentle manipulation to aid the reshaping. Special mounts were made to provide support for the garments and to facilitate a better interpretation of them as wearable objects whilst on display.

Fig.51

Photograph of a woman taken c.1884 which illustrates the fashion for a small shelf-like protrusion at the back of the garment. This shape which was created with the aid of the style of the smaller bustle (MSA C.03) shown above in fig.50.

(Image: Gernsheim, 1981, plate 148).



2.6.4 Cotton Body Warmer/Vest/Chemisette (MSA C.14)

This is another object which was not immediately identifiable when first discovered. It is made from cotton with a twill structure and has cotton tapes attached for tying round the body. The National Trust collections shown on-line⁸³ include over eighty examples of this type of clothing and label them 'chemisette'. Some of the samples have lace or other embellishments and a few have collars and this style would probably have been visible to a certain extent when worn. However, most of the pieces are very plain, as is the example from the cache, and would have been purely functional undergarments and not intended to be seen. Willett and Cunnington (1992) make only one reference to the chemisette but the garment they refer to is a 'fill-in' which was worn above the low cut chemise c.1540 to cover the décolletage so clearly is something different and the description they give to the 'waistcoat' seems more relevant; 'An undergarment which, like a man's, was slipped on over the head and so resembled a vest. ... From the nature of the material we must suppose that some were quite concealed while the more ornate were intended to be

⁸³ <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk>. Examples include NT ref. 1362467 (1860) and NT ref. 1359523 (1840-1850).

partly visible' (Willett and Cunnington, 1992, p.48). This description referred to the period 1485-1625, so much earlier than the cache garment. Mention was also made where they state 'women often wore this (the waistcoat) as an undergarment – even, apparently, next to the skin' (Willett and Cunnington, 1992, p.65) citing a will written in 1644 where reference was made.



Fig.52

Cotton twill bodice/chemisette (MSA C-14) c.1860-1900

The little garment found in the cache (fig.52) has a simple construction, being open sided, and would have been a purely functional item and definitely not intended to be seen. It is machine stitched and the internal seams have raw edges, so probably homemade. It is still structurally sound although it has obviously had a lot of use as a wearable object; there are many areas where the fabric is worn and there are several darts and repairs. It has also been torn the full length of the back. It is possible that this was an unintentional tear due to the garment becoming fragile through use, and this is perhaps the most likely explanation although the material is not particularly delicate even now. However, another avenue of thought is that it could have been deliberately torn. There is a suggestion that bending or folding an object (often a coin or tool) could be an indication of a superstitious ritual; the interpretation being that 'killing' an artefact so that it can no longer be used for its original purpose transfers it to a spiritual plane where it takes on protective powers (Merrifield, 1987). Merrifield also cites the *Concealed Shoe Index* held at Northampton

Museum (see section 3.1.3) where a few of the shoes recorded had apparently been damaged deliberately prior to concealment, suggesting a connection with the symbolic damage of votive objects referred to above.

In common with many of the items in the cache the garment is heavily stained which most probably occurred during its concealment. There are two tapes attached to the shoulder areas which would appear to have hung under the arms and two tapes attached to the lower edge at the back which would have tied around the body but there is no other form of fastening, and no evidence that any ever existed, so it is difficult to imagine how it remained in place when being worn. Because of the small size this could be classified as a child's garment but on the basis of the design it most probably belonged to a small adult. This type of garment would not only have given extra warmth and comfort to the wearer but, like detachable collars and cuffs, would have provided a barrier between the body and outer garments, thus helping to keep the outer garments clean.

2.6.5 Dress Sleeve Protector (MSA C.04)

Sleeve protectors were items of clothing which were worn over the lower section of dress sleeves whilst indoors or carrying out chores in order to protect clothes. In other words, their function was to protect (hence their name). It could be argued that this item (fig.53) was continuing its role during its concealment because when found in the cache it was being used to contain a toddler's black dress (MSA C.05), thereby protecting it.

The garment is made from a good quality silk taffeta but is quite badly faded, and now appears brown, although was most probably black originally. The quality of the fabric suggests that the garment it was made for would have been 'for best'. These were functional items and were in evidence in the BBC2 television series and subsequent publication *Victorian Farm* (Goodman, 2009). The female member of the team was featured wearing sleeve protectors, covering her sleeves from the wrist to just over the elbow, and the material appeared to be a heavy weight cotton made from the same fabric as her apron. It would have been usual to have different pairs of sleeve protectors to match different garments or occasions so that, for instance, on a Sunday, if you were

wearing your 'best' or 'second best' clothes, the protectors might be made from the same fabric so that they were unobtrusive.

Fig.53

A black silk sleeve protector which, in the cache, contained a toddler's black silk dress (MSA C.04). 1860-1900



However, as stated above, the function of this item of clothing in the cache was as a receptacle for a small child's black dress (C.05).

2.6.6 Toddler's Black Silk Dress (MSA C.05)

The toddler's dress (fig.54) measures only 38 cm (15') in length and had been carefully folded and placed inside the sleeve protector. It is made from a heavy black silk, is hand stitched with very small, exceptionally neat stitches and the back and lower edges are finished with an extremely narrow piping.

This is potentially a poignant little item; due to the colour – black – it is possible that this was a mourning dress, perhaps worn for a sibling. Miss Smith's brother was seven years her senior and although no record has been found of any other brothers or sisters it is quite possible there were other children in the intervening years who did not survive. The dress has no sleeves and whilst it was normal in earlier periods for the sleeves of babies' clothing to be detachable and pinned into place (Ehrman⁸⁴ and Styles, 2010) by the mid-19th century this was no longer the practice and, in addition, the size of this item of clothing indicates that it would have been for a toddler rather than a baby. There are indications that this garment originally had a facing or sleeve

⁸⁴ Edwina Ehrman, DATS.

attached to the armholes – the edges are over sewn and there are sections of (back) stitching along what would have been the seam line. There is also a raw edge around the neckline which also has evidence (holes) of two rows of stitching, maybe from a facing or a collar.

Fig.54

A toddler's garment made from black silk. It appears to have been made either from remnants or cut down from an adult's dress as there are several triangular pieces stitched in to the sides to increase the width around the lower edge.

This little dress had been neatly folded and placed inside the sleeve protector prior to inclusion in the cache. (MSA C.05.)



Colourful fabrics were freely available by the mid-19th century but Ehrman maintains that black was a very practical colour for people who were not particularly affluent. It was suitable for 'best' and, in the event of a death, for mourning. This little dress is black but it also demonstrates another Victorian attribute - thriftiness. Styles (2010) notes that clothes were 'worn and re-worn' until they were beyond repair when they would be cut-up and any serviceable bits used for babies' or children's clothes or quilts; the remaining scraps would be sold to the rag and bone man (Goodman, 2010). This dress is beautifully made but has several small inserts by the side seams which suggests that it was made from leftover remnants or was cut down from a larger garment and the addition of the patches was needed to make a wide enough piece of fabric to allow the child freedom of movement. The garment is essentially complete but the style is open to speculation. There is no sign of any fastening but if there had been a collar there may have been a button, or some other form of

closure mechanism, attached to the collar. If the item was worn with the opening at the front it may have been a type of waistcoat. Alternatively, if it was worn with the opening at the back it could have been a pinafore. Whatever its original purpose, the fact that it was so carefully folded and protected implies that the garment held a very particular significance.

2.6.7 Sleeve from Mourning Silk (MSA C.09)

The style of this sleeve dates it to around 1840;⁸⁵ and shown in fig.55 below. It is hand-made and very good quality. During this period the middle classes, particularly in rural areas, would rarely have bought their clothes ready-made and it was normal practice at that time to refer to an article of clothing by the name of the fabric. This practice is corroborated by Pountney (1998) recording on 11 April 1865 that they had been to buy 'spring raiment' 'as the burden of our linseys is greater than we can bear'. Linsey-woolsey was a textile with a linen warp and woollen weft, often used for petticoats (Styles, 2010), and favoured for its warmth and durability. As this sleeve is made from silk taffeta the garment would have been called a 'silk'. The sleeve is very slim fitting but is cut on the bias, which would give it some elasticity, and there is a very small cotton loop at the wrist so it probably had a button or some other form of fastening. There is a decorative trim, made from a very fine silk yarn, at the top of the sleeve with three rows of ruffles underneath. The top section is unlined but from the braiding to the wrist it is lined with a light brown mercerised cotton.



Fig.55

The image above shows the sleeve of a mourning silk c. 1840 which was found in the cache (MSA C.09)

⁸⁵ Lucy Johnson, Curator of Fashion 1800-1947, the V & A.

A photograph taken c.1842 illustrates a gown which had this style of sleeve (Fig.56).

Due to its colour, black, this could well have been mourning clothing. Victorian etiquette demanded that black was worn as a mark of respect when there was a death in the family and this ritual included children and servants. The length and 'depth' of mourning depended on the relationship to the deceased (VAM).⁸⁶ Because of the date of this item of clothing it could be speculated that it came from a dress belonging to Miss Smith's mother.⁸⁷

Fig.56 →

The photograph to the right was taken c.1842.

It features a dress with sleeves of a very similar style to that found in the cache (MSA C.09) (Fig. 55 above). (Image: Gernsheim, 1963, plate 7).



2.6.8 Two Men's Shirt Collars (MSA C.06 and C.07)

These two shirt collars are different styles but both date from the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸⁸ Men's shirt collars were detachable and shirts usually also had detachable cuffs (Laver, 1996). Both collars have a buttonhole in the neckband at the centre back for attaching to the shirt and C.07 is stamped with a trade mark (fig.57 below) although it hasn't been possible to identify the

⁸⁶ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O59234/dress-fabric-and-peter-robinsons-mourning/>

⁸⁷ Sarah Smith née Haynes, 1816-1884 would have been in her twenties in the 1840s.

⁸⁸ Lucy Johnson, Curator of Fashion 1800-1947, the V & A.

around the body with lacing. The lacing was still in place and tied when the bustle was found and this has been left undisturbed.

By the late 1870s styles had changed and skirts were fitted close to the body with drapery around the hips, so the bustle went out of fashion. The second distinct appearance of the bustle came in the 1880s and the smaller of the two included in the cache (C.03) is a good example of this type of garment (fig.50). It is smaller and sharper than its predecessor and would have protruded from the back in a shelf-like manner – as illustrated in the fashion photograph below (fig. 51).

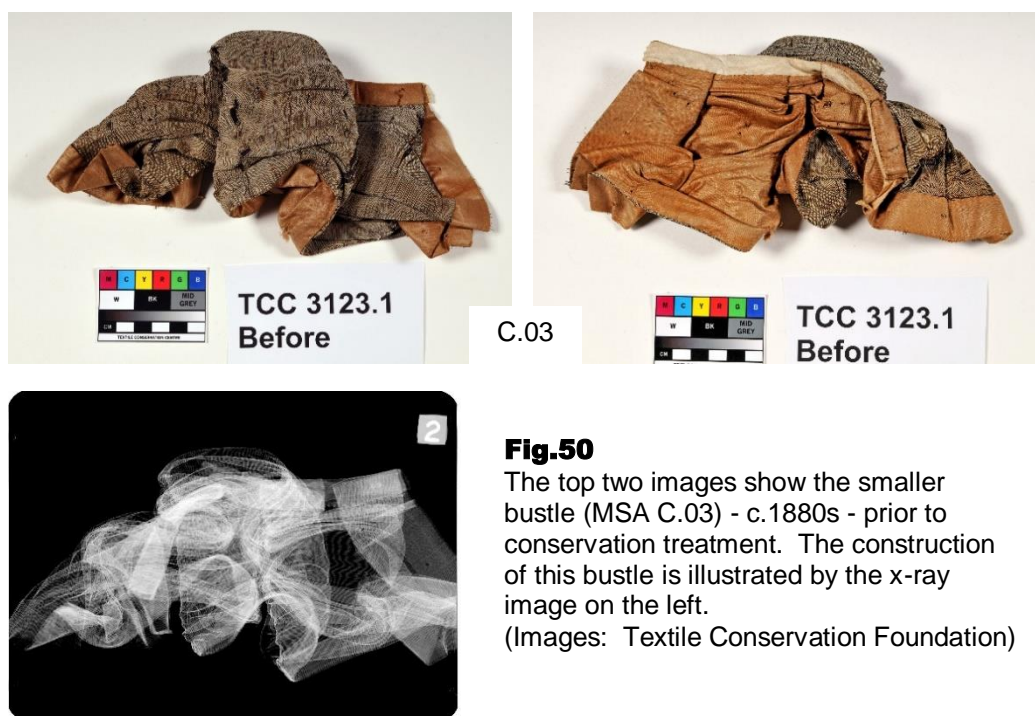


Fig.50

The top two images show the smaller bustle (MSA C.03) - c.1880s - prior to conservation treatment. The construction of this bustle is illustrated by the x-ray image on the left.
(Images: Textile Conservation Foundation)

In 2008/09 both the bustles underwent conservation work at the Textile Conservation Centre. The work was to be non-invasive and the aim was to return the artefacts as close to their original form as possible and to stabilise them to enable occasional display. A detailed report of the work carried out forms appendix 1 in volume 2 but, briefly, both items were surface cleaned and underwent a process of humidification and gentle manipulation to aid the reshaping. Special mounts were made to provide support for the garments and to facilitate a better interpretation of them as wearable objects whilst on display.

Fig.51

Photograph of a woman taken c.1884 which illustrates the fashion for a small shelf-like protrusion at the back of the garment. This shape which was created with the aid of the style of the smaller bustle (MSA C.03) shown above in fig.50.

(Image: Gernsheim, 1981, plate 148).



2.6.4 Cotton Body Warmer/Vest/Chemisette (MSA C.14)

This is another object which was not immediately identifiable when first discovered. It is made from cotton with a twill structure and has cotton tapes attached for tying round the body. The National Trust collections shown on-line⁸³ include over eighty examples of this type of clothing and label them 'chemisette'. Some of the samples have lace or other embellishments and a few have collars and this style would probably have been visible to a certain extent when worn. However, most of the pieces are very plain, as is the example from the cache, and would have been purely functional undergarments and not intended to be seen. Willett and Cunnington (1992) make only one reference to the chemisette but the garment they refer to is a 'fill-in' which was worn above the low cut chemise c.1540 to cover the décolletage so clearly is something different and the description they give to the 'waistcoat' seems more relevant; 'An undergarment which, like a man's, was slipped on over the head and so resembled a vest. ... From the nature of the material we must suppose that some were quite concealed while the more ornate were intended to be

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Fig.52

Cotton twill bodice/chemisette (MSA C-14) c.1860-1900

The little garment found in the cache (fig.52) has a simple construction, being open sided, and would have been a purely functional item and definitely not intended to be seen. It is machine stitched and the internal seams have raw edges, so probably homemade. It is still structurally sound although it has obviously had a lot of use as a wearable object; there are many areas where the fabric is worn and there are several darts and repairs. It has also been torn the full length of the back. It is possible that this was an unintentional tear due to the garment becoming fragile through use, and this is perhaps the most likely explanation although the material is not particularly delicate even now. However, another avenue of thought is that it could have been deliberately torn. There is a suggestion that bending or folding an object (often a coin or tool) could be an indication of a superstitious ritual; the interpretation being that 'killing' an artefact so that it can no longer be used for its original purpose transfers it to a spiritual plane where it takes on protective powers (Merrifield, 1987). Merrifield also cites the *Concealed Shoe Index* held at Northampton

Museum (see section 3.1.3) where a few of the shoes recorded had apparently been damaged deliberately prior to concealment, suggesting a connection with the symbolic damage of votive objects referred to above.

In common with many of the items in the cache the garment is heavily stained which most probably occurred during its concealment. There are two tapes attached to the shoulder areas which would appear to have hung under the arms and two tapes attached to the lower edge at the back which would have tied around the body but there is no other form of fastening, and no evidence that any ever existed, so it is difficult to imagine how it remained in place when being worn. Because of the small size this could be classified as a child's garment but on the basis of the design it most probably belonged to a small adult. This type of garment would not only have given extra warmth and comfort to the wearer but, like detachable collars and cuffs, would have provided a barrier between the body and outer garments, thus helping to keep the outer garments clean.

2.6.5 Dress Sleeve Protector (MSA C.04)

Sleeve protectors were items of clothing which were worn over the lower section of dress sleeves whilst indoors or carrying out chores in order to protect clothes. In other words, their function was to protect (hence their name). It could be argued that this item (fig.53) was continuing its role during its concealment because when found in the cache it was being used to contain a toddler's black dress (MSA C.05), thereby protecting it.

The garment is made from a good quality silk taffeta but is quite badly faded, and now appears brown, although was most probably black originally. The quality of the fabric suggests that the garment it was made for would have been 'for best'. These were functional items and were in evidence in the BBC2 television series and subsequent publication *Victorian Farm* (Goodman, 2009). The female member of the team was featured wearing sleeve protectors, covering her sleeves from the wrist to just over the elbow, and the material appeared to be a heavy weight cotton made from the same fabric as her apron. It would have been usual to have different pairs of sleeve protectors to match different garments or occasions so that, for instance, on a Sunday, if you were

wearing your 'best' or 'second best' clothes, the protectors might be made from the same fabric so that they were unobtrusive.

Fig.53

A black silk sleeve protector which, in the cache, contained a toddler's black silk dress (MSA C.04). 1860-1900



However, as stated above, the function of this item of clothing in the cache was as a receptacle for a small child's black dress (C.05).

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The toddler's dress (fig.54) measures only 38 cm (15') in length and had been carefully folded and placed inside the sleeve protector. It is made from a heavy black silk, is hand stitched with very small, exceptionally neat stitches and the back and lower edges are finished with an extremely narrow piping.

This is potentially a poignant little item; due to the colour – black – it is possible that this was a mourning dress, perhaps worn for a sibling. Miss Smith's brother was seven years her senior and although no record has been found of any other brothers or sisters it is quite possible there were other children in the intervening years who did not survive. The dress has no sleeves and whilst it was normal in earlier periods for the sleeves of babies' clothing to be detachable and pinned into place (Ehrman⁸⁴ and Styles, 2010) by the mid-19th century this was no longer the practice and, in addition, the size of this item of clothing indicates that it would have been for a toddler rather than a baby. There are indications that this garment originally had a facing or sleeve

⁸⁴ Edwina Ehrman, DATS.

attached to the armholes – the edges are over sewn and there are sections of (back) stitching along what would have been the seam line. There is also a raw edge around the neckline which also has evidence (holes) of two rows of stitching, maybe from a facing or a collar.

Fig.54

A toddler's garment made from black silk. It appears to have been made either from remnants or cut down from an adult's dress as there are several triangular pieces stitched in to the sides to increase the width around the lower edge.

This little dress had been neatly folded and placed inside the sleeve protector prior to inclusion in the cache. (MSA C.05.)



Colourful fabrics were freely available by the mid-19th century but Ehrman maintains that black was a very practical colour for people who were not particularly affluent. It was suitable for 'best' and, in the event of a death, for mourning. This little dress is black but it also demonstrates another Victorian attribute - thriftiness. Styles (2010) notes that clothes were 'worn and re-worn' until they were beyond repair when they would be cut-up and any serviceable bits used for babies' or children's clothes or quilts; the remaining scraps would be sold to the rag and bone man (Goodman, 2010). This dress is beautifully made but has several small inserts by the side seams which suggests that it was made from leftover remnants or was cut down from a larger garment and the addition of the patches was needed to make a wide enough piece of fabric to allow the child freedom of movement. The garment is essentially complete but the style is open to speculation. There is no sign of any fastening but if there had been a collar there may have been a button, or some other form of

closure mechanism, attached to the collar. If the item was worn with the opening at the front it may have been a type of waistcoat. Alternatively, if it was worn with the opening at the back it could have been a pinafore. Whatever its original purpose, the fact that it was so carefully folded and protected implies that the garment held a very particular significance.

2.6.7 Sleeve from Mourning Silk (MSA C.09)

The style of this sleeve dates it to around 1840;⁸⁵ and shown in fig.55 below. It is hand-made and very good quality. During this period the middle classes, particularly in rural areas, would rarely have bought their clothes ready-made and it was normal practice at that time to refer to an article of clothing by the name of the fabric. This practice is corroborated by Pountney (1998) recording on 11 April 1865 that they had been to buy 'spring raiment' 'as the burden of our linseys is greater than we can bear'. Linsey-woolsey was a textile with a linen warp and woollen weft, often used for petticoats (Styles, 2010), and favoured for its warmth and durability. As this sleeve is made from silk taffeta the garment would have been called a 'silk'. The sleeve is very slim fitting but is cut on the bias, which would give it some elasticity, and there is a very small cotton loop at the wrist so it probably had a button or some other form of fastening. There is a decorative trim, made from a very fine silk yarn, at the top of the sleeve with three rows of ruffles underneath. The top section is unlined but from the braiding to the wrist it is lined with a light brown mercerised cotton.



Fig.55

The image above shows the sleeve of a mourning silk c. 1840 which was found in the cache (MSA C.09)

⁸⁵ Lucy Johnson, Curator of Fashion 1800-1947, the V & A.

A photograph taken c.1842 illustrates a gown which had this style of sleeve (Fig.56).

Due to its colour, black, this could well have been mourning clothing. Victorian etiquette demanded that black was worn as a mark of respect when there was a death in the family and this ritual included children and servants. The length and 'depth' of mourning depended on the relationship to the deceased (VAM).⁸⁶ Because of the date of this item of clothing it could be speculated that it came from a dress belonging to Miss Smith's mother.⁸⁷

Fig.56 →

The photograph to the right was taken c.1842.

It features a dress with sleeves of a very similar style to that found in the cache (MSA C.09) (Fig. 55 above). (Image: Gernsheim, 1963, plate 7).



2.6.8 Two Men's Shirt Collars (MSA C.06 and C.07)

These two shirt collars are different styles but both date from the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸⁸ Men's shirt collars were detachable and shirts usually also had detachable cuffs (Laver, 1996). Both collars have a buttonhole in the neckband at the centre back for attaching to the shirt and C.07 is stamped with a trade mark (fig.57 below) although it hasn't been possible to identify the

⁸⁶ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O59234/dress-fabric-and-peter-robinsons-mourning/>

⁸⁷ Sarah Smith née Haynes, 1816-1884 would have been in her twenties in the 1840s.

⁸⁸ Lucy Johnson, Curator of Fashion 1800-1947, the V & A.

brand.⁸⁹ As with women's garments, collars were detachable for practical and economic purposes (see section 2.6.2); a clean collar would freshen up the shirt without the necessity of washing the whole garment. Additionally, collars and cuffs are the areas which usually show the most wear so separate collars and cuffs would prolong the life of a shirt as they could be replaced without the expense of buying a complete garment.



Man's detachable shirt collar. Machine stitched with hand-sewn buttonholes, so probably homemade. Dates from the second half of the 19th century (MSA C.06).



Fig.57

Man's detachable shirt collar. This collar had a trade mark stamped on the inside, shown in the image on the right, but it has not been possible to identify the brand. Dates from the second half of the 19th century (MSA C.07). (Images: Textile Conservation Foundation)

⁸⁹ An example of the style of MSA C.07 is illustrated in fig. 58.

Washing was a major undertaking during the Victorian period and anything that could be done to lighten the load would have been a good thing. The washing took a week to complete starting with 'spot' cleaning any stains. Chemicals were used sparingly and only where needed. Substances used included milk on ink stains, butter on fruit stains followed by a mix of ammonia and washing soda, and alcohol on glue (Goodman, 2009). After the stain removal process the clothes were left to soak in water overnight to soften the dirt. Soap was used in the washing process and the final rinse, on day three, saw the addition of synthetic ultramarine (artificial blue) which counteracted the yellowness of the soap and gave the washing a bright white appearance. By the mid-19th century mass production of the cast iron mangle, with large wooden rollers, speeded up the drying stage by squeezing out excess water. This process was followed by the ironing with the aim of having everything put away by the weekend, ready to start the whole operation again on the Monday (Goodman, 2009).

Fig.58

Dr Frederick Haynes (1845 – 1935) wearing a turn-down collar of the style MSA C.07 found in the cache.

(Image: <https://www.search.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk>)



Illustrated above in fig.58 is a picture of Leamington doctor Frederick Haynes⁹⁰ wearing a turn-down collar of the same style as MSA C,07. The collars included in the cache were both cotton and machine-stitched and are still fairly

⁹⁰ Coincidentally, Dr Haynes was born in Evesham and was also the doctor who signed the death certificate of Miss Smith's mother.

stiff with starch. C.06 appears to have been homemade; although it is machine stitched the holes for the button and the studs have been hand sewn. When found they showed signs of wear and had undergone some minor repair work. They appeared to have been carefully placed in the cache rather than being randomly stuffed in to fill a gap. As outlined in sections 2.3 and 2.4 above, when upholstering an iron-back it is neither necessary nor usual to bind the frame. Sometimes the upper and lower rails will be bound with hessian (shown in fig.38 T.87) to protect the tarpaulin and to help when stitching the upholstery into place but in the case of this chaise the whole frame had been copiously bound, mainly with glazed cotton and net curtains. On the bottom rail, on top of all this binding, were the two shirt collars seemingly deliberately placed, smoothed out and covered over with a brightly coloured cotton scarf (T.81) and then held in place with further binding. Miss Smith's father died in 1902 so it is possible that the collars belonged to him and they were included in memory of him. In 2008 these collars underwent conservation treatment at the Textile Conservation Centre⁹¹ and now have a supporting cushion to enable them to be displayed.

2.6.9 Man's Tie (MSA C.08)

In Oscar Wilde's 1894 play *A Woman of no Importance*, Lord Illingworth offers the advice 'A well tied tie is the first serious step in life' and Wilde himself allegedly tied his first tie at the age of two. But what happens at the other end of the scale when a man is elderly and maybe infirm? The answer would surely be a pre-formed tie. Miss Smith's father lived to be 89 and his death certificate (appendix 5) states that the cause of death was 'old age, morbus cordis' and the tie which formed part of the cache (fig.59 below) could well have belonged to him. The tie is made from black silk with a twill weave construction, the main body of which has a cotton/wool plain weave interlining, and the neckband is lined with a brushed cotton. When discovered in 2003 the tie was in poor condition due to its use as a wearable object – there is evidence of previous repairs - the natural aging process of the material and the conditions of its concealment. Apart from particulate dirt there was some slight staining on the

⁹¹ A full report of the process is included in volume 2, appendix 1.

front of the tie which appears to have occurred during its use as an item of clothing (potentially spilled food or drink).

Ready-made ties may seem to be a relatively modern invention but they were available in the 1890s (Laver, 1996). What makes this tie particularly interesting is its ingenious method of fastening. When first discovered it appeared to have a piece missing; the neck band was attached to the knot at one end but the other end was frayed with no obvious means of securing it.



Fig.59 ↑

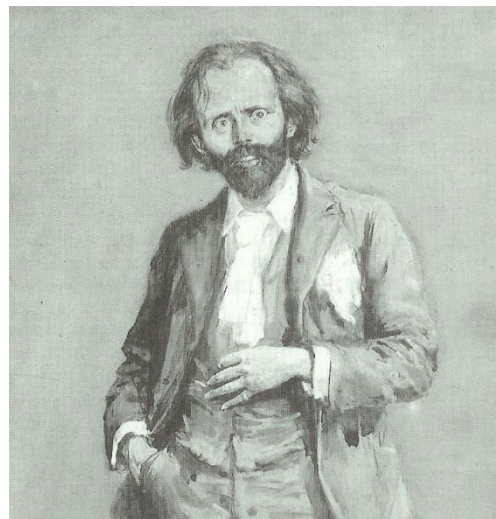
The images above show the front and underside of the pre-formed tie found in the cache (MSA C.08).

(Images: Textile Conservation Foundation)

Fig.60 →

On the right is a watercolour of Sir Hall Caine showing what the tie could have looked like in wear.

(Portrait by Sir (John) Bernard Partridge watercolour, published in Vanity Fair 2 July 1896)



However, closer inspection revealed a spring mechanism concealed in the knot which would grab the end of the neck band when tucked in and hold it in place. The watercolour of Sir Hall Caine⁹² (fig.60) was painted by Sir Bernard Partridge for Vanity Fair in 1896 and, whilst it may or may not be a pre-formed example, illustrates this style of tie in use.

⁹² Sir Hall Caine (1853-1931) was a novelist and secretary to D G Rossetti (1828-1882) the English poet and painter.

In 2008 the tie was conserved by a student at the Textile Conservation Centre and a copy of the treatment report is included in volume 2, appendix 1 of the thesis. The tie is now in a stable condition and has been mounted on a support to enable it to go on occasional display. A decision was made not to remove the staining as this is evidence of its original wear.

2.6.10 Lace Shawl (MSA C.11)

Lace and ruffles were popular throughout the second half of the nineteenth century (Laver, 1995) and this lace shawl trimming would have been an easy way to embellish a dress and would allow a relatively plain gown to be 'dressed-up' in different ways. Even towards the end of this period women were advised 'for those who dress their hair high and adopt the present vogue for flat shoulders to the sleeves, something fussy round the neck is absolutely necessary' (The Lady, 1903) although by this date Miss Smith's shawl had probably seen better days. It is made with machine net embroidery with a separate overlaid/underlaid machine lace and is in an extremely fragile condition (fig.61). It is a good example of Victorian thrift and practicality; an elaborate adornment for a plain garment thus broadening its scope from everyday wear to fashionable glamour.

Fig.61

Image of a delicate lace shawl which would have been worn draped around the shoulders and hanging down the front to accessorize the dress. (MSA C.11)



2.6.11 Garment Piece, possibly sleeve decoration (MSA T.78)

The invention of the sewing machine had a huge effect on fashion. The early machines were limited in their capabilities but coped well with straight seams and were ideal for making trimmings. As a consequence dresses were adorned with yards and yards of frills and ruffs because they were quicker, and therefore cheaper, to make than the labour intensive hand finishes.⁹³ The item shown in fig.62 below, which formed part of the cache, is an example of the sort of trim applied to outfits and could have been a sleeve decoration. It is made from a cotton fabric with a twill weave structure, is lined with a silk satin faced fabric and has been edged with a narrow knitted braid, hand sewn into place. The braid is in fact the same type as that on the ladies' collar (C.13) but a different



Fig.62

A decorative sleeve tab with button hole. MSA T.78

colour. The buttonhole is machine made. It is a black colour on the face side with a dark chocolate coloured lining which was probably originally black. An illustration of this type of decoration in use is shown in section 2.7 (fig.69) below.

⁹³ An indication of the use of 'accessories' to adorn garments is provided in the Pountney diary September 30, 1864 when Adelaide records 'Louisa (her sister) bought some epaulettes for her dress' (Pountney, 1998).

2.6.12 Newspaper dated November 12, 1909 (MSA E.08)

Although not part of the cache found in the chaise longue the rationale for including this sheet of newspaper in the collection is explained below. In 1995, building work in the first floor back bedroom at 20 Russell Terrace necessitated taking-up the floorboards, under which was found a sheet of newspaper (MSA E.08) and an advertisement for a stove (MSA E.09). The newspaper in particular was in an extremely fragile condition, disintegrating when handled, and had also darkened considerably due to the degradation of the paper and years of accumulated dust. The condition made it almost impossible to read to ascertain if there was a reason for its concealment. However, the publication name and date were almost decipherable '*The Courier*ber 12, 1909' which was when Miss Smith was living in the house and for this reason it was felt appropriate to include it in the inventory although technically it was not part of the cache. The Leamington Spa local newspaper is called *The Courier* and there were references to.. 'today, Friday' in the print, and research confirmed that the month had to be November - November 12, 1909.⁹⁴ So what was the reason for wishing to keep this piece of newspaper and, by concealing it, preserve it for posterity? The Leamington library has a microfilm facility for viewing old newspapers, as do many libraries, but a perusal of the contents showed no match with the remnants of the paper. Closer scrutiny of the newspaper indicated that it probably did not come from Leamington Spa after all, but from Tunbridge Wells – another spa town and with a local paper called *The Courier*, but what was the connection?

Census returns show that from 1891 Miss Smith took in lodgers – in every case single or widowed mature women 'living on own means'. The 1901 census shows that one of these lodgers is named as Charlotte Elers, single, aged 77 years and living on her own means (Miss Smith was aged 52). A search of the census returns shows that Charlotte Elers came from a large, well-off family; her father was a Cambridge educated clergyman. Ten years later, in 1911, Charlotte Elers was still a lodger at 20 Russell Terrace⁹⁵ and it is reasonable to

⁹⁴ <http://www.mathsisfun.com/games/dayofweek.html>

⁹⁵ 1911 Census return

assume that she and Miss Smith would have known each other quite well by this time, having shared a roof for so long, and may well have regarded each other as friends and shared an interest in each other's lives; probate shows that she was still living there until her death in April 1919. To return to the newspaper, the most striking piece of news was of the inauguration of the new mayor – one Mr Frederick Wadham Elers and research into his family history shows that he was the cousin of Miss Smith's lodger, Charlotte Elers (their fathers were brothers), and an abbreviated family tree illustrating the association is shown in fig.64 below.

It must have been a source of some pride to be related to someone holding such a prestigious office and perhaps Miss Smith too felt some of that reflected pride. However, this posed another possibility – that it was the lodger, and not Miss Smith, who secreted the newspaper under the floorboards. This option is lent further weight by the fact that, in her will, Charlotte Elers left all her 'wearing apparel' to a friend so it would appear that she had clothing, and potentially fabrics, that were of some value. However, close examination of census returns suggests that this theory can be discounted for the following reason. The 1911 census form differed from previous returns in two respects: the Head of the household had to sign the form, and the number of habitable rooms had to be stated. No. 20 Russell Terrace has three floors with two large rooms on each floor and a semi-basement with one large room. Miss Smith completed one form declaring six rooms and two occupants (herself and a domestic servant) and Charlotte Elers completed a second form stating that she was a lodger and there was one room in her dwelling place. This seems to indicate that Charlotte Elers was living in the semi-basement and is therefore unlikely to have had access to the first floor back bedroom in order to place anything under the floorboards. Nevertheless, she may have provided some of the textiles to her landlady/friend upstairs.

When the cache was discovered in 2003 the owners of 20 Russell Terrace, Alan Wilkinson and Jo Crozier, informed me that the previous owner had carried out extensive building work but it was not known if he had found anything else hidden within the fabric of the building. Coincidentally, the house owner in 2011 (Alan Wilkinson) was inaugurated mayor of Leamington – one hundred years after its first association to that high office. Fig.63 below is of the two mayors in their official robes.



Fig.63

Frederick Wadham Elers
Mayor of Royal Tunbridge Wells
1909-1910
(www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org)



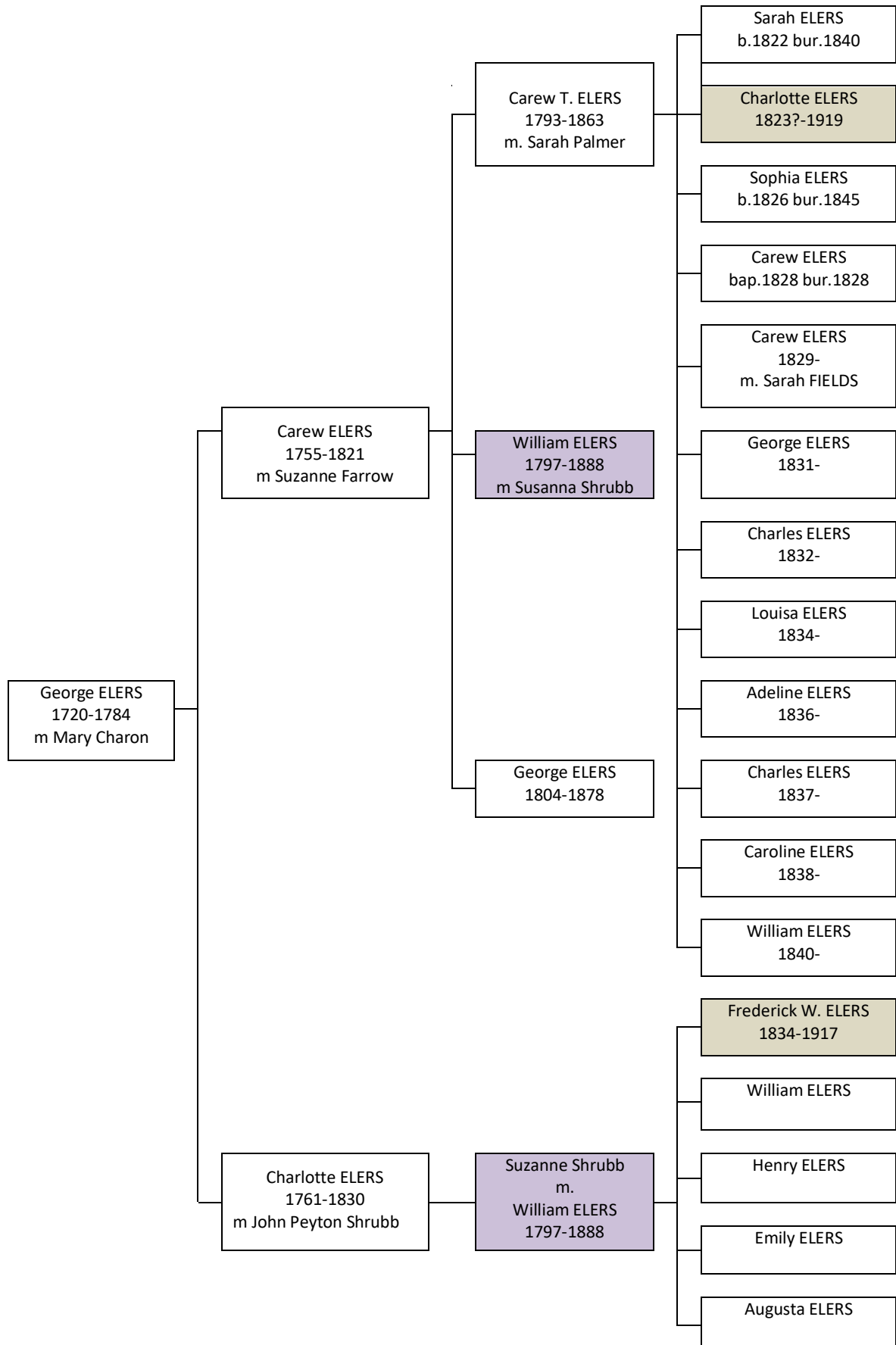
Alan Wilkinson
Mayor of Royal Leamington Spa
2011-2012
(*Leamington Courier*)

Frederick Wadham Elers was a cousin of Charlotte Elers, a lodger with Miss Smith in Russell Terrace at the time he was mayor of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Alan Wilkinson was Mayor of Royal Leamington Spa at the time he was living in Miss Smith's house in Russell Terrace.

Fig.64

Abbreviated family tree for Charlotte Elers, lodger with Miss Smith from abt. 1900-1919 and cousin of Frederick Wadham Elers, inaugurated Mayor of Tunbridge Wells in 1909.



2.6.13 The Textiles

Whilst perhaps not having the same immediate impact individually, nor potentially as informative as the clothing, the textiles are equally interesting and edifying and just as important. Many of them are very beautiful when seen at close range with interesting weave structures and the darns, patches and unpicked seams all form part of their history. It is difficult to describe in words the effect of seeing all the fabrics laid out together (fig.65 below) or the sense of excitement and anticipation experienced when handling them. Most of the pieces show signs of considerable wear and many have been darned and/or patched although a few look brand new with colours which are fresh and bright. The variety of the textiles in the cache has also been surprising (a selection of the printed fabrics is shown in fig.67 below) and the quality of the samples ranges from very cheap fabrics to a few really good quality pieces.

Fig.65 →
Image showing some of the
textiles laid out during the final
sorting and categorizing process.



As noted in the introduction an archive such as this, containing clothing or textiles once owned by a middle class person, is rare. Collections usually focus on the best possible quality objects made with top quality materials and fine workmanship, which tends to reflect the lives of wealthy people rather than the poor or middle classes.⁹⁴ However a unique archive is held by the Foundling Museum, which holds Britain's largest collection of eighteenth century textiles

⁹⁴ The classification of middle class was in fact a complicated multi-layered structure and is discussed in chapter 4 (section 4.1) but the most important qualification that defined middle-class status was the number of resident domestic staff employed.

belonging to ordinary people (Styles, 2010). The London Foundling Hospital first opened in 1741 and mothers giving-up their babies were encouraged to leave a token to aid identification in case circumstances changed and they were able to reclaim their child in the future. In practice, details of the babies were registered on admission and, where no token was left, a sample of material was cut from the babies' clothing and kept with the register and these records and samples comprise the archive. Although the Foundling archive is much larger (5,000 individual items) than the Miss Smith archive and dates from an earlier period (1750s) there are parallels. The most striking feature is the sheer number and variety of cloth and although many were patterned and colourful fabrics there are, astonishingly, very few duplicates. Styles (2010) talks of 'beautiful, mundane and moving scraps of fabric' to describe the Foundling archive (Styles, 2010, p.6) and those words could be applied to the Miss Smith archive too.

Fig.66

A sage green jacquard brocade trimming for trimming hats and dresses. Ribbons like this were a popular way of accessorizing clothing. (MSA T.63)



Some of the best quality fabrics in the cache were decorative braids; an example of which is shown in fig.66 above (MSA T.63). Accessorizing was an important part of fashion in the eighteenth century and 'no accessory was more versatile than ribbons' (Styles, 2010, p.43). They were usually made from silk and, Styles adds, 'ribbons added luxury and colour in an inexpensive manner' (Styles, 2010, p.43). In the nineteenth century the fashion for accessorizing continued and Dickens acknowledges this in his novel *A Christmas Carol* (1843) describing Cratchit's wife 'dressed out poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave with ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence'

(equivalent to just over £1 today⁹⁵). The quotation above highlights not only the use of ribbons but another Victorian practice exercised by the less affluent; that of re-making garments so that the worn, faded side is turned to the inside and the less shabby surface becomes the outside. This economy is also noted by George Elliot⁹⁶ when she refers to the poor curate's wife, Milly, in her 'newly-turned black silk'. George Elliot, coincidentally, was born and brought up in Warwickshire and, like Dickens, based her characters and locations on familiar people and places.

Items T.08 and T.09 – garment pieces - from the cache could well have been recycled material made up from another garment. The odd shapes and remains of previous stitching on the pieces makes them difficult to interpret but provokes speculation as to what the original article might have looked like. These two objects are both made from black silk taffeta and possibly both were part of the same garment. They are both machine stitched but have the inside raw edges over sewn by hand. Piece T.08 is part of a dress bodice (fig.68 below) and is a small size with a tiny armhole which is edged with minute piping. It is possible that it was part of a child's garment, although it has a bust dart so is more likely to have been adult clothing. The lower edge has a fairly deep hem and there are six handmade cotton loops along the bottom but they do not extend the full width of the bodice. During the Victorian period women's dresses often had separate skirts which attached to the bodice with hooks, but the cotton loops on this bodice would not have been strong enough to support the weight of a skirt so it is unclear what their purpose would have been. A silk gown wouldn't have been worn when carrying out housework, but one possible explanation could be that the loops were for attaching a lacy apron when serving tea or some other such comparatively 'clean' undertaking. The second piece (T.09) is made up from several small pieces of material sewn together but it has not been possible to decipher its original form.

⁹⁵ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency>

⁹⁶ *Scenes of Clerical Life: The Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton*, written by George Elliot and first published 1858.



Fig.67 A selection of the textiles used to stuff the chaise.



Fig.68

Part of a dress bodice made in black silk with tiny cotton loops along the bottom edge (detail bottom left) (MSA T-08).

2.7 Summary

The first part of this chapter gave an insight into an activity undertaken by someone over a hundred years ago, that of reupholstering a large piece of furniture, and the manner in which that task was carried out. The images in the chapter offer a brief glimpse of a person's possessions and the life that they had before being hidden away in the back of the chaise longue, and it is intriguing to wonder what that person might have looked like.

The photograph in fig.69 below was taken by a professional photographer in Leamington Spa in 1874 (when Miss Smith would have been 26) and not only is it typical of its time but it also provides links to several of the pieces found in the cache. Under this very beautiful silk dress, and the profusion of fabric ruched at the back, would almost certainly have been a bustle similar to the larger of the two found in the cache (MSA C.02). The dress has a lot of decoration made possible by the introduction of the sewing machine – a decorative pocket, frills around the cuffs and the neckline and sleeve decoration which includes two pointed tabs with buttons which bear a striking resemblance to sample MSA

T.78 found in the cache (a pointed decorative tab with a buttonhole in the end (fig.62). The young woman is wearing a detachable collar in the neck of her gown (MSA C.13) and she is leaning on a typically Victorian couch – probably one of the photographer's props as it appears in several images in his portfolio.⁹⁷



Fig.69

Person with the surname Smith.

Photograph taken by a professional photographer in Leamington Spa in 1874. Miss Smith would have been 26 in 1874. (Image: WoW)

⁹⁷ <http://www.search.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk> Graham Studios portraits.

Perhaps even more remarkably, the photograph is labelled 'person with the surname Smith'. The Leamington street directories list the names of all inhabitants of middle class or above and for the period covering 1884 only three families are shown with the surname Smith. Apart from Miss Smith, there was only one other person listed who could potentially be the person in the photograph. Census returns for 1881 show a total of 78 people named Smith living in Leamington, but this figure includes domestic servants and other working class people and they are unlikely to have had a photograph taken by a professional photographer, or been in possession of such a magnificent gown.

Whilst it cannot be claimed categorically that the young woman in the photograph is the same person who created the cache there is a possibility that it is. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the appearance of the person in the photograph is fairly typical of a young, middle class woman living in Leamington Spa at that time.

To return to the cache, as claimed throughout this chapter there are no other known examples of a piece of furniture being upholstered in the way Miss Smith's chaise was upholstered which potentially makes this method unique and the arguments to support the claim that this was a deliberate concealment are as follows: The items used for the stuffing clearly had different uses and lives before being hidden away in the chaise longue and it appears that some of them at least had been very carefully selected for inclusion because of the way they had been placed in bags or other receptacles. The clothing styles span a period of six decades and include items of male, female and children's wear and, perhaps surprisingly, several items of underwear, which again appears to indicate a selection process has taken place. The original stuffing in the chaise would almost certainly have been horsehair, which was (and still is) a valuable commodity, so why would someone discard that and replace it with used scraps of fabric. The repetitive winding of the textiles into balls could be seen as a ritual activity. All the above suggests that the items could have had sentimental significance and perhaps the chaise was being used to contain a person's memories.

The number and variety of the textiles also raises questions about where they all came from and this probably cannot be answered with absolute certainty but

options can be considered. Could these be personal possessions which had been saved over a long period or maybe collected from friends and relations? It is possible; Miss Smith lived until she was 89 so if she saved materials for sixty years, say, and there are four hundred different textiles, that is an average of only six pieces a year. June Swann⁹⁸ recalls that her grandmother had a sewing cupboard which had been a late Victorian side-board; it was waist-high and was stuffed full of scrap materials that she had saved and garments unpicked for re-use. Any precious items like christening robes were carefully folded and packed separately. This acknowledges that it was not unusual to save things in case they should be of further use in the future, but the manner in which they were used in the chaise is unusual.

There was a Workhouse in Leamington and it is possible that all these fabrics were bought from the Workhouse or some other source but if that was the case it is likely there would have been more than one piece from most garments. The pieces of clothing presumably came from whole garments so one has to question why the whole garment was not used. Because of the number and variety of the textiles it is possible that they represented a token piece and it could be conjectured there were other projects and other pieces of furniture upholstered in the same idiosyncratic way with the textiles being distributed amongst them. The seat of the chaise would have had harder wear than the back and it is feasible that this had been upholstered in the same way but that the seat stuffing had been discarded during the refurbishment of the frame in the 1960s or 1980s. Whatever the reason, what was included in the cache is still a significant collection.

This chapter has introduced the cache. It has contrasted traditional upholstery practices to the method used with the cache to demonstrate the highly unusual nature of this upholstery technique and it has demonstrated that even if this was an exercise in economy it was also a deliberate concealment, meticulously carried out. Once the top cover was in place on the chaise the items were effectively concealed and Miss Smith must have been fairly certain that no-one

⁹⁸ Former Keeper of the Shoe Collection at Northampton Museum from 1951-1987 and leading member of DATS.

would discover the cache, at least in her lifetime, but it is interesting that she included her name and address. It could be that as well as providing a sort of comfort blanket the cache also served the dual purpose of creating her own memento mori. Why anyone would conceal artefacts in this way and other forms of the practice of concealment are explored in chapter 3, 'The practice of concealment'.

3. The Practice of Concealment

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the discovery of the cache in the chaise longue; the finding of which and subsequent treatment of it could be likened to an archaeological dig.⁹⁹ The chapter also served to underpin the hypothesis that this was a deliberate concealment rather than just an economical way to refurbish a piece of furniture. The practice of concealment is therefore fundamental to the context of the research and the purpose of the first section of this chapter is to discuss other forms of hiding things and to consider the behavioural traits, opinions and frame of mind of those who are involved in the custom to try to understand why anyone would wish to create a cache. It questions how people decide what to hide and considers how they might select a hiding place, opening-up questions surrounding the phenomenon of concealment and issues around human behaviours. It does this by using published sources, previous research projects and exhibitions. One of the projects which has particular relevance to, and has influenced, part of this research is the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project (DCGP). The scope of the DCGP as outlined in section 3.1.4 is essentially a means of recording such finds in a cohesive way and encouraging the reporting of such finds whereas this research aims to add to this knowledge by exploring the possible reasons behind such behaviour as well as considering the life of the person behind the chaise concealment, Miss Smith, to try to understand the rationale which led to her carrying out this activity.

The second section of the chapter studies motivations for this behaviour and explores what artefacts can tell us about the person who concealed them by using particular examples as case studies. It discusses the meaning attributed to 'things' and also looks at how people communicate through art using examples represented in exhibitions and literature to confirm and interpret this.

⁹⁹ Excavation recording (undated), Oxford University for Continuing Education and conversations with C R Baumber, Trustee of Wiltshire Museum (Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society) and Chairman of Buildings and Monuments Committee for listed buildings and monuments.

Two particularly powerful illustrations of emotions and ‘things’ becoming intertwined were demonstrated by exhibitions held at Compton Verney in 2008 (section 3.2.3) and The Foundling Museum in 2010 (section 3.2.4). Both these exhibitions included items which had intense personal significance for the original creators/owners and this is expanded upon in the related sections identified above. By exploring these different avenues it is hoped to gain a better understanding of the motivation behind the creation of Miss Smith’s cache and try to fathom the reason why the cache was deliberately concealed.

Deliberate concealments are part of a wider practice which have been taking place in various forms for centuries and are often connected to rituals and superstition (Merrifield, 1987) and this aspect is addressed in the section on myth, ritual and symbolism (3.2.2). This is potentially a massive area but for the purposes of this thesis the scope will be confined to western culture and to examples found, researched or exhibited from the early nineteenth century to the present day in order to control the boundaries of the research and to keep it within the period of Miss Smith’s cache.

Another considerable, and specialist, area of research concerns the psychology of acts of concealment and, in particular, self-concealment when people deliberately hide personal information - often their innermost feelings - from others. This construct is commonly linked with negative thoughts and is frequently associated with mental illness (Larsen and Chastain, 1990). There is a connection here with the way that people sometimes express themselves through art and this is explored in section 3.2.3 with reference to *Outsider Art* and case studies of some instances of this are cited in this section; in particular Bispo’s cape (3.2.3.2), Agnes’ jacket (3.2.3.3) and Lorina’s samplers (3.2.3.4). Whilst Miss Smith’s act of concealment doesn’t necessarily qualify her to be classified as mentally troubled it is interesting to note that here even the person is hidden due to her commonplace surname, Smith. To expand on this; your name is your most personal possession yet Smith is the most popular surname in the English speaking world by a considerable margin,¹⁰⁰ added to this Miss

¹⁰⁰ Hanks, P. (editor-in-chief) (2016) *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. The research for this publication examined 45,600 surnames that are carried by more than 100 people. It established that most surnames are fairly rare and in 1881 nine in ten names had fewer than 1,000 bearers. The most common name is Smith which is used by more than half a million people.

Smith's first name was Sarah which was the same as her mother's, so it would be easy to imagine that this person could feel invisible.

The practice of concealment is a multi-faceted ritual with diverse motivations and whilst the following insights do not claim to be exhaustive, they offer a range of examples of different forms of concealment which are included in the categories detailed below. Whilst not all of these examples are relevant to this thesis they are acknowledged because they form part of the phenomenon of concealment, but where they are applicable illustrations will be studied in this chapter.

3.0.1 Other Forms of Concealment

Other forms of concealment such as the illicit, the illegal, the unsanctioned: for safety, instances such as priest holes for the protection of people in times of political strife: for religious and cultural reasons, for example women wearing the burka or hijab: recreational reasons such as geo-caching¹⁰¹ and letterboxing¹⁰² - are recognised as alternative forms of the genre, but are not specifically relevant to this thesis and do not form any further part of the research.

The section on Quilts (3.1.6) investigates the hidden histories behind the material work but one of the case studies has an additional form of concealment in the form of a diary, several pages of which were written in shorthand. Shorthand is a valuable skill, still practiced today, but in the seventeenth century it was considered useful not only for recording sermons and but also as a means of 'secrete' writing¹⁰³ - an expedient method of recording one's thoughts in times of political upheaval (Clare Smith in Prichard, 2010).

Caves often occur naturally and there are accounts of them being occupied by hermits (ostensibly concealing themselves) and ordinary people. There are

¹⁰¹ Geocaching is an outdoor pursuit which uses navigational techniques such as GPS (Global Positioning System) to find hidden caches. These typically comprise a small waterproof container inside which is a logbook for participants to record their visit.

¹⁰² Letterboxing is similar to geocaching but tends to use puzzle solving to locate the cache, although many also incorporate elements of orienteering. Those taking part follow clues to find the cache and record their visit by rubber-stamping a hidden logbook.

¹⁰³ *Of Household Stuff: The 1601 inventories of Bess of Hardwick* (National Trust, 2001), p.46.

also reports of them being used for concealment purposes. One instance relates to a complex system of underground passageways and storage areas constructed by smugglers in Worcester which passes through the grounds of St Andrew's Church (Palmer, 2005). Tales of smugglers and secret passages formed part of the folk lore of Worcestershire, where Miss Smith was born and spent the first years of her life, and it is very likely that she heard these stories as she was growing up. However, these sections are not in line with the core of this study and therefore have not been reviewed in any depth.

The following part of the thesis begins by looking at some of the different forms of concealment which do have relevance to the research, specifically those connected with furniture and those with possible connections with ritual and psychological needs. Although each of the following sections focuses on a specific example of the genre of concealment there is an element of overlap as many instances fall into more than one category and therefore potentially contain different reasons for the undertaking of a particular activity.

3.1 Forms of Concealment

3.1.1 Secret Compartments in Furniture

Some pieces of furniture have purpose-made secret compartments built-in to them with the objective of providing privacy and security. These were designed to be used to store personal or valuable items or documents and whilst Miss Smith's cache was not strictly in a secret compartment it was not immediately accessible, it was an integral part of the upholstery structure, so could be claimed to fall into this category.

Research into secret compartments in furniture was carried out by former furniture restoration student Richard Green who based his undergraduate dissertation on the subject. He found that whilst the subject is fascinating, and exciting when a secret compartment is discovered, very little has been written about them. This is probably because secret drawers and compartments are designed to be just that – secret – and it would defeat their purpose to publicise the location or means of access. Green's (1996) research included correspondence with antique dealer and author Christopher Claxton Stevens who suggests that these types of compartment can be put into three categories:

firstly those that are designed to show off the technical skills of the maker: secondly, 'semi-secret' drawers which are quite common in some types of furniture: thirdly, specially commissioned pieces with compartments which are designed to be truly secret. In addition, instances have been found of implicit codes and one example of this was found on a rush back stool which had been stripped ready for restoration and which revealed a complete set of finger prints on the inside of the seat frame.¹⁰⁴ Similar but less oblique forms of this are displayed by signatures and dates on seat frames, often written by the upholsterer wishing to record his involvement with a piece.¹⁰⁵ It could be surmised that Miss Smith's inclusion of her name and address incorporated in the sofa stuffing would fall into this latter category. The details were unlikely to have been discovered in her lifetime but nevertheless she was associating herself with the work by leaving her mark.

It is not uncommon to find hidden inscriptions on furniture,¹⁰⁶ for example Seddons¹⁰⁷ furniture often records the original owner or maker with inscriptions such as 'This piece was made by ...' frequently found under the drawers. It is also very common to find inscriptions on clocks and behind mirrors.¹⁰⁸ These types of inscriptions are usually not intended to be obvious, but are rather the craftsman leaving his mark in a discrete manner. To make a connection with Miss Smith's cache, she identified herself by the inclusion of her name and address with an address label attached to brown wrapping paper (MSA E.02, shown in chapter 1, fig.1). The paper appears to have been the packaging from a purchase delivered from a local store (Burgis and Colbourne of Leamington Spa, general providers¹⁰⁹), which also coincidentally identified where she did

¹⁰⁴ The explanation for this is that in the past the legs would have been stained and, inevitably, some of the stain would get on the craft person's hands which would get transferred to the frame when the stool was put aside to dry, thus providing a perfect but hidden 'signature' beneath the rush. Conversation with furniture historian Bernard Cotton, 21 July 2016.

¹⁰⁵ If the upholsterer signs the calico it would be hidden by the top cover so not visible, but when the seat was reupholstered the calico would invariably be replaced and the association lost. By signing the frame the record is retained for posterity – conversations with David Middleton, retired Chief Upholsterer, The Royal Household.

¹⁰⁶ Conversation with Adam Bowett, furniture historian and author, 23 April 2012.

¹⁰⁷ George Seddon (1727–1801) was an English cabinet maker.

¹⁰⁸ Conversation with Adam Bowett, furniture historian and author, 23 April 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Burgis and Colbourne was founded in 1875 by two grocers – Charles Richard Burgis and James Colbourne - and is still in existence today albeit now as part of House of Fraser.

some of her shopping.¹¹⁰ It could be that the inclusion of her name indicated a desire to have her handiwork recognised should the cache ever come to light or it could have been a desire to include and connect herself to the cache. This item had been folded and placed in a cotton bag before being incorporated into the cache, so it was a very deliberate placement – and a concealment within a concealment. The fact that Miss Smith had folded items before their inclusion in the cache, rather than just stuffing them in, could allude to a (perhaps subconscious) form of ritual, a subject included in section 3.2.2 which covers ritual and symbolism.

3.1.1.1 Display of technical skills

An example of this first type of furniture is the Murray Cabinet which is housed at Temple Newsam House, Leeds. This was made c.1750 and contains a separate interior cupboard which has seventeen drawers and compartments which can only be accessed via the operation of hidden catches and springs (fig.70 below). One of the special features of this cabinet is the use of escutcheons on lock plates which require pressure on a certain point, using a metal spike, in order to activate the mechanism to open the secret compartment; an idea taken from furniture such as pieces made by Roentgen¹¹¹ who specialised in furniture with unique mechanical features and secret compartments.

¹¹⁰ Or perhaps she would like people to think that was where she did her shopping. Was she creating an accurate or aspirational impression of herself?

¹¹¹ David Roentgen, 1743-1807, German cabinet maker who specialised in marquetry, secret drawers and intricate mechanical fittings.



Fig.70

The Murray Cabinet, Temple Newsam House, Leeds, which contains seventeen secret compartments.

(www.leeds.gov.uk/museumsandgalleries)

The Berlin secretary cabinet made by Roentgen (shown in fig.71 below) incorporates an abundance of mechanical features and is described by the Metropolitan Museum of Art¹¹² who state that this is possibly 'the most expensive piece of furniture ever made'. The museum has posted a *youtube* entry (details for the link included in the footnote¹¹³) which displays the mechanism in action of this truly amazing piece of furniture.

¹¹² <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/L.2013.15.1>

¹¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKikHxKeodA>



Fig.71

The Berlin secretary cabinet made by Roentgen, possibly the most expensive piece of furniture ever made. It contains numerous hidden compartments, all accessed via mechanical means. (Image: www.metmuseum.org)

Another striking example of this type of work forms part of the Terry's collection displayed at Fairfax House in York. It features a walnut cabinet c.1700 which contains 48 drawers, 21 of which are 'secret'; an inventory has been kept of everything found hidden inside.

3.1.1.2 Semi-secret hiding places

Tea caddies fall into the second category of secret compartments in furniture, which frequently had sliding sides and hidden drawers in which to keep silver teaspoons, and 18th century bureaux which often featured sliding panels or false columns either side of the central inside door. Mouldings, plinths and frieze rails are all areas which have been used to incorporate secret drawers and whilst these features were designed for security purposes it was not uncommon to incorporate them in this type of furniture making them an 'open secret' rather than truly secret. With a little knowledge and some patience the secret compartments can usually be unearthed; Thomas Sheraton included drawings and instructions in his drawing book with one example of a lady's

writing table being accessed by means of a spring when the knob on the candle-branch was pressed (Sheraton, 1802).

An example of a semi-secret concealment was related by furniture historian Bernard Cotton¹¹⁴ who was invited to look at a Scottish laburnum box which contained family documents and letters. The box had a sliding lid, rather like a pencil case, which meant that the underside of the lid would not normally be seen. However, close inspection revealed an inscription written on the underside of the lid which recorded the wood used, who made the box, where it was made, and who it was made for. To complete the picture, further research unearthed a steel engraving of the house the box was made for.

3.1.1.3 Truly secret hiding places

Green (1996) cites an example of something which had been hidden with the intention of it never being found with an article taken from the Chester Chronicle dated May 7, 1755.¹¹⁵ This related to an old chest of drawers which was being sold at auction in which a cache of bank notes was found, totalling between nine and ten thousand pounds.¹¹⁶ These were discovered in a secret drawer which only came to light because the purchaser complained that the drawer didn't close correctly. The furniture had apparently belonged to an elderly lady who had died some forty years previously, leaving her friends wondering what she had done with all her money.

3.1.2 Deliberate Concealments of Garments and Textiles

The practice of deliberately concealing garments, shoes and other artefacts in buildings is apparently widespread, although relatively unreported in Britain and mainland Europe¹¹⁷ as evidenced at a North American conference on the

¹¹⁴ Conversation with furniture historian Bernard Cotton, 21 July 2016.

¹¹⁵ Recounted by W R Symonds in *Country Life* magazine, December 1, 1955.

¹¹⁶ This would equate to around £750,000 in today's money.

¹¹⁷ It is interesting that this practice appears to be more known in the US which is a much 'newer' country.

subject in 2003¹¹⁸ and, as with secret drawers in furniture, seldom reported. It is an intriguing phenomenon and one that captures people's imagination. The DCGP conducted and recorded a number of interviews with people associated with the discovery of some of the hidden caches which had been reported to them. One of these interviews included homeowners the Maynard family who discovered a cache behind one of the bedroom walls in their 15th century home in Nether Wallop. Mrs Maynard says that they were previously unaware of the custom of concealing garments in buildings and she was 'terribly excited' by the discovery. She added that it was inspiring to find clothes that old and to imagine the people who had lived in the house and who had worn the clothing.¹¹⁹ Textile conservator, Sue Stanton, recalls the first time she saw the 18th century doublet which had formed part of a cache which had been found in Reigate.¹²⁰ She realised instantly that that was the project she wanted to work on in the final year of her course and found it completely fascinating. This garment was extremely rare, not only because of the age of the piece but also because it had been worn by a working person; most items of clothing from that period which have survived have belonged to wealthy people and been well cared for and retained because of their perceived aesthetic value – a tendency referred to in the introduction of the previous chapter. In common with the clothing cited above, the items in Miss Smith's cache were generally not high quality pieces and therefore quite rare to find.

There are over 800 pieces of fabric in Miss Smith's cache of 400 different types; but was this just what we would now refer to as a master class in recycling or was it something of much greater significance for Miss Smith? Many of the textiles had been darned or patched and showed signs of significant use and these repairs are recorded on the individual record sheets in the inventory – current cataloguing methods were researched using existing archives, as identified in the Introduction chapter (section 1.7), which sets out the methodology for the inventory. Some of the textiles also appeared to have been used more than once prior to their concealment;

¹¹⁸ D Eastop and C Dew, *Secret Agents: deliberately concealed garments as symbolic textiles*, in J Vuori Tales in Textiles, preprints of North American Textile Conservation Conference 2003, Albany NY pp 5-15

¹¹⁹ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/2010/07/nether-wallop-cache/>

¹²⁰ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/2002/08/the-reigate-cache/>

again, this is documented in the inventory. Curiously, any seams had all been unpicked rather than the items just being torn or cut into smaller pieces and this aspect is considered further in section 3.2.3.5 which highlights an article of clothing on display at the Compton Verney exhibition which had been created by unpicking other garments which had associations with the family of the maker. 'Reuse, repair, recycle' is a popular mantra in current times but it is not a modern invention; in the 19th century it would have been common practice. June Swann remembers¹²¹ that her grandmother had a late 19th century side-board which she used as a sewing cupboard. It was stuffed full of scrap materials she had saved, like the textiles found in the chaise, and 'of course, garments unpicked for re-use'. Unpicking seams, rather than cutting or tearing the items apart, would ensure that all seam allowances were retained and so the maximum amount of material would be available for reuse. Swann said that anything precious like christening robes were carefully folded and packed separately, although she had no recollection of mourning dresses. Swann added that the only surviving material of her mother's 1928 wedding dress she used to make a needle-case about 75 or maybe more years ago, and 'it's still in the workbox upstairs now' although she rarely uses it. Whilst some of Swann's textiles would undoubtedly have sentimental value their re-use was mainly due to economic reasons and the practice of 'make do and mend' rather than as an oblique concealment.

Thus, storing textiles for future re-use is a practical, economic exercise whereas deliberately concealing them puts them in a totally different context, endowing them with another form of life. It could be argued that the fabric for Miss Smith's bundles came from a storage cupboard like the one owned by Swann's mother but, as has previously been contended, if that were the case then surely there would have been fabric from complete garments rather than smallish samples from four hundred different articles.¹²² It could also be that utilising the items in this way had the purpose of keeping the contents safe and also preventing them from being found whilst still keeping

¹²¹ email correspondence

¹²² This does of course depend on any deliberate intentions on the part of Miss Smith: a smaller number of more complete garments might not give such a comprehensive record of her life.

them close. The fact that they were encased could be significant and this suggestion is prompted by the work of ceramic artist and author Edmund de Waal in two different ways: firstly his research into his family history which was motivated by the inheritance of 253 Japanese netsuke (de Waal, 2011) and secondly his contribution to an exhibition at the Foundling Museum (*Found*, 2016). However, whilst both these instances could be classed as 'concealed' they also have a strong leaning towards 'the meaning of things' and are therefore expanded on in section 3.2.0.

This next section focuses on examples of deliberate concealments, mainly of shoes, and the principal source of information comes from records initiated at Northampton Museum.

3.1.3 Shoes Concealed in Buildings

Northamptonshire has a proud footwear heritage and so it is fitting that the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery contains the world's largest collection of objects which chart the history of shoes.¹²³ June Swann worked at the museum as shoe curator from 1950 until her retirement in 1988 and in that role regularly received shoes for identification which had been found hidden in buildings. She records:

They had come mostly from chimneys, and I recall being particularly puzzled by a pair of child's boots, found in the thatch of a cottage in Stanwick, Northamptonshire, and wondering what sort of people allowed a child so small to lose its boots on the roof (Swann, 1996, p.56).

Swann says she is not a superstitious person but during the 1950s she was having a conversation with John Thornton, who was then Head of the Boot and Shoe Department at Northampton College of Technology, when both disclosed that they had received a number of shoes for identification which had been found hidden in unusual places within the actual fabric of buildings. They suddenly realised that this could not be a coincidence and possibly showed the existence of a superstition which neither had come across before and which had apparently been unrecorded. This led Swann to begin to document these finds and her records have become the Concealed Shoe Index (CSI) which is

¹²³ Shoe is a general term for all sorts of footwear.

held at the Northampton Museum.¹²⁴ Despite her initial scepticism, Swann was finally convinced that these shoes had not been lost by accident with the discovery of an adult shoe, c. 1620s, which was found plastered halfway up a wall in a medieval property, Leigh Barton, in Devon, and which could not have been plastered over accidentally. Another example was a shoe hidden behind a fireplace in Farndon, Nottinghamshire, which had been placed in an earthenware pot. Swann observed that this was 'not the normal way to store shoes' (Swann, 1996, p.60).

In the CSI details recorded, wherever possible, include dating and a description of the shoes, the type of building where the shoe was found, the location within the building where the shoe had been hidden and any associated finds (Swann, 1996). One of the objectives of the index was to try to establish if particular hiding places were favoured at different times, but no pattern emerged from the records. The buildings are diverse and range from workhouses and small cottages to grand homes, such as Haddon Hall and Hampton Court Palace, and also include religious establishments; chapels and cathedrals. The number of entries recorded is now over 1,900 coming from all over the UK and includes some finds from Europe and North America. It is probable that many finds have not been recorded and have just been thrown away as junk and this is an issue encountered by both Merrifield in relation to archaeological digs (Merrifield 1987) and Eastop when working on the DCGP; in fact one of the aims of the DCGP was to raise awareness of the practice of concealing garments within buildings and to encourage people who find such concealments to report them.

But why would anyone deliberately conceal objects, and particularly shoes, within the structure of a building? This question of 'why' is addressed in more detail in section 3.2.2, covering myth, ritual and symbolism but one suggestion is that it gives the dwelling protection from evil, a theory put forward by Merrifield (1987 p.133) who cites a fourteenth century belief that the rector of a Buckinghamshire parish, Sir John Schorne, conjured the devil into a boot from where it couldn't escape; and with the devil contained the building was protected. Swann points out that this idea could be rationalised by the style of shoes at the time – which were extremely narrow and pointed, so it would be

¹²⁴ <https://northamptonmuseums.wordpress.com/2012/06/19/concealed-shoes/>

easy to think that the devil was pinching you – but acknowledges that it does reinforce the belief that evil can be trapped in a boot.

One of the problems of researching deliberate concealments is the secretive nature of the custom. Merrifield (1987 p.134) cites an example recorded by June Swann where a child witnessed his father hiding a worn-out boot amongst the foundations for a new floor. The boot had not belonged to the family and when the child questioned his father he was unable to get a satisfactory explanation for this behaviour. Merrifield (1987) suggests that it may be perceived that in order for the charm to work it has to be hidden secretly. Shoes are the only item of clothing that retain the shape of the owners – textile clothing just falls in a heap on the floor – and therefore, it is suggested, they retain the spirit of the person. Swann records concealments which appear to contain shoes from several family members, as though they had all contributed, and suggests the practice is almost like consecrating the house for their use (Swann, 1966, p.64). To relate this practice to the cache, whilst there were no shoes hidden in the chaise there did appear to be items from different family members as the clothing comprised both male and female, adult and child. Textile conservator and curator Mary Brooks records some of the many finds from National Trust properties, which are often referred to as ‘builders’ sacrifice’, and suggests the practice could stem from ancient rituals of burying a human sacrifice to provide spiritual protection to a building (Brooks, 2001). This is a practice expanded upon by Merrifield (1987) who writes that evidence of rituals of commencement involving ‘foundation offerings’ were customary in the pre-Roman Iron Age when the sacrifice was often human. Merrifield draws a distinction between sacrifices and other offerings suggesting that the taking of life – human or animal – was not just a gift of food to a god from whom protection was being sought, but was probably seen as being able to renew the life of the god to whom it was offered. Whilst less usual, evidence exists of deposits associated with rites of termination when a building or well, for example, came to the end of its useful life.

To return to the subject of shoes concealed in buildings, as stated earlier the term ‘shoe’ in the Northampton Museum index is used as a general term for all kinds of footwear but it is interesting to compare the associated finds recorded in the index with items found in the chaise cache. After shoes, the highest

number of other items recorded in the index are articles of clothing.¹²⁵ Some of these are socks and stockings but the majority are items of headwear. A brief comparison of the Northampton Museum finds with those in the Miss Smith cache shows similarities as disclosed in the table below (fig.72). The items found in Miss Smith's cache correspond to those found in other concealments which could indicate that some items were specifically chosen for concealment because they were seen to have symbolic significance in one way or another.

Northampton Museum Concealed Shoe Index ¹²⁶	
Northampton Museum – associated finds	The Miss Smith cache
hats and caps	lady's cotton cap
women's and children's dresses	sleeve from a lady's dress plus a number of cuffs and collars
a baby's gown	toddler's dress
corsets	two bustles
chemise	two found
shawls	lace shawl (dress trim) two large squares which were possibly used as shawls
pocket	one detachable pocket plus three pocket-shaped artefacts found
man's shirt	two detachable collars
man's cravat	pre-formed tie
socks and stockings	foot section of a stocking
papers with names	two examples
newspaper reports	one example found under floorboards of Miss Smith's house
Fig.72 The highest number of associated finds are of other items of dress; associated with the foot are some socks and stockings, but the majority are items of headwear.	

¹²⁵ This could be that people are more likely to recognise a shoe as being purposely hidden than they would a textile fragment.

¹²⁶ The period covered by the Shoe Index is from the 1950s onwards whereas some (or most) of the items from Miss Smith's cache are specific to a fairly narrow time period. However, some of the items may be comparable i.e. the bustles compared against corsets – they are quite different but are all 'shapewear' in modern parlance.

3.1.3.1 Stockings

Of particular relevance to this section is the lady's cotton stocking found in the cache (MSA C.10)(fig.73). Museum curator Jeremy Farrell wrote that socks and stockings have never acquired the 'mystical' status of other items of clothing such as the glove or the shoe and suggested this may be because they could not easily be removed (Farrell, 1992). He pointed out that our oldest order of chivalry was inspired by 'the garter, rather than the fallen stocking'¹²⁷ and suggested the background of the stocking is rather more domestic.

Machine made socks and stockings have been available for over four hundred years; William Lee was the inventor of the stocking frame and is regarded as



Fig.73

Images of the much-darned cotton stocking found in the cache. MSA C.10.

the father of the hosiery industry (Farrell 1992). Although the machines were initially poorly received¹²⁸ the process was developed and refined and by the late 19th century stocking frames were in regular use.

Sales of framework knitted stockings were recorded in Daniel Defoe's *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1722-1758) in many locations, including Miss Smith's birthplace of Evesham (albeit a hundred years prior to her birth). The chief advantage of the knitting frames was the fineness achieved but they were time-intensive and were too expensive for common

¹²⁷ The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward III in 1348 and is the most senior and the oldest British Order of Chivalry.

¹²⁸ It is reported that when Lee first demonstrated his machine to Queen Elizabeth I in 1589 she refused to grant him a patent because she thought the results were too coarse – following this he allegedly emigrated to France where he died of a broken heart (although that was some twenty years later) (Farrell, 1992).

wear, whereas hand knitting could be successfully combined with seasonal jobs (such as farming or fishing) in slack periods or time between chores. By the 1870s fully automatic circular machines were being used for making socks and stockings and these industrial machines were the basis for the hand operated domestic machines which were introduced from the late 1860s.

The stocking from Miss Smith's cache (MSA C.10) has been made with very fine machine knitting with fashioning marks, so was probably purchased from a shop rather than home-made. It appears to have been very well used as an item of clothing and has been darned extensively¹²⁹ – and very neatly. At first sight it appeared to be a shoe liner, rather like a modern-day sports sock, but closer inspection showed that it had probably originally been a stocking but had been cut off around the ankle and now has a raw edge around the top which has rolled over. The extensive darning would probably have made the stocking quite uncomfortable to wear and it was apparently customary to replace the foot section when footwear reached this stage. According to Ringgaard¹³⁰ some stockings had their feet cut-off and replaced sometimes two or three times and there were professional stocking repairers who would carry out this work. In fact, at Beatties store in Wolverhampton repairs were still available in the 1960s.¹³¹ Images of Miss Smith's stocking were shown to members of the DATS via their on-line forum and the view of some of the members was that the construction of the sock did look a lot earlier than 1900 but that the stockings for some of the Scottish regiments are still made like that, so it is impossible to date accurately. June Swann is an honorary member of the society and contributed the following comments:

It reminded me immediately of the socks we wore inside rubber wellingtons in the 1930s. Definitely bought from shop, and all socks endlessly darned. Of course, knowing almost nothing of history of hosiery, I've no idea how far back they go, but rubber overshoes and boots were certainly around before 1848. We thought rubber was bad to have on feet, so always wore sock inside to blot up moisture (I still do). Wear/damage at centre front of throat suggests this worn with

¹²⁹ This may be an indication of the value of the stockings to the owner, or may just conform to the Victorian ethics of thrift.

¹³⁰ Maj Ringgaard, National Museum of Denmark. Conversation during CHORD Workshop at University of Wolverhampton, 12 June 2014.

¹³¹ Source – Richard Batho, goldsmith and independent conservator and resident of Wolverhampton.

shoe/overshoe with fastening there. Some later rubbers had spring/folding buckles that might have caught the cotton.

On this latter point, having had the benefit of finding the cache in situ and working closely with it, my view is that a number of small holes in the stocking appear to have been caused by the buttoning twine during one of the re-upholstery processes rather than by a buckle but, nevertheless, since this item has been so well worn it would be reasonable to suppose that its pair was in a similar condition and to question why that wasn't included in the cache too. It suggests that its inclusion could have been symbolic rather than just an economic use of items for stuffing.

3.1.3.2 Shoes and ritual

Shoes have long been associated with superstition and ritual and also as symbols of authority; reference to this goes back as far as the Old Testament indicating that to remove your shoes was an act of respect.¹³² Queen Victoria was illustrated by *Punch* magazine throwing a shoe after troops marching off to the Crimea War 'for luck' and Alfred, Lord Tennyson¹³³ wrote a monologue to mark the closing, after 300 years, of a Fleet Street tavern favoured by the literati which included a reference to shoe throwing for good luck:

And whereso-er thou move, good luck
Shall throw her old shoe after.¹³⁴

A common custom is to nail an old horseshoe over doorways or to fix one over bedsteads, not only to attract good luck but also as a form of protection against evil influences. There is some disagreement about the correct positioning of the horseshoe for maximum effectiveness: some people place them with the points upwards (associated with the horned moon) in order to catch good luck,

¹³² Examples in Exodus 3:5 when God told Moses to remove his shoes as he came out of the burning bush, and again in Joshua 5:15 when God told Joshua that the place where he was standing was holy and therefore he should remove his sandals.

¹³³ Alfred Lord Tennyson 1809-1892, Poet Laureate of Great Britain and Ireland during much of Queen Victoria's reign.

¹³⁴ Tennyson, *Lyrical Monologue*. The Cock Tavern in Fleet Street had been exclusively a male domain for around three hundred years but around the time Tennyson wrote his monologue (1853) it introduced two new innovations – vegetables and women. For a haunt which had been so masculine, and also so carnivorous, this move seemed like 'the beginning of the end' and the establishment finally closed in 1886.

others maintain it should be placed points downwards (associated with the Greek omega) in order to stop bad luck getting in (Palmer, 2005). There are a lot of superstitious practices associated with weddings including the throwing of rice (originally grains of wheat) together with an old shoe or slipper symbolising fruitfulness (Palmer, 1976). Brides nowadays are often given decorative horseshoes and old shoes are tied to the back of bridal carriages for luck. Another association linked to shoes is to aid fertility; suggested by the nursery rhyme about the old woman who lived in a shoe who had so many children. Looking at Miss Smith's stocking, there is nothing 'fancy' about it. It is very plain. It is now a red sand colour but was probably originally an off-white 'natural' colour. There doesn't appear to be anything special about it which would warrant inclusion on sentimental or aesthetic grounds. If she created the cache around the turn of the century she would have been in her early fifties, and she was unmarried, so it was highly unlikely that it was included to aid fertility so perhaps the inclusion was 'for luck'.

3.1.3.3 Concealed shoes

Many people who find a shoe concealed in a building assume that the shoe dates from the same time as the building, but unless the item has been buried under the actual foundations this assumption has often proved to be incorrect and the likelihood is that items have been concealed at a later date. Swann's work¹³⁵ on the subject of shoes concealed in buildings has recorded that several buildings have been found to have concealments dating from more than one period. Some caches appear to have been added to, sometimes several times, perhaps when the original has been discovered during building or restoration work and been replaced but with the addition of a contemporary shoe. One instance of a cache found hidden in a chimney in Suffolk included shoes from the 1540s, the 1640s and the 1720s. Many of these finds have actually been plastered into the fabric of the building, confirming the view that these were deliberate concealments rather than items which had just been lost or thrown away. Swann cites further examples where the finds were totally incongruous with their surroundings; such as a late 17th century 'tarty' woman's

¹³⁵ http://www.apotropaios.co.uk/june_swann_concealed_shoes.htm

shoe found in the wall in Ely Cathedral and a pair of children's shoes, dating from around 1850, which were found in the roof of a Benedictine monastery.

3.1.3.4 The treatment of discoveries

Given that the ostensible purpose of these concealments was to provide protection it is perhaps unsurprising that people who find them are faced with a dilemma; if they remove the cache will the building lose its protection and will there be unpleasant consequences? Brooks (2001) records the discovery of a collection of hidden boots and shoes found at a National Trust property in Pembrokeshire where the farmer's wife insisted they were boarded-up again immediately. Swann has come to the conclusion that men are far more likely to be superstitious than women and are often reluctant for any finds to be removed from the house (Swann, 1996). Some people have reported strange occurrences when the items have been removed; one instance reported by a woman from Hampshire reported strange noises and the sensation of vibrations when the items were sent away for identification, but once they came back the house returned to normal. Consequently many people feel the items should be left undisturbed. Miller (2010) addresses this conundrum by suggesting that 'ghosts clearly have a marked tendency to cling to their old haunts' (Miller, 2010, p. 93) and asks why should 'the new owners of such houses find themselves encumbered with *possessions* beyond those they knowingly purchased' (Miller, 2010, p.93). He argues that whilst we think that we have control of our belongings we clearly don't – 'objects can be obdurate little beasts, that fall from the mantelpiece and break, that refuse to grow in shady spots in the garden, that cause us to trip, and that crash their systems just as we were about to type something genuinely interesting' (Miller, 2010 p.93) and argues that if 'things' are not behaving as we expect them to do then it is reasonable to suggest that they have a life of their own. He proposes 'Things do things to us, and not just the things we want them to do' (Miller, 2010, p.93). On the other hand, some people find the items from a hidden cache repugnant and have no hesitation in disposing of them. As far as Miss Smith's cache was concerned, the current owner of the chaise longue has an abhorrence of dirt and would have been resistant to any part of the cache being returned to the chaise. In order to ensure that the chaise retains some of its history a copy of my undergraduate dissertation was placed in a calico bag and hidden inside the

new upholstery; the next stage of a deliberate concealment as the owners have not been told. A bonus of this process is that the artefacts are still accessible for further research and display.

3.1.3.5 Favoured locations for concealments

Analysis of the reported finds sent to the Northampton Museum has identified that the most popular place for concealments is in the chimney and around the fireplace and hearth. An example of this was unearthed during the making of a television historical documentary in 2009¹³⁶ which was filmed on the Acton Scott estate in Shropshire. The original chimney and fireplace had been bricked-up many decades before with a replacement built in another part of the kitchen. For the purposes of filming it was preferable to brick-up the 'new' fireplace and re-open the original one. When the original fireplace was opened-up it was discovered that an old shoe had been placed in the chimney; for the record, the shoe was returned to its original hiding place after filming was completed. The second most popular location is above a ceiling/under the floor although it is often difficult to decide whether the concealment took place from above or below. Other locations include the areas around doors and windows, in roof spaces and under stairs and under foundations. Swann records that Norwich shoe manufacturer Norvic¹³⁷ (1899-1973) buried a pair of shoes from their production line in the foundations of their new factory in 1964.

Apart from the supposed protective powers of concealments Swann also points out that some of the instances may be due to people just wishing to leave their mark. She likens this to the delight of people entering comments in museum registers, feeling that the records will be kept for ever and that they are therefore part of that history. Swann acknowledges that the dearth of information surrounding this subject, coupled with an air of secrecy, may be due to a superstition that any powers afforded would cease to be effective if any details were disclosed. Nevertheless she urges people to report any finds,

¹³⁶ *Victorian Farm*, BBC Two, 2009

¹³⁷ 1899-1973, details of history of the company at http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Howlett_and_White

recording as many details as possible, and to treat them as an archaeological excavation in order to try to broaden our knowledge of the past.

3.1.4 Deliberately Concealed Garments in Buildings

Building on this original work by Swann, more recent research has been carried out as part of the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project (DCGP)¹³⁸ which was introduced in the literature review. The venture was led by Dinah Eastop¹³⁹ with the principal aims being to raise awareness of this phenomenon and to encourage anyone discovering instances of deliberate concealments in buildings to report the finds so that they can be systematically documented. In addition, the project offered an opportunity to develop conservation techniques for the preservation of such finds and also to use the garments to increase our knowledge of dress and textile history. The author's research has parallels with the DCGP, and been guided by it, because of similarities in the items hidden and the fact that they were deliberately concealed. However, the emphasis of Eastop's work has been on concealments in buildings and primarily has been a tool for recording such findings rather than contextualising the items.

The DCGP found that concealments are usually discovered during renovation work to buildings and most of the garments found show signs of considerable use prior to their concealment and were probably too worn out to be used for their original purpose. They are often heavily soiled and creased¹⁴⁰ and some show signs of being deliberately torn or cut; possibly to ensure they could not be returned to their original use. This is a practice also reported by Swann who records that concealed shoes are almost always very well worn prior to concealment and some may also have been deliberately damaged; this is a topic expanded upon in section 3.2.2 which focuses on myth, ritual and

¹³⁸ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/>

¹³⁹ Dinah Eastop was a Senior Lecturer at the Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton until its move to Glasgow in 2009. The project was jointly funded by the L J Skaggs and Mary C Skaggs Foundation and the Arts and Humanities Board and was an important undertaking of the AHRB Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies.

¹⁴⁰ The textiles in Miss Smith's cache were also soiled and creased but this was probably mainly due to the conditions of their concealment. After over a hundred years of being bound tightly into bundles it is not surprising that the creases now seem to be permanent. The staining too seems to have occurred during the concealment which may have been in damp conditions.

symbolism. The items of clothing in Miss Smith's cache all showed signs of wear; many of them had been darned or patched. The textile pieces included in the cache had all been unpicked and just relatively small samples included rather than complete garments.

The deliberate concealments of clothing have a correlation with the concealments of other objects, such as witch bottles and dried cats which are believed to be associated with superstitions and ritual practices (see section 3.2.2). The garments have usually been well-worn and are often found with other objects, such as coins and seeds, and appear to have been hidden by builders or the occupants of the houses and sealed into cavities; most often near entry points such as chimneys, doors and windows. Some caches appear to have been added to at a later date which suggests that they have been previously discovered and supplemented with additional items, maybe when later building work was being carried out.

Hoggard¹⁴¹ questions why so little is known about the practice of concealment and suggests it is probably because of a general lack of awareness amongst homeowners, and perhaps builders too,¹⁴² with the outcome that most finds are just thrown away and not reported. He thinks people fail to realise the significance of objects found so that even those finds which are reported are often inadequately recorded. Swann believes that homeowners who unearth a cache during DIY work are more likely to report a find whereas workmen rarely do. Hoggard considers that the practice of concealment is still on-going but there is a reluctance by people to admit to their association – possibly fearing a jinx on any protective powers they may have afforded. He is convinced that 'approximately 50% of builders could report some experience of these objects' (whether discovering them or knowing of concealments) but are unwilling to formally acknowledge the practice or report any finds they make.¹⁴³ Moreover, an 'anonymous confession'¹⁴⁴ by a builder divulges that when concealments are

¹⁴¹ Brian Hoggard has conducted independent research into deliberately concealed objects and publishes some of his finding on his website. <http://www.apotropaiois.co.uk/>.

¹⁴² Another motivation may be the wish to keep to programme and not incur delays and therefore additional costs.

¹⁴³ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/2002/02/interview-with-brian-hoggard/>

¹⁴⁴ Conversation with the author.

found – particularly bones – it is easier to discard them to prevent any ‘interest’ from either archaeologists or police which could delay the building project.

Eastop (2006, pp.238-255) records that although these caches often contain rare examples of clothing, their significance extends to how people perceive the built space. She argues that in the first place clothing has a protective function – against the weather and to preserve modesty – but that once it is used in a concealment its function changes from an external protection role to one protecting from within – guarding against incoming malign forces. This theme is expanded upon in section 3.2 which explores the meaning of things.

An item of dress that has often been included in deliberate concealments in buildings is the tie-on pocket and Eastop (2006) notes that whilst they were extremely common during the whole of the 18th and 19th centuries, and were worn by women of all social classes, they are now very rare. One of the pieces found in Miss Smith’s cache was a tie-on pocket and their history is researched in the following section.

3.1.5 Tie-on Pockets

One of the features of the tie-on pocket was that they were designed to be worn independently of other garments; they were tied round the waist and were normally worn underneath the skirt or apron – so in itself a form of concealment. Referring back to the previous section, one instance of a concealed pocket, discovered in the attic space of a property in Abingdon during restoration work (fig.74), had been used to contain a small cache which included a baby’s hat, coins and some papers.¹⁴⁵ Textile and dress historian Barbara Burman notes that ‘its everyday contents mirror the role the pocket would have played in the life of the owner’ and suggests it could have been a memorial, or perhaps a ritual concealment to protect the house from witchcraft (Burman, 2006). A 20th century illustration of the use of a pocket for concealment purposes was recounted by de Waal (2011) who had inherited a collection of 264 Japanese wood and ivory carvings (netsuke) which had at one point in their lives belonged to his grandparents, and had been displayed in a vitrine in his grandmother’s dressing room in Vienna. When the city came under the rule of

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.concealedgarments.org/cache/28558/>

the Nazis at the start of the Second World War Jewish families were persecuted and his grandparent's possessions were appropriated and their home ransacked. However, the one thing that was saved was the collection of netsuke which were smuggled out of the house, a few at a time, in the pocket of the maid, Anna. De Waal is conscious of the family history imbued in these little objects and writes 'Each one of these netsuke for Anna is a resistance to

Fig. 74

A mid-eighteenth century pocket found deliberately concealed in a building in Abingdon.
(<https://vads.ac.uk> vads.ac.uk)



the sapping of memory. Each one carried out is a resistance against the news, a story recalled, a future held on to' (de Waal, 2011, p.279) and the role of the pocket was central to this. The pocket in this case facilitated both a concealment and an emotional function.

In 2006 a comprehensive research project (the *Pockets of History* study), led by textile and dress historian Barbara Burman, aimed to bring pockets into the academic fields of dress and social history .

During the 18th and 19th centuries the tie-on pocket was an essential item of clothing for women of all classes and the *Pockets of History* study, culminating in an exhibition¹⁴⁶ and accompanying publication, offered a detailed analysis of them and considered their significance from different perspectives. Over 300

¹⁴⁶ Held at the Museum of Costume in Bath 2006 – 2007.

pockets were sourced from museums and collections and the results of this work can now be viewed on the VADS (Visual Arts Data Service) website¹⁴⁷ and includes images of a pocket found in Miss Smith's cache¹⁴⁸ (MSA C.12) (fig.75). The exhibition had a sub-title of 'the secret life of an everyday object' and explored not just the practical value of these little items but also the social and emotional aspects. It provides a complete history of the 'life' of a pocket covering the way they were acquired (bought or home-made), the way they were worn (under or over the skirt), the way in which they were used and what they contained. Burman suggests that in the 18th century small possessions became more readily available for 'middling class' women, and changes in their lifestyles – such as paying calls and visiting shops – promoted the use of the tie-on pocket (Burman and Denbo, 2006) and their history is explored below (3.1.5.2). But it was not just middling class women who wore pockets, their usage spanned the social spectrum from royalty and the aristocracy to the extremely poor and for such a mundane article they are remarkably well documented and at every level. A lot of information is available about pockets and the methodology for the project included researching private letters and diaries, inventories of household possessions and household bills and novels. Newspaper articles and court papers were another valuable source of information because pockets were vulnerable to pickpockets and thieves, not particularly for the articles themselves but for their contents which are helpfully listed in the accounts of the court cases. Paintings and prints also featured pockets and they became the subject of work by satirists who frequently ridiculed the vast number of contents women carried in them.

Pockets were not expensive items, but they can tell us a lot about the social history of the time. Because of their simplicity they could be made quickly and easily and could also be purchased from haberdashers and from hawkers and peddlers who travelled the country selling their wares from door-to-door. The *Workwoman's Guide*, which was first published in 1838, provided sewing patterns and instructions for a wide variety of items of dress and included a pattern for a tie-on pocket (illustrated in the following section, 3.1.5.1).

¹⁴⁷ VADS provides an online resource for visual arts -
<http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=94084&sos=12>

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=94084&sos=14>

Fashion towards the end of the 18th century changed dramatically. Full-skirted dresses went out of fashion and instead slim-line dresses were favoured which had high waistlines and close fitting skirts. However this style had nowhere to disguise the bump of a traditional pocket and hence saw the introduction of the reticule¹⁴⁹ which were very small decorative bags. Nevertheless, there is plenty of evidence to show that the tie-on pocket was still popular and continued to be worn (Burman and Denbo, 2006) and contemporary literature on etiquette supports this view. A guide written in 1819 gives advice on what should be carried in a tie-on pocket:

It is ... expedient to carry about you a purse, a thimble, a pincushion, a pencil, a knife and a pair of scissors, which will not only be an inexpressible source of comfort and independence, by removing the necessity of borrowing, but will secure the privilege of not lending these indispensable articles.

It continues –

Never sally forth from your own room in the morning without that old-fashioned article of dress – a pocket. Discard forever that modern invention called a ridicule (properly reticule). (Tidy, 1819)

Generally pockets were worn around the waist and (concealed) beneath the skirt although those worn by working women, such as street sellers, were often visible both for ease of use and also as a sign of their independence. Women during this period had no private space and the pocket provided a place to keep personal possessions securely – they were the handbags of the day.

So what did women keep in their pockets? Reports of criminal court proceedings provide detailed records of the contents of pockets which had been stolen, revealing items of everyday use: keys, scissors, pins, sewing thread, buttons, handkerchiefs, prayer books etc. One reference to the numerous contents of a pocket records a coach journey undertaken by Henry Seymour Conway¹⁵⁰ in the mid-18th century, writing to his cousin Henry Walpole about two female travelling companions, and refers to their pockets as ‘a cornucopia’, likening them to the horn of plenty due to the abundance of refreshments they

¹⁴⁹ A small fabric handbag.

¹⁵⁰ Field Marshal Henry Seymour Conway (1721-1795) was a British general and statesman, a brother of the 1st Marquess of Hertford, and cousin of Horace Walpole.

produced from them to sustain themselves on their journey (Burman and Denbo, 2006). The suggestion that pockets could often resemble a bottomless pit is reinforced by references in novels such as Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* where his nurse, Peggotty, 'put her arm into her pocket up to her elbow' and took out some cakes in paper bags. It is quite likely that one of the items Miss Smith carried in her pocket was a pair of scissors with which to unpick garment seams, but whatever she had kept in her pocket it had obviously been well worn which indicates that it would have been an essential part of her clothing.

3.1.5.1 Construction of a tie-on pocket

Although the tie-on pocket was in use for over two hundred years remarkably its form and construction changed very little (Burman and Denbo, 2006). They were designed to be worn separately from other garments and tended to be oval shaped with a vertical slit from the top to around halfway down the length. There are examples of dolls from the 17th to 19th centuries which still have their tie-on pockets, and these give an indication of the way they were worn and demonstrate how they were incorporated into the clothes worn at the time (Burman and Denbo, 2006). They were made either as a single pocket or as a pair and most had tapes sewn around the top which could be tied round the waist, a few had buttonholes – perhaps to attach them to stays or some other



Fig.75

The tie-on pocket found in the chaise showing the opening slit for access and the loop at the top which could be threaded on to a separate tape or belt for tying around the waist (MSA C.12).

undergarment, and some had loops (as did Miss Smith's, fig.75) which would enable the pocket to be suspended from a separate tape or belt.

Burman and Denbo (2006) suggest that the popularity of the tie-on pocket was due not only to its practicality but also to its simple construction and the fact they could be made very economically. They write:

Some are pretty or have a quirky charm. Others are unpretentious, probably drab and workaday from the start. Some show hardly any signs of wear but others have been patched and darned, battered and stained from hard use. (Burman and Denbo, 2006, p.14)

They added that women of a thrifty nature often used recycled fabrics to make their pockets, the lives of which were extended further by careful mending. Miss Smith's pocket would probably fall into the category of 'drab and workaday from the start'. It also has been patched and darned and is battered and stained. Miss Smith's pocket has been made from smaller pieces of fabric sewn together; possibly left-over fabric from other items, or pieces salvaged from a worn-out article, and gives the appearance of being home-made. The outside is made from a heavy-duty twill fabric which is partially lined with gabardine. It features both hand and machine stitching and shows signs of being very well used. Given that domestic sewing machines were not readily available until the early 1860s that is the earliest date which could be attributed to it. The era of the tie-on pocket was over by the end of the century and because Miss Smith's pocket showed evidence of such considerable wear and repairs it is unlikely to have been made as late as the early 1900s and therefore a realistic timespan would be late 1860s to the 1880s.

Early sewing manuals provided patterns and instructions for making various types of practical clothing and *The Workwoman's Guide* of 1838, written by 'a Lady', includes patterns for different versions of pockets including pockets that tie around the waist and pockets that fasten into the skirt, and an illustration of the cutting guide is shown in fig.76 below. The pockets were normally formed from separate front and back pieces with the opening formed by a vertical slit running from the top of the front section to approximately halfway down. The opening on the pockets was usually reinforced by means of binding or additional stitching – Miss Smith's pocket is reinforced with stitching.

The 1840s seems to have been a transitional period with sewing guides showing patterns for separate pockets alongside those that were sewn into the seams of a dress. Although by the 19th century tie-on pockets were often

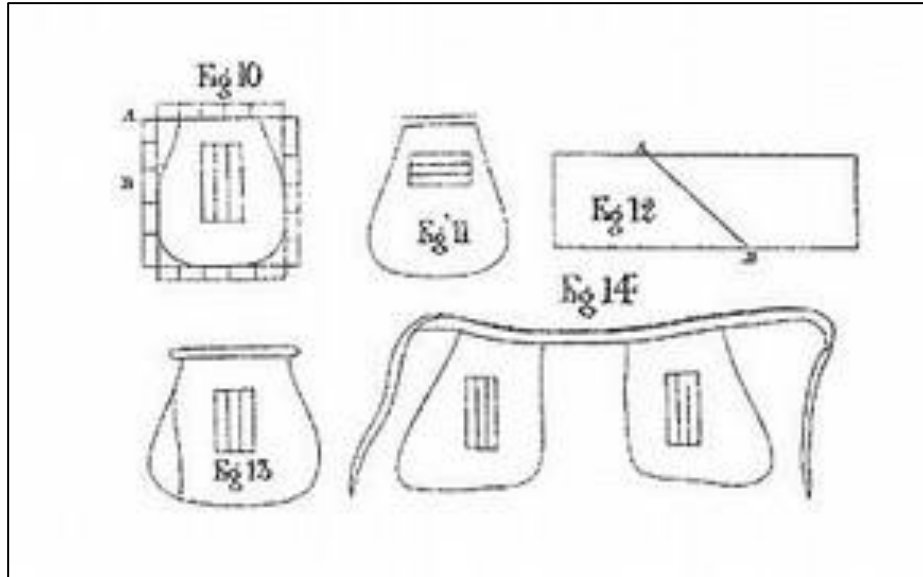


Fig.76

Illustrations for pockets included in *The Workwoman's Guide*, 1838

viewed as old-fashioned, being used by traders and older or less fashionable women, there is plenty of evidence that they were actually still popular (Burman and Denbo, 2006). In a court case reported in 1858¹⁵¹ (when Miss Smith would have been ten years old) relating to a woman who had had her pocket stolen, the pocket was described as 'old –fashioned' but it was evidently still in use.

More affluent women would have owned several pockets, perhaps to match different outfits, and to ensure there was always a freshly laundered one ready for use. In 1849 a children's story was published¹⁵² which featured a grandmother who had different pockets for different occasions – some for everyday use but some special ones which she wore only on birthdays and festivals.

Although the design of surviving pockets is consistent, what makes each one unique is the differences in quality, materials used and decorations; many are

¹⁵¹ *The Times*, 4 March 1858.

¹⁵² Hall, Mrs S.C. (1949) *Grandmamma's Pockets*. Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers.

decorative but some appear to have been purely functional items, as was Miss Smith's. Many of the pockets sourced for the Bath exhibition are objects of beauty and exquisitely embroidered. Whilst it might seem incongruous to decorate an item which was apparently kept out of sight, Burman suggests that in practice they may have been on view fairly frequently, at least in the home.

3.1.5.2 The social life of pockets

In the 18th and 19th centuries women often sat together to sew and chat and their pockets would most likely have been visible, perhaps even placed on a table beside them, because they would have contained items they were using such as scissors, thimbles, needles and thread. Surviving pockets range from the purely functional and quite crudely made to those which have been made with beautiful fabrics and embellished with threads and embroidery. Some of this embroidery features elaborate designs, others have designs similar to sampler patterns, and some appear to have been cut down from larger pieces, perhaps from clothing which had become outdated or maybe furnishing fabrics. Textiles were a valuable commodity and it was common practice to recycle them, piecing together areas which were still serviceable to make something new. Whilst there is no evidence of embroidery or patchwork in Miss Smith's cache, there are considerable signs of repair work being carried out and she could well have carried out this work in the company of female companions.

Although women used other means of carrying small possessions, such as baskets, the tie-on pocket was probably the most personal and would have been very convenient for instance when shopping to carry small items (Burman and Denbo, 2007). Whilst we may regard privacy as a right, in the 18th and 19th centuries it was a limited privilege and even regarded as a sign of immorality. Women had very few rights, whatever their social class, and no private space so a pocket provided somewhere to keep personal and precious items. Women did, however, have various household responsibilities and would have needed some form of secure and accessible means to contain items they might require throughout the day. Women were known to carry keys in their pockets, for rooms, cupboards and chests, and it was common practice for the mistress of the house to keep valuable items under lock and key. These 'precious' items included tea, silverware and linen and an example of this practice of keeping

locked cupboards is illustrated in the Pountney diary¹⁵³ when Adelaide (who wrote the diary) was being taught by her sister how to take care of the family linen. It is noted that the chest would have been kept locked and sheets, tablecloths etc. would have been handed out to the servants as required. Census returns show that Miss Smith's family always had a domestic servant and, in her latter years, she took in lodgers and boarders and it is likely that because Miss Smith shared her home with non-family members she kept certain items under lock and key and her pocket probably would have contained keys. The wear and tear associated with carrying hard objects, such as keys, would have been considerable and this is evidenced by the amount of careful repairs which have been carried out to those that have survived – and to Miss Smith's – and the efforts taken to maintain a pocket reinforces the value that was attached to them.

A feature of pockets, along with other household linen, is that they were often marked with names, initials, numbers or dates often in cross stitch or indelible ink. This underpins the core values of the period relating to the importance of household management along with thrift and cleanliness because by marking the items it was possible to ensure that they were used and washed in sequence, thus maintaining them in the best condition. It also enabled identification in the case of theft. This practice again reinforces the value afforded to these items shown by the care taken in their maintenance and their security markings.

Aptly named pocket books were another item commonly found being carried in pockets. These useful little books not only contained pages for making notes, and perhaps recording details of your daily life, but also included almanacs, pages for expenditure, ready reckoners, weights and measures, stage coach times etc. and presumably train times. In 1881 Miss Smith's brother was living in the St Pancras area of London and there is evidence that she travelled up to London at least once, and probably by train, because she has signed as a witness to the marriage of her brother and it is very possible that her pocket accompanied her on this journey. Pockets were seen as a secure way to carry small valuables when travelling, evidenced by an advertisement in 1857 for

¹⁵³ 4 October 1864

'patent safety railway pockets' which were priced at 1/6 (equivalent to £3.24 in 2005¹⁵⁴) and were used by travellers up to the end of the 19th century (Willett and Cunnington, 1992).

Apart from being a close companion to their owners and accompanying them constantly in their private and public lives (some women even slept with their pockets under their pillows), pockets were also associated with crime. Court records and newspapers report incidents where women had had their pockets stolen as they walked in the street, sometimes quite violently. Pockets, along with other clothing, were regularly stolen from washing lines and hedges where they had been left out to dry because they were relatively high value goods. But apart from people who lost their pockets due to crime, they were also used by criminals. Women thieves used their pockets to hide stolen goods and poachers too used pockets to transport their spoils.

Despite suggestions in 19th century fiction that pockets were old-fashioned this was not necessarily a sign of disapproval. Referring again to the children's novel *Grandmamma's Pockets*, far from criticising the use of pockets, they were viewed as having a symbolic role; *Grandmamma's* were a pair of pockets and the right-hand one was portrayed for giving whereas the left-hand pocket was for receiving. 'Steadfastness, thrift, and self-discipline were all ideals that the pocket could embody' (Burman and Denbo, 2006, p.28).

Considering the fact that tie-on pockets were a mundane, everyday item of clothing they have been exceptionally well documented in diverse ways – through written sources such as letters, diaries, inventories and bills, court records and bills, and also in novels, children's stories and nursery rhymes. They are included in numerous paintings, most commonly as a social comment rather than in formal portraits, and satirized by cartoonists. In addition, there are two other things that are remarkable about tie-on pockets: firstly, that they remained popular for two hundred years and secondly that their design remained unchanged during all that time. Burman believes it is an indication that women ignored changing cultures and fashions and instead exercised

¹⁵⁴ The National Archives currency converter,
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>

personal choice to retain something they valued¹⁵⁵ (Burman and Denbo, 2006) and this attitude is underlined by the amount of darning and patching seen on those that have survived.

Miss Smith's pocket was very worn and had been patched and darned in several places. She must have worn it a lot, it would have accompanied her throughout her day, carrying essential items such as keys, pins and sewing thread, and also perhaps personal items such as letters. It also provided her with a private space and as such could have been symbolic in some way. However, despite their enduring popularity by the start of the 20th century some pockets were beginning to be displayed in museums and it was probably around this time that Miss Smith felt she no longer had a practical need for hers and perhaps reassigned its role to one of evoking memory.¹⁵⁶

3.1.6 Quilts

The sofa cache was not, of course, a quilt but the basis is the same – using small pieces of material to create something new, and the aim of this section is to demonstrate how textiles can be used to tell a story, with the added dimension that the story told by quilts is often conveyed via symbolism rather than in a direct way and is therefore a form of concealment. Patchwork and quilting, although often combined, are two distinct crafts; patchwork evolved from the need to re-use worn textiles and clothing for reasons of economy, while quilts were made to provide warmth and protection (Prichard, 2010). Moreover, a patchwork quilt can take many guises, including a memento mori, and an encyclopaedia.

In addition to Miss Smith's cache – which contained a total of eight hundred pieces of textiles of four hundred different varieties - another use for recycling worn-out garments is old, poor quality patchwork quilts.¹⁵⁷ This was a way of extending the useful life of clothing and other textiles once they were too worn

¹⁵⁵ which was also a practical/functional item.

¹⁵⁶ She may of course have bought or made a new one, but their popularity had waned by the turn of the century. Incidentally there were three other artefacts in the cache which were pocket-shaped.

¹⁵⁷ Conversation with Christine Stevens, St Fagans National History Museum, Cardiff, which has several examples in its collections.

for their original purpose and therefore had a functional purpose. Textiles were a desirable commodity but were expensive, so the recycling of household furnishings was common practice. However, apart from the utilitarian aspect, as referred to above, quilts often contained veiled histories of the makers and for this reason the *Quilts* exhibition mounted at the V & A in 2010 had a sub-title of *Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, which sought to uncover the stories revealed by these textiles.

3.1.6.1 Quilts 1700 – 2010 exhibition, V&A Museum

Curator of the exhibition, Sue Prichard, writes that patchwork quilts are often regarded (merely) as family heirlooms which represent ‘the yesterdays of us all’ (Prichard, 2010 p.10) but suggests that they also have a social significance which is due to the life history and memories associated with the article and the association with a particular person and also the depiction of life in general which is contemporary to when the quilts were crafted. The closer you look at the needlework the more they reveal their stories which cover a wide spectrum – national dramas, public and private events, arts and crafts. Some of the pieces display a mischievous humour; one, by an unknown maker, portrays King George III inspecting troops in Hyde Park in 1799 at the centre of the quilt. Around the borders are forty-one separate scenes depicting major events of the period as well as images of domestic life which show details of daily life and clothing styles. However, in the background of the central picture are some young ladies watching the proceedings with King George, and the suggestion is that the person who created the quilt has, in effect, included herself in the picture. This would have been a good way to associate yourself with your work, in the same way I believe that Miss Smith associated herself with her work, identifying herself by including her name and address in the chaise.

Quilts have an intimacy too, because in use they wrap around the body providing warmth and protection. Similarly, the curves of an upholstered chaise longue wrap around the body offering comfort and refuge and I suggest that the artefacts and textiles chosen by Miss Smith for her cache had intense personal significance and formed part of her hidden history.

An installation by artist Tracey Emin displayed in the *Quilts* exhibition was entitled *To Meet my Past* which portrayed a personal narrative of her life including embroidered text which discloses periods of despair. The work has been likened to that of Agnes Richter (3.2.3.3) and Lorina Bulwer (3.2.3.4), two nineteenth century women who spent much of their lives in asylums and recorded their feelings and emotions through stitch (Prichard, 2010, p.229). It is interesting how emotion is projected through materiality and this is a subject explored further in section 3.2.3.

In the 18th and 19th centuries textiles were highly coveted and for the less affluent recycled material could be bought from second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers, with the result that high quality chintzes and other fabrics were found in the homes of all social ranks. It was not just people from the lower classes who re-utilised old fabrics, there are numerous examples of what would originally have been grand furnishings which have been cut down from larger pieces, such as wall hangings; V & A curator Clare Browne¹⁵⁸ cites one such suite at Penshurst Place in Kent, and questions whether the development of patchwork was prompted by the need to re-use this valuable commodity, or whether it was just seen as a good way to display small pieces of special fabric. Generally, the fabrics used by Miss Smith were fairly ordinary, albeit interesting from a pattern and weave point of view, but there were two examples which were completely different and much more luxurious – one was a sand coloured silk (pictured in fig.77 below) and the second was a piece of green silk ribbon (illustrated in section 2.6.13, fig.66)

Another sign of the value given to textiles is that it became a focus of crime. Styles reports that transcripts from trials at the Old Bailey regularly included thefts of patchwork, often from lodging houses and mainly bedcovers and cites one case in 1794 when a pair of patchwork tie-on pockets were stolen (Styles in Prichard, 2010). The pockets belonged to the wife of a publican and the records quote her as saying they were made from patchwork of her 'own doing'.¹⁵⁹ It seemed as though the fact that her handiwork had been stolen

¹⁵⁸ Clare Browne in ¹⁵⁸ Prichard, S. (ed). (2010) *Quilts 1700-2010: hidden histories, untold stories*. London: V&A Publishing. p. 31

¹⁵⁹ John Styles in Prichard, S. (ed). (2010) *Quilts 1700-2010: hidden histories, untold stories*. London: V&A Publishing. p.51

caused her emotional injury which was more intense than that caused by the loss of her actual property.



Fig.77

MSA T.62 a sand coloured silk twill weave fabric with fringing along the lower edge – one of the most expensive fabrics found in Miss Smith's cache.

3.1.6.2 Ann Randall's coverlet

This coverlet was included in the *Quilts* exhibition and, as with Miss Smith's cache, the textiles used to create it appear to have been collected over a long period of time; the contents of Miss Smith's cache spanned six decades. Many quilts used large amounts of the same material, which suggests that they were



Fig.78

Ann Randall's coverlet illustrates the wide range of fabrics and patterns used in the creation of this artefact which span a date range of around forty years. (Prichard, 2010, p.179)

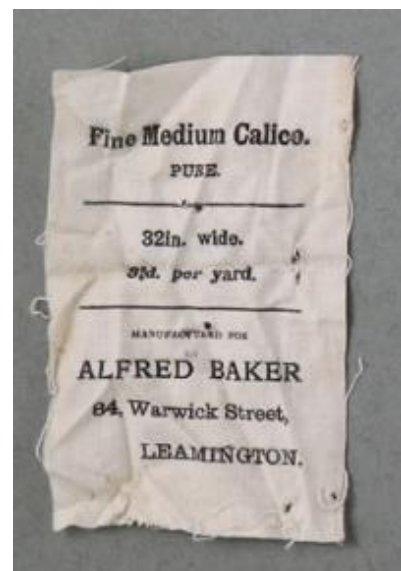
bought specifically for the making of the quilt. On the other hand most

patchwork pieces use fabrics which appear to have been collected from different sources and periods, as with Ann Randolls's quilt (Parry in Prichard, 2010). However, Ann Randall's coverlet is unusual because the fabrics she used cover such a long timespan; some forty years ranging from the 1780s to the 1820s, and the wide variety of fabrics is evident in the image above (fig.78).

Parry cites a short story (The History of Polly Patchwork, 1815) which indicates that it was common practice to buy small bundles of off-cuts from dressmakers for patchwork. Family legend suggests this is what Randall did (Parry in Prichard, 2010) but if that is the case it is puzzling that they spanned such a wide period. Whilst the sale of these bundles was undoubtedly legitimate, the custom did give rise to some opportunism as highlighted by a court case in 1807 when printed calico was particularly popular. The defendant was a man employed as a calico finisher and packer who habitually cut-off the ends of the rolls of fabric, which he claimed was a perk of the job. His employer seemed to confirm that this practice was widespread by saying 'it's an unfortunate circumstance that in all the markets they are publically sold as remnants to make patchwork' (Burman and Denbo, 2006, p.16).

Fig. 79

An item of ephemera included in the chaise cache included this draper's sample dating from 1885-1886 advertising calico at 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d a yard, equivalent to around 80p today – which is comparable to today's prices for calico, and nice quality. (MSA E.03)



Most of the fabrics used by Miss Smith for her stuffing had been used in a previous incarnation so it seems unlikely that she had bought bundles of off-cuts for her endeavour. Interestingly though, one of the items of ephemera included in the cache was a draper's sample advertising calico (fig.79 above). The calico is quite narrow – 32' (81cm) and nowadays would normally be 54' or

60' (137cm/150cm) for upholstery weight or 38' (96cm) for dressmaking/craft purposes – but is nice quality. Local street directories show that Alfred Baker was only at these premises between 1885 and 1886 so it can be accurately dated, and coincidentally 1886 was the year that Miss Smith and her father moved into the house in Russell Terrace.

Returning to Ann Randall's quilt, the panel at the centre is embroidered 'Ann Randall, October 27 1802' which is considerably older than many of the textiles but could indicate when the work was started, or perhaps was her date of birth.

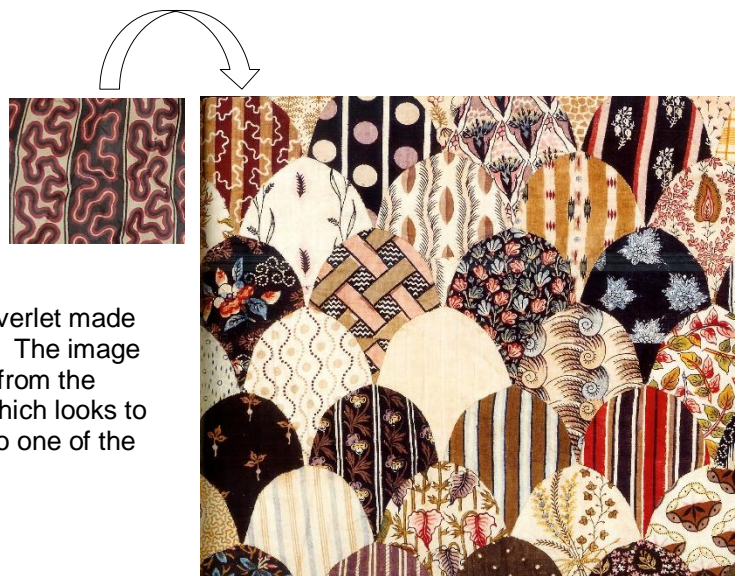


Fig. 80

On the right is a detail from a coverlet made by Ann Randall and dated 1802. The image above shows one of the textiles from the Miss Smith cache (MSA T.32) which looks to be a remarkably similar design to one of the patchwork pieces.
(Prichard, 2010, p.179)

What is particularly interesting to see is that one of the fabrics used is almost identical in design to one of Miss Smith's fabrics (MSA T.32), as shown in fig.80 below. It has been identified as the 'coral' pattern and was apparently a very popular design in the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁰ In Miss Smith's cache there were ten small fragments of this fabric, all apparently off-cuts, and mostly in a bright clean condition, although some had degraded which could be due to the chaise being stored in damp conditions at some time.

¹⁶⁰ Conversation with Sue Prichard, Curator of Contemporary Textiles, V&A Museum, 19 March 2015.

3.2 The Meaning of Things

3.2.0 Outline

The first part of this chapter concentrated on concealment in different forms, from the technically challenging creation of secret compartments in furniture to the more subtle interpretation via textiles and needlecraft, in order to define 'what' a deliberate concealment is. To do this it highlighted a range of case studies which also had a connection in one way or another to Miss Smith's cache, such as the *Pockets of History* study (3.1.5). It also included sections on deliberate concealments which had indications that they could have been part of a ritual or symbolic practice in some way, for example the DCGP (3.1.4). This second section asks the question 'why' and the emphasis is on motivations behind concealments and the emotional response to situations expressed through materiality.

If we accept that objects which are concealed are chosen for a specific reason then it is necessary to explore the significance of the chosen objects, in other words the meaning we attribute to things. We are surrounded by objects so what makes some more special to us than others and how do they dictate our behaviour? It is claimed that there is a powerful connection between our sense of identity and our personal possessions¹⁶¹ and even when those possessions are long past being used for their original purpose they become a symbol, provide memories and thereby help to order our lives. Anthropologist Daniel Miller poses the question 'Objects surely don't talk. Or do they?' (Miller, 2008, p.2). He argues that the objects with which we surround ourselves speak just as clearly about who we are as if we had spoken out loud because our belongings – clothing, furniture, ornaments etc. – have been specifically chosen by us and therefore become an expression of who we are (Miller, 2008). But the acquisition of an object is just the starting point in the life of that object after which 'they are transformed and invested with new meanings that reflect and assert who we are' (Attfield, 2000).

¹⁶¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3029526/Emotional-turmoil-decluttering-lifetime-memories-Old-love-letters-Children-s-toys-Author-Jane-Shilling-couldn-t-bear-throw-away-now.html#ixzz3WhdYrmD3>, 8 April 2015

This section explores the meaning we attribute to things with the purpose of trying to gain a better understanding of why Miss Smith created her cache and the potential significance of the items included. It could have been her spiritual midden, it could have doubled as a time capsule, the folding and winding of the bundles could also have served as part of a ritual and all these aspects are considered. Drawing on literature, exhibitions and examples of 'stuff' the following sections of the thesis will provide a discussion to try to understand and explain why people attribute significance to certain artefacts, how things take on different meanings at different stages of their existence and even how they define us. It researches the relationship between people and things both from an anthropological and psychological point of view. Examples include the tokens kept by the Foundling Museum (3.2.4.2) which have a particular poignancy, and Bispo's cape (3.2.3.2) provides a striking example of the significance of textiles and the genre of outsider art. But perhaps the first thing to consider is 'why does all this matter'? This is addressed in section 3.2.2 which studies myth, ritual and symbolism and explores how these might provide a context for the practices and behaviours explored in this chapter.

3.2.1 Material Culture

The study of anthropology is a way of determining how other people see the world by looking at areas such as their possessions, practices and rituals, and the manner in which they have evolved, in a non-judgmental way.

Anthropologist Daniel Miller has carried out a set of studies relating to material culture which are about the specific area of artefacts, or 'stuff'. He proposes that material forms are the way in which people identify themselves and clothing in particular is the way in which we mediate with the external world, constituting who we are rather than just representing us (Miller, 2010). Elsner and Cardinal (1994) write that it is 'a primary compulsion to accumulate'; collecting possessions is a basic need and can be interpreted as a three-dimensional cataloguing of a life lived and a way to preserve one's identity. They quote *Ecclesiastes* 3.1-6 to suggest that the act of amassing belongings follows a natural cycle which imitates that of the seasons.¹⁶²

¹⁶² 'To everything there is a season ... a time to keep and a time to cast away..'

Possessions play a special part in keeping memories alive and there are many ways we can manage them, for instance, glass fronted cabinets to display ornaments or trophies – such as the vitrine used to house the netsuke inherited by de Waal - boards on which to assemble and display items such as photos, postcards and notes. Art critic and author John Berger proposes that these items ‘all belong to the same language and are all more or less equal because they have been chosen in a highly personal way which expresses the experience of the room’s inhabitant’ (Berger, 1972, p.30). Miller’s research¹⁶³ supports this view and demonstrates how people use their possessions to express themselves, both consciously and unconsciously (Miller, 2008). He cites one of the subjects in the case studies from his research who displayed photographs of happy occasions on her walls but one photo, from a less than happy time, is kept in a little box on top of her wardrobe. Miller observes that she can’t reach it but ‘she just knows that it is there’ (Miller, 2008, p.87). He suggests that most people think of memory being just in the mind but his research proves otherwise, that it is triggered by our possessions amongst other things and that possessions are the key to memories. Relating this to Miss Smith’s cache, she had included items of men’s clothing – two shirt collars and a tie. It is quite possible that this clothing had belonged to her father and whilst she would (hopefully) have had happy memories of her father she would also probably have felt considerable sadness after he died. In the cache, the collars were laid flat along the bottom rail of the chaise back then encased by a cotton shawl bound round it. Even though she couldn’t see the clothing because it was buried inside the chaise longue, she may well have gained some comfort from ‘just knowing that it is there’.

Early research into material culture focussed on semiotics arguing that we are represented by objects, and in particular clothing, which sends out signs and symbols about who we are. Miller (2010) rejects this theory maintaining that it is the other way round. He maintains that whilst we make ‘things’ they in turn make us and contends that this is a neglected area of study. He argues that clothing is not superficial; our possessions, and clothing in particular, make us

¹⁶³ Miller’s anthropological survey studied thirty people who lived in the same London street over a period of seventeen months.

what we think we are. He draws on playwright Henrik Ibsen's¹⁶⁴ observation that we are all onions (Miller, 2010, p.13) and if we keep peeling off layer after layer we eventually find nothing else; there is no inner core and 'no true inner self'. Clinical psychologist Linda Blair addresses the debate – *do we make things or do they make us* - and believes that our personal possessions are actually an extension of our identity and it works both ways (Blair, 2014). She believes that one of the reasons why people hoard things is due to anxiety and may be a sign of an identity crisis and this could have been a predicament which prompted Miss Smith to assemble her hoard. Census returns indicate that she always lived at home with her parents and was never shown to have a job. She was registered simply as 'daughter'. Once her father had died she was no longer anyone's daughter, so who was she? Coupled with the fact that she had a commonplace name, highlighted in the introduction (3.0), and also shared her first name with her mother perhaps she did feel that she had no identity of her own and was invisible. Bettelheim (1976) writes that 'our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives' (Bettelheim, 1976, p.3) so perhaps gathering together intimate possessions, which appeared to span at least six decades, helped her to clarify her identity and to make sense of her life.

However, Blair's research (Blair, 2014) is a contemporary view and it is important to consider the role of possessions from Miss Smith's position; a middle class single woman living in the 19th century. In 21st century Britain mass production makes products readily available to the masses and there is constant enticement through marketing and advertising to acquire more and more possessions. The industrial revolution was the start of this process but in Miss Smith's lifetime it was common practice to keep things for economic reasons, particularly textiles, for future possible use – confirmation of this habit is given by Swann's account of her grandmother's textile 'hoard' (section 3.1.2) – quite apart from any sentimental value an item might have. Additionally, everything could be recycled: rubbish could be sold to the rag and bone man who would sell on coal dust and cinders to the brick-makers, bones to soap makers and rags to paper manufacturers or textile companies for making

¹⁶⁴ Henrik Ibsen 1828-1906, 19th century Norwegian playwright, theatre director.

shoddy.¹⁶⁵ However, Miss Smith's collection, whilst functioning as stuffing material, was not easily accessible once she had created a new purpose or life for it. It may be that the significance of still owning the items was not diminished by them being out of sight as Miller's research showed in relation to the 'unhappy' photo which was kept in a box (Miller, 2008). Very often items that are kept are no longer capable of being used for their original purpose and could be described as junk, or 'tat', to an observer. Tat has been defined as 'simple minded' – objects that can 'speak for themselves' and, in so doing, a collection of such objects represents a picture of a past life creating nostalgia (Windsor in Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p.54). In the cache, referring to the man's collars and tie again, these items would not have had a practical use for Miss Smith so she would not have needed to retrieve them, but they may have been included to represent the person who once wore them, potentially her father, and taken on a new significance as a replacement for that relationship (Miller, 2008) – 'Even when one is no longer attached to things, it's still something to have been attached to them, because it was always for reasons which other people didn't grasp'¹⁶⁶ (Proust, cited in de Waal, 2011). Almost everybody has at least one possession which, to them, is irreplaceable and is important not for the monetary value but for the memories it evokes and the meaning it brings to our lives (Hutchings, 2012). 'Like dreams artefacts are, in addition to their intended function, unconscious representations of hidden mind' (Prown in Lubar and Kingery, 1993, p.4) and surrounding ourselves with familiar objects and in the sanctuary of our home environment offers both emotional and physical comfort (Csikszentmihalyi in Lubar and Kingery, 1993). Miller (2008) adds that 'material and social routines and patterns ... give order, meaning and often moral adjudication' to our lives which provides comfort (Miller, 2008, p.296).

¹⁶⁵ Shoddy is a poor quality yarn made from the shredded fibres of old recycled textiles.

¹⁶⁶ Proust, M. (1927) *Cities of the plain*. Cited in Waal E. de (2011) *The hare with amber eyes*. London: Vintage.

3.2.2 Myth, Ritual and Symbolism

This section focuses on myth, ritual and symbolism to explore how these might provide a context for the practices and behaviours identified throughout this chapter and to consider whether these aspects might have had an influence on Miss Smith. Miss Smith was born in Worcestershire, moving just thirty miles into Warwickshire when she was around twelve years old and this area, the centre of England, has a history rich in folklore (Palmer, 1976 and 2005) and these tales of folklore tend to use symbolism as a means of communicating their message (Jones in Lubar and Kingery, 1993). Palmer (1976) maintains that there are a wealth of ghost stories associated with the area, and a strong belief in the supernatural, and cites a ghost hunter who attributes this proliferation to the time of the Civil War and the bloody history of the Midlands relating to that period. The traditional stories for children are fairy tales which are based on myths and generally have religious connotations which aim to instil values in children and to help them to understand and cope with difficult situations in their formative years (Bettelheim, 1976). Bettelheim (1976) suggests that there is little difference between myth and folk fairy tales and that they provide one of the most important ways for children to find meaning in their lives. He maintains that fairy tales have much greater depth than an average novel, setting out dilemmas in an uncluttered way and providing solutions for the child to contemplate and he uses a Brothers Grimm story as an example of this depth of meaning.¹⁶⁷ Whilst nineteenth century children's stories may seem odd nowadays they usually had a strong moral message, with good triumphing over evil in the end, and they were delivered in a way that helped young people to cope with the pressures of childhood thus having an impact on children in their formative years (Bettelheim, 1976).

Nowadays, fairies and the supernatural are regarded by the majority of people in the Western world as fantasy but a hundred years ago they still held some credence. For instance, Miss Smith's mother came from Feckenham where a ghostly hunter allegedly roamed the forest and a sighting was said to predict a disaster (Palmer, 2005). Myths are closely related to ritual and whilst the

¹⁶⁷ *The Poor Man and the Rich Man* begins 'In olden times, when the Lord himself used to walk about on this earth amongst men ...'.

purpose of many of them has been lost in the mists of time many are still practiced, albeit in a light hearted manner.¹⁶⁸ Evesham has an abundance of medieval buildings and it is not hard to imagine that on a dark wild night, with the wind whistling through apertures in the home, impressionable children could accept these superstitions as truth.

It is not the Gods who created rituals but rather that man created Gods in order to justify the rituals we perform which are embedded in social interaction (Miller, 2008) and, as such, range from very public displays such as royal or religious ceremonial occasions to small-scale private practises - not stepping on the cracks in pavements for instance. Museum archaeologist Ralph Merrifield¹⁶⁹ had a keen interest in ritual and magic and researched the topic of simple rituals which have been practiced for centuries. His work investigated the practice of ritual and symbolism as protective devices, as well as the deliberate concealment of items in buildings, and he argues that they have survived because they fulfil deep human needs (Merrifield, 1987).

The Latin derivation of ritual means 'excessive religious belief' and many surviving rituals have their origins in religious practices. Merrifield (1987) defines ritual as 'practices intended to gain advantage or avert disaster by the manipulation of supernatural power' (Merrifield, 1987, p.xiii). He maintains that, in the past, ritual and magic were a part of everyday life although they have lost their significance over the years and are now often seen as eccentric traditions rather than having a relevant function in modern day life. Nevertheless, a broad interpretation of ritual would include superstitions: - such as not walking under ladders, a four-leaf clover bringing good luck, breaking a mirror bringing seven years bad luck, etc. - and ceremonial events which are very much part of the English institution. Merrifield suggests that ritual shapes the way that people see themselves in their environments and, as such, is a basic need at least as

¹⁶⁸ An example of this is the saying 'a pinch and a punch for the first of the month', often chanted by children now but originally referred to a pinch of salt which, when sprinkled on a witch would make her weak so she could be punched out of the house, thus offering protection for the month. Another superstition is that the new moon should never be seen through glass: the ritual is to bow to it nine times and turn over the money in your pocket and this will ensure good luck throughout the year (Palmer, 1994).

¹⁶⁹ Ralph Merrifield worked in the museum service for forty years and was deputy director of the Museum of London

important as food, shelter and protection. He bases this view on the number of signs found by archaeologists which indicate ritualistic practices (Merrifield 1987, p.1) where objects have been deposited and appear to serve no practical purpose. The boundaries of land and buildings were popular places for ritual deposits which would have been seen to have protective properties. Sites such as ditches and wells were often filled in when they were no longer needed but archaeological evidence suggests that ritual deposits, and often animal (and occasionally human) sacrifices, were placed in such locations before they were filled in (Merrifield 1987, p.48). Although caution has to be exercised in order to distinguish ritual deposits from general detritus, containers of various sorts were often used as offerings. Merrifield (1976) points out that the keeping of relics in churches has the same purpose as foundation sacrifices in pagan times, which is to provide protection – or a ‘guardian spirit’ – for the building. In the same way, offerings in homes were usually positioned by openings – doors, windows, chimneys – in the belief that they would offer protection at the most vulnerable places in the building and by far the most common item used was an old shoe (see section 3.1.3). Through repeated wearing shoes take on the imprint of the person who wore them and therefore retain a very close association with that person and there is a suggestion that this gave them special protective powers once the person had died (Merrifield 1987). There could also have been a secondary reason for their selection in that those left behind couldn’t bear to part with them and feeling that to keep the shoe was to keep a part of that person near them and this could be a reason why Miss Smith included items in her cache which presumably she never wore, for example the men’s items of clothing. Equally, there are many references in folklore to suggest that old shoes were considered to bring good luck, such as a shoe thrown after the bride and groom after their wedding and the belief that it could aid fertility; as recorded in the nursery rhyme about the old woman who lived in a shoe with her numerous children.

Research, such as the DCGP and Swann’s Northampton shoe index, has shown that other items found hidden in houses along with shoes are usually personal possessions such as clothing, tobacco pipes, spoons and coins (Merrifield 1987, p.136). There are many instances of items (particularly coins) which have been bent or folded and Merrifield (1987, p.187) proposes that this indicates a superstitious ritual which apparently renders the item useless for its

original purpose but helps its progress into the afterlife. Referring to Miss Smith's cache again, the address label had been cut in half which may have been for ease of opening the package in the first place or it may signify a wish to 'kill' the artefact in order to change its function. Merrifield observes that bending coins and other metal objects would be a tedious process and if there is no obvious practical reason then it is reasonable to suspect that this was done as part of a ritual. Examples of deliberate folding occur with many of the mediaeval pilgrims' tokens which have been found deposited in rivers (Merrifield, 1987) and one of the Northampton shoes had been so severely damaged that it suggested malevolent magic was involved.

Items in the chaise cache had been folded – for example papers in a cotton bag and the toddler's dress inside the sleeve protector. It may have been solely for ease of stuffing, but it is possible it also had a ritualistic significance. In the chaise longue very few of the fabrics had been used in large quantities; as identified in the inventory (volume 2). It is interesting to compare this with other examples of the use of textiles and one such is the (unfinished) Chapman coverlet which had a sub-title of 'texts, myths and mysteries' in the *Quilts* exhibition (McShane et al in Prichard, 2010). An interesting aspect of this quilt is that the 'piecing-in' or template papers have been left in and are visible on the back but, rather than providing illuminating documentation regarding the making and history of the coverlet, they have actually been responsible for the creation of myths surrounding this artefact and added to its mystery (Prichard [ed.] 2010, p.125). The story passed down in the family is that the templates are actually made from the Chapman's love letters; with the implication that normally such papers would be removed once they had done their job but these had been left in because of their sentimental value. However, this quilt has been compared to three other patchworks in the V&A's possession which also have their papers retained and this shows that in each case the papers fall into four main categories: firstly, children's copy books (written on both sides of the paper and by several different hands): secondly, personal correspondence and bills (one piece in the Chapman quilt contains the word 'dear'): thirdly, printed paper such as newspapers and invitations: fourthly, blank paper (these are by far the least numerous as paper was hand-made and therefore expensive). Some of the Chapman papers are connected to purchases from various merchants in Rochester and others refer to town council business in Rochester, and these

seem to indicate that the quilt came from Rochester and that the family belonged to the upper-middling class. Why this quilt was never finished, and the significance of the design remains a mystery but one suggestion for leaving the template papers in place is that they would provide additional insulation.¹⁷⁰ There was some text included in Miss Smith's cache: the wrapping paper with her name and address on a label from a local store identifies her and also where she did some of her shopping (MSA E.02): a piece of plain weave cotton with the remains of a screen or block printed lettering '...GHAMS' (MSA T.91) which could have been the name of the company producing the fabric but perhaps it is more likely that the fabric was used as sacks or bags to hold something else and referred to the supplier of that product: a piece of glazed cotton with the name of the supplier printed on and 'Dyes and Finishes' (MSA T.396.7). The other two pieces of text are less obvious: A calico drapers sample (MSA E.03) and a piece of hand-made paper with two words written on 'Baileys' with the second word being undecipherable (MSA E.10). Both these items had been neatly folded and placed inside small cotton bags. Two more examples of text and hidden (probably) by Miss Smith - the newspaper (MSA E.08, section 2.6.12) and the advertisement for a Kitchener (MSA E.09, section 4.4) - were understandable, but why hide them under the floorboards?

Our favourite possessions become symbolic, acting as a reminder of people, occasions and locations that evoke happy memories and creating a bond with the particular artefact (Hutchings, 2012). Batchelor (2004) argues that humans need a strong sense of identity in order to survive and that attributing significance and meaning to artefacts adds to, and strengthens, the narrative of our identity (Batchelor, 2004).

3.2.3 The *Fabric of Myth*

There are four hundred different types of fabric in the cache and it is possible that they held particular significance for Miss Smith and were perhaps symbolic in some way. This section highlights examples of the use of textiles to tell a story and has a recurring theme in that the meanings are

¹⁷⁰ Sue Prichard, curator of the *Quilts* exhibition, believes that it would not have been unusual for the papers to be left in a quilt and three of those in the V & A's collection have retained their templates.

often hidden in symbolism. The *Fabric of Myth* exhibition mounted at Compton Verney in 2008 sought to demonstrate the connection between textiles and myth and the way that fabrics seem to shape our lives, albeit sometimes in a 'hidden' way. Many English words associated with cloth making have their origins in storytelling – weaving is a metaphor for the creation of something other than cloth such as a story or plot, a story may be spun, a yarn may be told,¹⁷¹ and the 'fabric of our society' refers to shared moral and cultural values (Kruger in Compton Verney, 2008). The exhibition demonstrated that textiles can tell us as much about the society in which they were made and used as the written word and the exhibits ranged from depictions of classical myths to contemporary creations. The classical myths illustrated in the exhibition included that of Ariadne's thread unlocking the mystery of the labyrinth¹⁷² and the story of Penelope.¹⁷³ Creative work can also provide a means of coping with difficult or unhappy circumstances by interpreting the situation through the artwork as detailed in the following paragraphs.

The *Quilts* exhibition at the V&A suggested a link between people in confinement and the creative pursuits that this often produces. Prichard (2010 p.93) cites the Lady of Shalott¹⁷⁴ as an example of this and also Mary, Queen of Scots' production of numerous embroideries during her 19-year incarceration. Prichard suggests that the repetitive use of hand/eye coordination over prolonged periods of imprisonment may have therapeutic properties, acting as a form of meditation and also allowing something worthwhile to be produced from the most wretched situations. Referring

¹⁷¹ or 'spin a yarn'.

¹⁷² In Greek mythology Ariadne gave a ball of thread to Theseus which allowed him to find his way back out of the labyrinth after slaying the monster.

¹⁷³ In Greek mythology Penelope was a legendary heroine who tried to delay the attentions of her suitors until her husband returned from war by prolonging the completion of a shroud for her father-in-law, Laertes; weaving by day and then unpicking most of her work by night and thus having to reweave the next day.

¹⁷⁴ Tennyson's ballad about the Lady of Shalott who is cursed and imprisoned in a tower. She has to continually weave at her loom but is forbidden from looking directly at the outside world; instead she watches the world go by through a mirror. When Sir Lancelot rides by she becomes distracted from her weaving and looks out of the window. This provokes the curse, causing the mirror to break, and she dies as she floats down the river in a boat towards Camelot.

back to the chaise longue, it would have taken Miss Smith many hours to select and prepare the textiles for the chaise stuffing – even before starting the actual upholstery - and that may well have been a cathartic exercise.

Oblique communication through art

A less obvious form of concealment is the use of oblique communication through art: tapestries and patchwork quilting often convey messages, both personal and political, by the use of symbolism. A striking example of this type of concealment is portrayed by a 17th century stumpwork¹⁷⁵ casket at Sudeley Castle, details of which are examined in section 3.2.3.1 below, which relates to the meaning attributed to possessions. Quilts are never intended to be hidden away, in fact they are often meant to be on display and admired, but quite often they contain hidden messages due to the materials used or particular imagery or words stitched into the work – as in the Sudeley stumpwork casket. They also have particular significance because of the care taken in their creation with the makers feeling a certain pride in their work. Historian John Styles demonstrates this when he cites transcripts from an Old Bailey trial in 1794 where a publican's wife had had a pair of patchwork tie-on pockets stolen. She is quoted as saying that they were made from patchwork of her 'own doing' with the implication that the loss of her handiwork distressed her at least as much, if not more so, than the actual theft (Styles in Prichard, 2010, p.51).

3.2.3.1 The Sudeley Castle stumpwork casket

Sudeley Castle has a collection of textiles spanning more than four hundred years of its history; many of which are displayed in their *Threads of Time* exhibition. One of their most important treasures is the exquisite 17th century stumpwork casket referred to above which not only contains seven secret compartments but also uses imagery in an indirect way to tell a story (fig.81). The casket was made around 1660, which was when the civil war had just ended, and was a period when the need for security and secrecy were paramount and any discussion about politics or religion would have been a dangerous undertaking. However, this casket does just that. The lid

¹⁷⁵ Stumpwork is a type of 3-dimensional embroidery, using different materials and techniques to tell a story.

of the casket illustrates the story of Abraham but the symbolism actually represents the accession of Charles II; the use of butterflies represent the restoration of the monarch and also joy. Other representations on the casket include a peacock (pride) and a fox (cunning) and, in particular again, joy and the restoration of the monarchy. This type of work was carried out by girls of a relatively young age (perhaps 12 – 15 years) and was one of the skills which had to be acquired in order to enable them to marry well. During this period it was generally believed that women were not capable of understanding the political situation and the religious connection so they were able to use religious imagery to tell a story without judgement being passed on them.



Fig.81

The Sudeley stumpwork casket contains seven secret compartments as well as conveying hidden messages by the use of imagery. (www.sudeleycastle.co.uk)

The craftsmanship and number of techniques used in this work is remarkable and the person who carried out the embroidery would have been extremely proud of her work, evidenced by the inclusion of initials (most probably those of the embroiderer) over the doorway of a grand building depicted on one of the end panels. Many houses had hiding holes built into

them during this period because houses were often raided and it was important to have somewhere to hide personal items (and sometimes people) and this casket, with its secret compartments, would also have provided hiding space for small items or documents. In addition, creating the embroidery would probably have offered moments of relaxation for the young girl creating the work when the country was still in turmoil.

A diary written by Priscilla Redding in 1678 illustrates another form of concealment in those troubled times (Smith in Prichard, 2010). Apart from the production of a quilt which offers an insight into 17th century family life Priscilla's diary records family and social relations and includes several pages written in shorthand. Smith records that shorthand was a fashionable accomplishment at that time, being useful to record such things as sermons, but it also enabled 'secrete' writing¹⁷⁶ - and therefore another form of concealment.

3.2.3.2. Bispo Do Rosário's cape

One particularly evocative exhibit at Compton Verney, and an example of a hidden story, was the spiritual robe created by Arthur Bispo Do Rosário (c. 1909 – 1989), a Brazilian man who spent more than half his life in a psychiatric hospital. Following his hospitalization Bispo began to create things using whatever materials he could find. His best known piece is the *Presentation Cape* (fig.82) which was literally made from junk, threads from his blanket and anything else he could lay his hands on.

Just as in Greek mythology Penelope (see above) had spent her days weaving and her nights unpicking most of the day's work, so Bispo spent his time unravelling threads in order to reuse them in his creations and Miss Smith unpicked garments to subsequently wind them into balls to re-use them. Bispo's cape had sewn into it the names of everybody he had ever met, or thought he had met, and depictions of places he had been to, or thought he had been to, and objects he had made. Bispo felt he had a spiritual calling with a duty to be an observer of life and often wore the cape during his lifetime 'triggering memory by the act of creating itself' (Compton Verney p.37).

¹⁷⁶ *Of Household Stuff: The 1601 inventories of Bess of Hardwick* (National Trust, 2001), p.46.

His intention was to wrap the cape around himself on Judgement Day as a record of his life and the world in which he had lived.



Fig.82

Arthur Bispo do Rosário's cloak which provides a detailed record of his life.

(Compton Verney, 2008, p.88)

There are potentially some parallels between Bispo's spiritual robe and Miss Smith's chaise cache. The items which were chosen by Miss Smith for inclusion in the cache spanned six decades so could be representative of her life. If the pieces were selected because they had intense significance for her then it may have given her some comfort when she was sitting on the chaise to feel that her memories were wrapped around her, rather like Bispo's cape.

3.2.3.3 Agnes' jacket

A similar task to Bispo's cape was undertaken by Agnes Richter who was a patient in an asylum during the 1890s due to mental illness. Agnes had previously been a seamstress and this skill allowed her to express her thoughts and feelings via this medium. During her time there she covered her hospital uniform with intricate embroidery using words and phrases which obviously had some significance for her and in effect wrote the story of her life (Hornstein, 2012). Interestingly, a psychiatrist at the hospital, Hans Prinzhorn, was also an art historian and during his time at the hospital acquired a huge collection of 'artwork' produced by the patients, including Agnes' jacket. Although Prinzhorn's collection was mainly dismissed by the medical profession, it was enthusiastically acclaimed by the art world and Agnes's jacket became a symbol of the Outsider Art movement. This, though is a controversial area as

one school of thought maintains that ‘art’ implies an act of creative intention whereas Agnes Richter’s straightjacket is more akin to a diary transcribed by means of her skill as a seamstress and using the only materials which were available to her. Likewise, Miss Smith’s cache could be likened to a diary recording her life through the textiles.

3.2.3.4 Lorina Bulwer’s samplers

Another person in a similar situation to Agnes Richter was Lorina Bulwer (1838-1912) who was a needle worker from Norfolk and who also had a mental disorder. After the death of both of her parents Bulwer, then aged 55, was placed in a workhouse in Great Yarmouth by her brother. The establishment housed 500 inmates, approximately 60 of whom suffered from mental illness. Bulwer’s reaction to her predicament was to embroider long messages – samplers - on cotton cloth, protesting about her dilemma and telling the story of her life as she saw it (fig.83). She used her creative work as a way of expressing herself and it probably also provided a means for her to comprehend her situation.¹⁷⁷



Fig.83

Two of Lorina Bulwer’s samplers, recounting the story of her life.
(<http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/view/NCC147556>)

¹⁷⁷ Some of Lorina Bulwer’s work is now on display in Norwich Castle Museum.

The work appears to demonstrate not only an obsessive need to tell her side of the story but also possibly to leave something by which she would be remembered, her memento mori.

3.2.3.5 Unpicking

A contemporary version of Bispo's cape was created by the Russian artist Leonid Tishkov (b. 1953) in his work *The Knitling* (fig.84), which looks at the relationship between textiles and 'time passing'. Garments from his family's past were unpicked and then re-made into 'one all-encompassing, crocheted swaddling suit', thus creating a 'literal embodiment of this early familial protection' (Compton Verney, p.35). This could be interpreted as a form of concealment because Tishkov was creating a personal memorial, or memento mori, which would have had great significance for him but, without explanation, would mean nothing to a casual observer. However, each section of the exhibited garment had a story which was displayed alongside it in the exhibition and he had also made a film which gave a commentary on the actual creation of the piece. Interestingly, the garments and other artefacts in Miss Smith's chaise had all been unpicked, rather than cut, and there could have been a dual purpose for this. Firstly, unpicking seams would ensure no wastage and therefore the maximum amount of material was retained. Secondly, unpicking is a much less 'violent' process than cutting and could have been a cathartic exercise clarifying her emotional attachment to the pieces as she handled them, first unpicking and then rewinding them into hand-sized bundles. Miss Smith's creation appears to have similarities with Tishkov's work in that she was making something new out of much-used textiles, arguably in which to contain her memories.

Fig.84

The Knitling created by Leonid Tishkov using worn-out garments from his family's past to make into something new – this reflected the tradition from his childhood of using threadbare textiles to make into rag rugs.

(<http://leonid-tishkov.blogspot.co.uk/2009/01/knitling-at-compton-verney-gallery-uk.html>)



An exhibit at the Cloth and Memory exhibition¹⁷⁸ (fig.85 below) used a similar interpretation to memory-making as Tishkov. Created by Norwegian textile artist Kari Steihaug, the exhibit, *Legacies*, utilised old clothing found in second-hand shops and flea-markets which were unravelled and used to create a new garment whilst simultaneously unravelling again and being wound on spools for the next stage of its life. This undertaking corresponds with Miss Smith's actions – unpicking/dismantling garments, rewinding into small bundles, then binding them again onto the frame of the chaise longue.



Fig.85

Legacies, an installation by Kari Steihaug using unravelled old clothing to create something new – and then unravelling it again.
(<http://www.clothandmemory.com>)

These examples interpret the sometimes hidden meanings held by textiles and the point made by the exhibitions is that thread connects us to our past. The Cloth and Memory exhibition makes the point that we recycle yarn and we recycle memory and the two are intertwined. Cloth accompanies us throughout our lives and we leave an imprint on it; we are absorbed into its fibres and therefore it provides a record of our existence.

¹⁷⁸ *Cloth and Memory* exhibition, 18 August – 3 November 2013, held at Salt Mills, part of Saltaire Village which is a UNESCO World Heritage site in West Yorkshire.

3.2.4 The *Threads of Feeling* Exhibition¹⁷⁹

3.2.4.0 Outline

This section considers further why it is that textiles play such an important part in our association with the past and the view that thread connects us is reinforced by an archive of some 5,000 small pieces of cloth at the Foundling Museum which were the basis of an exhibition in 2010.

Historian John Styles, who curated the exhibition, points out that there is very little clothing which has survived which can clearly be identified as having belonged to the poor which is what makes the textile archive at the Foundling Museum so special. The emphasis in museum collections tends to be on high end fashion and sumptuous fabrics worn by royalty and the aristocracy. Clothes belonging to ordinary people were worn, perhaps by several people, and recycled until there was almost nothing left; adult clothing was often cut down to make clothing for babies and children or to make quilts. Eventually the worn-out textiles would be cut up and used for cleaning rags. Consequently there is very little evidence about what people wore who were in the lower ranks of society.

3.2.4.1 The Foundling Hospital

The Foundling Hospital was established by Thomas Coram in 1741 'for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children' (Styles, 2010, p.11). The selection process for the admittance of children consisted of the mother taking a ball from a bag: if the ball was white the child was accepted, if it was black it was not. When a child was accepted the mother was encouraged to leave a keepsake, or token, in order to be able to identify the child should circumstances change and the mother was able to reclaim her child, although in practice this rarely happened. Invariably the token was a patterned or colourful piece of fabric or ribbon (fig.86 shows a sample) which was attached to the registration documents along with physical details of the child and a description of its clothing.

¹⁷⁹ Curated by John Styles and held at The Foundling Museum, London in 2010.



Fig.86

An example of one of the tokens left with a child at the Foundling Hospital – some patchwork, embroidered with a heart, and cut in half presumably the other half kept by the mother. In this case the mother was able to reclaim her child after eight years – a rare occurrence. Styles (2010, p.71)

3.2.4.2 The exhibition

The tokens form the archive of textiles retained by the Foundling Museum and were the focus of the exhibition in 2010. What is extraordinary is the wide range of fabrics – more than forty different types which are named and numerous others which have not been identified, a feature which is apparent in Miss Smith's cache. Styles (2010) points out that shops in small towns might stock around thirty different, inexpensive fabrics during this period (1741 – 1760) so the fact there is such variety in the tokens demonstrates that poor people didn't live in black, even they had access to brightly coloured fabrics. The value of the fabrics too covers a wide range; from the very cheap to very expensive, including a few silk fabrics. Silks were extremely expensive and beyond the means of most working women and they were also extremely impractical because they couldn't be washed. However, silk ribbons were a fashionable way to embellish gowns and hats and were extensively applied during this period, adding a bit of glamour and colour. There are several entries in the Pountney diary recording buying braid or trimmings with one instance where she went early to buy ribbon for her bonnet which she trimmed 'at once' (Pountney, 1998).¹⁸⁰ Interestingly,

¹⁸⁰ Diary entry for 23 April, 1864.

one of the textiles in Miss Smith's cache was a colourful piece of silk ribbon (see fig.66, MSA T.63, section 2.6.13).

One of the problems with recording the textiles in Miss Smith's cache was that fabrics have changed over time and many are no longer known to us today. Even names that are still used – such as calico and flannel – are not necessarily the same fabric as those with the same name in Miss Smith's time. This was a point made by Styles (2010) but the Foundling archive has the advantage that their textiles were pinned in the billet books with a description, such as shalloon¹⁸¹, calimanco¹⁸² and linsey-woolsey¹⁸³ which provides an invaluable, contemporary record of these long-forgotten cloths.

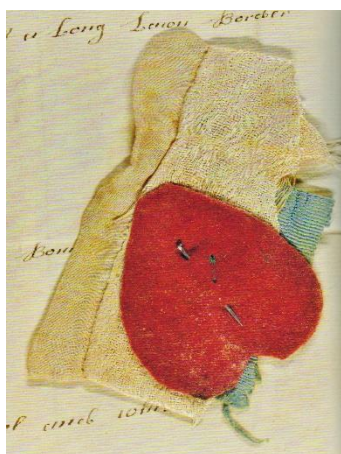


Fig.87

Hearts are recognised as an emblem of love and were a popular theme with the tokens left with Foundling babies. (Image: Styles, 2010, p.62)

Styles (2010) suggests that many of the Foundling mothers were probably illiterate but they used textiles to express their most tender feelings for the child they were giving up. He maintains there was 'a kind of material literacy', which is now rarely encountered, where particular objects were recognised as having particular meaning – such as the heart (fig.87 above is an example of one of the heart-shaped tokens). But why is it that textiles seem to hold a special power in the memory making process? Judy Attfield, academic and pioneer of material culture studies, maintains that 'Clothing and textiles have a particularly intimate quality because they lie next to the skin and inhabit the spaces of private life helping to negotiate the inner self

¹⁸¹ Shalloon, a twilled woollen fabric.

¹⁸² Calimanco, a worsted cloth.

¹⁸³ Linsey-woolsey, a combination of linen and wool, often used for petticoats in Victorian times.

with the outside world' (Attfield, 2000, p.121). She also argues that to keep things which had belonged to a deceased loved one perhaps acts as a stand-in for that person so that their presence becomes imbued in the possession, which gives some solace – rather like a child's comfort blanket – whilst at the same time reminding you of their irreplaceability. Equally, because domestic furnishings define the personal spaces inhabited by people 'the material which forms a large part of the stuff from which they are made – cloth – is proposed as one of the most intimate of thing-types that materialises the connection between the body and the outer world' (Attfield, 2000, p.124). Many people keep items of clothing long after they have served any practical purpose because of the memories they are associated with, and these transform an object from a commodity to a personal possession.

Consider Miss Smith, working away unpicking her clothing into small pieces, handling them, deciding which ones to use and then binding them up into tight, neat bundles. Was she wrapping her memories in the bundles?

3.2.4.3 Lost and found

Examples of miscellaneous artefacts prompting memory were portrayed in the *Found* exhibition which was curated by Cornelia Parker RA.¹⁸⁴ The show had a theme of 'found' or something which had special meaning and featured contributions from almost seventy artists. Parker likened the exhibits to the tokens that were left with the babies at the Foundling Hospital and suggested that the artefacts, and tokens, acted as a substitute for emotion. Two of the exhibits in particular resonated with Miss Smith's cache: the first was a 2.5 metre long piece of string on which had been strung a complete year's worth of slips from a pawnbroker's shop (fig.88). These had been found by designer Ron Arrad and, by coincidence, the year was 1951 which was the year he was born. Many of the slips have 'GWR' written on them meaning 'gold wedding ring' and the attraction for Arrad is that it is an extraordinary human document. The distress of having to take personal possessions to the pawnbrokers is alluded to with reference to Charles Dickens and his family having to pawn

¹⁸⁴ Mounted at the Foundling Museum in 2016.

family belongings prior to their stay in the Marshalsea prison (Richardson, 2012). Subsequently Dickens featured such establishments in his novels and Richardson writes that it is clear that Dickens ‘recognizes the memories and meanings special objects can hold, and respects the understandable reluctance to part with them’ (Richardson, 2012, p.265). The second exhibit from the Found exhibition is entitled ‘Dad’s stick’ (fig.89). The stick in question had been used by John Smith’s father to stir pots of paint for nearly sixty years and when the end was sawn off it revealed concentric circles of different colours of paint recording the history of the family home and consequently evoking memories of childhood. Like Miss Smith’s cache, both these exhibits featured clusters of small things (memories) packed tightly together.

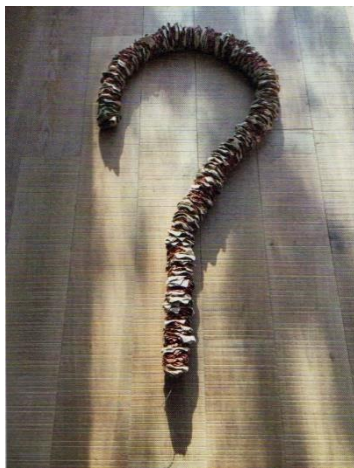


Fig.88
1951, 1973 String and Paper
Ron Arrad
(The Foundling Museum,
2016, p.23)



Fig.89
Dad's Stick, c. 1950-2007
John Smith
(The Foundling Museum,
2016, p.123)

3.2.5 Memento Mori, Spiritual Middens and Time Capsules

3.2.5.0 Outline

The translation of ‘memento mori’ is ‘remember that you have to die’ and the genre provides a means of reflecting on our own mortality, on the vanity of earthly life and the transient nature of our lives and possessions.

This section looks at ways in which memento mori is often expressed using literature, exhibitions and craft to explore the subject. Objects kept as a

reminder of the inevitability of death (such as a skull, hourglass or extinguished candle) are habitually used but it could be argued that Miss Smith's cache was her personal memento mori since it contained artefacts which appeared to portray her memories of her life. In addition, several of the items in the cache could have belonged to her parents, both of whom had died by the time she would have created her cache. The sections below are used as illustrations of different ways in which memento mori is expressed but each example could also be termed a spiritual midden containing, as they all do, a large collection of items.

When Miss Smith's father died there was probably something in almost every room in the house to remind her of him: his slippers maybe, a pipe, a walking cane in the hallstand, visiting cards perhaps, books and especially all his clothes. Memories are often triggered by sensory prompts and everyday objects frequently hold intense personal significance when remembering family members and friends. Clothing in particular often evokes strong memories because it appears to be imbued with the identity of the original owner (Burman and Denbo, 2006).

3.2.5.1 Memento mori

Memento mori reminds us of the inevitability of death. Traditionally it is represented by a wide range of artistic and literary works, particularly featuring such items as skulls, the Grim Reaper, and clocks engraved with the reminder *tempus fugit*, 'time flies' and examples often refer to the dire consequences if we fail to live good lives. In the 15th century *transi*, or *cadaver* tombs became fashionable; these depicted the corpse of the deceased in a decayed state, serving to show the consequences of the 'vanity of earthly riches'. This topic was addressed by Grayson Perry in his series of tapestries *The Vanity of Small Differences* which is explored later in this section (3.2.5.2).

Hallam and Hockey (2001) acknowledge that many people believe there is no other life after death and therefore face the prospect of 'social erasure and the annihilation of identity' (Hallam and Hockey, 2001, p.4). They suggest that the memorials we create are not just providing memories of departed loved ones but also act as a safeguard against the fear of being forgotten once our lives

have come to an end. Merrifield (1987, p.58) points out that human beings are the only 'animals' that are fully aware that our time on earth is limited and therefore it is understandable that rituals have developed not only to help the bereaved to cope with their loss but also to provide smooth passage for the soul to move from this world to the next. There is often the feeling that to carry out the last requests of a person enables them to rest in peace. As part of their research Hallam and Hockey (2001) explore how the living maintain their relationships with the dead, and consider how the personal belongings of the deceased are used to create memories.

Continuing the theme of memories and memento mori, one of the most popular poems of this genre was that written by Thomas Gray (1716-1771), *Elegy written in a country churchyard*; Gray's work was still influential throughout the Victorian period and it is likely that Miss Smith was familiar with it. The poem was written following the deaths of people he knew and questions his own life and his own mortality. Gray addresses the way people might wish to be remembered but also addresses discrimination in that well known people, such as William Shakespeare or John Milton, will have memorials erected in their honour and be remembered whereas the lives of more lowly people – for example the plowman referred to in line 3 of the poem 'The plowman homeward plods his weary way' – will fade into obscurity. Echoed by Hallam and Hockey (2001), Gray ends the elegy maintaining that it is natural for people to want to be known and remembered:

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

Merrifield (1987, p.79) refers to 'the cult of the blessed dead' whereby graves are sometimes grouped around that of a particularly venerated person; the theory being that the soul of the revered person would act as a sponsor for those lesser mortals. The grave then became a sort of shrine which would provide a place to visit and worship. Along the same lines it could be suggested that it is possible Miss Smith's chaise became a type of memorial shrine, providing a link with her past life and family containing, as it did, items which could have belonged to her parents clustered together. With such an ordinary surname as 'Smith' it could also have been an attempt to protect

herself from 'social erasure' (Hallam and Hockey, 2001, p.4). When a person dies every item in their home, even pieces such as old shopping lists and worn-out clothing, has the potential to be transformed into a memory object and there is a suggestion that there is a link between these things and dedicated memorials which warrants further investigation (Hallam and Hockey, 2001, p.12-13). They cite Cardinal (1994) who referred to the German artist Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948) who used the detritus and broken things found in the street after the First World War to create something new in the form of collages (Hallam and Hockey, 2001, p.12); it could be suggested that this is what Miss Smith did – gathering-up scraps to create something new.

For all their desire for privacy, the Victorian middle classes had an almost public attitude to death and mourning; it was usual for the body to remain at home until the funeral and to be on display so that visitors could pay their respects. It has been suggested that the Victorian practice of photographing the dead¹⁸⁵ helped people to come to terms with their loss (Hamlett, 2016). An extraordinary form of memorial is that produced by Nick Reynolds, a musician and sculptor best known for his speciality of creating death masks - which is a genre perhaps less well practised in recent times than further back in history. Reynolds states that it is the final portrait, but more tactile than a photograph; because it is three-dimensional it can capture the spirit of the person and help those left behind to believe that the person is still there. He maintains it is a form of immortality.¹⁸⁶ Hamlett (2016) writes that the way that Victorians valued possessions which had belonged to the dead emphasises the emotional importance attached to them.¹⁸⁷

Daniel Miller's ethnographic study of a group of people living in a London street included one woman (Elia) with a wardrobe full of clothes which appeared to represent people or events in her life history (Miller, 2008). Miller observes that the word 'represent' doesn't adequately describe the true sentiment and that Elia believes that these clothes 'actually mediate and transfer substance and emotion between people' (Miller, 2008, p.37). She wears clothes which had

¹⁸⁵ Bodies were sometimes 'posed' or incorporated into family portraits.

¹⁸⁶ BBC News magazine, 19 July 2013.

¹⁸⁷ One particularly popular form of memento mori in the 19th century was to integrate hair from the deceased into jewellery.

belonged to her mother, for instance, as a way of keeping her mother in her life and if she receives a compliment when she is wearing a borrowed dress she feels that the compliment is also to the friend who lent her the dress. It is the same feeling she has when she sits on a gravestone 'and feels the love which that person once bore her rise again and embrace her from within the stone' (Miller, 2008, p.37). Is that how Miss Smith felt when she was sitting on the chaise longue? Tim Dant¹⁸⁸ made an interesting observation on the subject of objects providing memory when he wrote that 'the material object has no faculty for memory and yet it is solid evidence of the existence and specificity of the past'.¹⁸⁹

The number of mementos we can sensibly keep is restricted to an extent by the space available in the home and a process of sorting and evaluation takes place until we are left with the most significant mementoes. The same is true with our associations and, over time, as new relationships come into our lives a natural process of separation occurs to make way for new things (and new people) and this process plays a major role in the way we deal with the loss of a loved one (Miller, 2010).

Re-using textiles to create something new helps with this divestment process whilst still retaining the essence of its connections. In section 3.2.3, *The Fabric of Myth*, several illustrations were given where people had gathered together the story of their life in the form of an artefact – Bispo Do Rosário's cape for example. Other illustrations were given of storytelling and history being recorded through needlework, such as the Sudeley Castle stumpwork casket, and quilts. The Hereford Mappa Mundi¹⁹⁰ is a remarkable example of memento mori. It was created in the 13th century and was an attempt to portray all human knowledge in one piece of work. It has Jerusalem at its centre and is an interpretation of how the world appeared to be both geographically and also from a spiritual perspective. It is a pictorial encyclopaedia and includes drawings of plants, animals, buildings, people – imagined and known – and illustrations of historical events. Above all it is a painting of allegorical

¹⁸⁸ Tim Dant is a reader in sociology at the University of Lancaster.

¹⁸⁹ Journal of Design History, 1 Jan 2000, Vol. 13 (3) pp.263-264).

¹⁹⁰ Meaning 'cloth of the world'

importance, a memento mori with Christ at the top of the map sitting at the Day of Judgement.



Fig.90

Ann West's coverlet, dated 1820, includes the phrases 'remember me' and 'forget me not' and fulfils the role of her personal memento mori. (Prichard, 2010, p.88)

One of the exhibits included in the V&A's exhibition on Quilts (section 3.1.6 above) was Ann West's coverlet (fig.90) which was inspired by the bible but also depicts numerous scenes from her daily life in the early nineteenth century, including a double wedding.¹⁹¹ Dated 1820, the work includes the phrases 'remember me' and 'forget me not' and fulfils the role of her personal memento mori. The coverlet is signed twice with the words 'Ann West's work, 1820' so she clearly wanted to be recognised as the creator of the coverlet. The coverlet is a visual narrative of a life and acts not only as a piece of history but also as a memorial to the person who created it in the same way as other creations such as Bispo's cape and, indeed, Miss Smith's cache albeit in a hidden way, although she had included her name and address which associated her with the artefacts.

¹⁹¹ The fabrics used for this coverlet are brightly coloured woollens, which were typical of cloth made in the West Country. It is thought that the creator of this coverlet, Ann West, may have owned a dressmaking shop in Wiltshire.

3.2.5.2 The vanity of small differences

Within the theme of memento mori, *vanitas*¹⁹² pictures were popular in the Victorian period and by the use of symbolism these typically portrayed the good life (often illustrated by fresh fruit and flowers) combined with death (Munro, 2004).¹⁹³ A contemporary example of this was produced by artist Grayson Perry who created a series of six tapestries primarily inspired by Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress*. The tapestries were the culmination of a research project on class and taste which Perry maintains are part of the English character.¹⁹⁴ The storyline of the tapestries is class mobility, the main character coming from a working class background, moving through the middle classes and finally to upper class. Interestingly, the middle class background featured is Tunbridge Wells and he summed-up the middle class attributes as individualism and self-expression but with a self-consciousness and need to show that they were good, moral people - which seems to align with the Victorian codes of behaviour for that class. The subject matter of the tapestries is meticulously observed and includes mythological narratives, allusions to politics and events of national importance but with the traditional characteristics of memento mori replaced with modern equivalents – for example, a skull keyring for a Citroen car in one tapestry but a smashed mobile phone in the final tapestry rather than a skull.

3.2.5.3 Spiritual Middens and Time Capsules

Historically the word *midden* has been used to refer to heaps of household waste and cesspits but researcher Tim Easton (1997) expands this expression to describe caches of concealed objects as 'spiritual middens'.¹⁹⁵ He feels it is important to make a distinction between a spiritual midden and a builder's deposit. Although evidence of ritual activity has been found dating back to pre-

¹⁹² Vanitas is a category of symbolic works of art, especially those associated with the still life paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries in Flanders and the Netherlands.

¹⁹³ Munro, D. (2004) Memento Mori and vanitas elements in the funerary art at St John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta, Malta. Article in journal *Treasures of Malta*. December 2004.

¹⁹⁴ *In the Best Possible Taste*: A BBC Channel 4 series of three programmes where Perry investigated the emotional investment we make in our possessions. First shown in June 2012.

¹⁹⁵ Easton, T. in Oliver, P. (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*. Vol. 1., p.568.

Roman times (Merrifield, 1987), Easton (1997) maintains that the incidence of spiritual middens increased during the 16th and 17th century due to a heightened fear of witches and the perceived need to provide protection from them. The alterations being made to older houses at this time, such as the installation of floors and chimneys, provided cavities in which people could place 'offerings' in the hope that evil spirits would be distracted by them and therefore the inhabitants of the dwelling would be left safe. The items selected were invariably well-worn and were representative of the lives lived by the occupants, and research has shown that these caches were frequently added to by different generations. Testimony from builders in the 1950s indicated that the practice of builder's deposits was passed down the generations but that it was generally kept secret from customers and usually just consisted of whatever was to hand before the floorboards were nailed down (Easton, 1997). These, therefore had nothing to do with providing protection for the occupants of the house but were more for the amusement of the builder – or perhaps even a way of getting rid of unwanted rubbish.

Ethnography was a popular research methodology with Victorian anthropologists and in 1884 the Pitt Rivers Museum was founded in Oxford¹⁹⁶ exhibiting 26,000 objects. Items are exhibited in cabinets so that even ordinary everyday things gain importance due to being displayed in a museum/cultural context and it is interesting to see the way it is organised; exhibits are clustered together, rather like Miss Smith's bundles. Walking round, the analogy with Miss Smith's cache resonates; the museum represents an ideology; the natural history of evolution. It is a time capsule relating to life experiences, a glimpse into a life. It is representative of 'everything' in the world – resembling the Mappa Mundi.

When a hoard of treasure is unearthed it sparks the public's imagination as evidenced in 2009 when an amateur metal detectorist discovered a hoard of Saxon gold in a field in Staffordshire and in Miss Smith's lifetime a similar discovery was made in London. In 1912 a group of workmen excavating in a cellar discovered what became known as the Cheapside Hoard¹⁹⁷ which

¹⁹⁶ Museums often display objects by country but Pitt Rivers displays by category first, then by country/region.

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.museumoflondonimages.com/viewCollection.php?collectionId=319>

contained 400 pieces of Elizabethan and Jacobean jewellery. Following research it was concluded that this was probably a goldsmith's working stock as Cheapside was the centre for luxury goods and, in particular, gold jewellery in Medieval London. It was probably not the intention of the owner of this hoard to leave it in the ground but one person who deliberately buried things to leave behind was the potter Enoch Wood (1759-1840). Enoch Wood and Sons made earthenware products in Burslem but he was also one of the first antiquarian archaeologists in the area of the Stoke on Trent potteries. One of Wood's past-times was to bury time capsules containing their wares around the town centre¹⁹⁸ and it is interesting to ponder on this behaviour and wonder if perhaps it is a subconscious survival instinct.

Collections of items of sentimental value are sometimes referred to as spiritual middens¹⁹⁹ and this has a particular connection to Miss Smith's cache because of her apparent selection of items rather than them having the appearance of a random approach for inclusion. Amongst the textiles in Miss Smith's cache were the remains of some net curtains and it was interesting to see the use of net curtains as part of an exhibition on cloth and memory²⁰⁰ which portrayed them as a form of concealment. The exhibit was created by textile artist and lace consultant Carol Quarini who had embroidered the words 'I can see through you' across one of the curtains; with the suggestion that whilst you can see out the purpose of the curtains is that no-one else can see in. She describes net curtains as providing a boundary between the home and the outside world. Quarini suggests that the transparent nature of the curtains represents a liminal space which sees the home as a sanctuary but at the same time trapping memories which become part of the fabric of the room which then becomes a sort of prison. In addition to resembling a spiritual midden, Miss Smith's cache also appears to form an example of a time capsule containing as

¹⁹⁸ One of these time capsules was discovered during the making of a Channel 4 *Time Team* programme: Series 6, Episode 1.

¹⁹⁹ Easton, T. in Oliver, P. (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*. Vol. 1., p.568.

²⁰⁰ *Cloth and Memory* exhibition, 2012, held at Salt Mills, part of Saltaire Village which is a UNESCO World Heritage site in West Yorkshire.

it does items which can be dated to a specific period – and also remnants of several net curtains.

3.3 Summary

Although the practice of deliberately concealing garments and other items in buildings has been reported,²⁰¹ to date there is no evidence of such a large cache as Miss Smith's being found in furniture, potentially making this hidden store unique. The justification for claiming that this hidden store is potentially unique is addressed in section 2.2 of the previous chapter and follows discussions with professional upholstery bodies,²⁰² presentations given to their members and conversations with furniture historians.

When objects which have been concealed are uncovered the air of secrecy and mystery which is exuded captures the imagination of many people, but despite this being an ancient practice there is a dearth of bibliographic material on the subject. Merrifield (1987) acknowledges this lack of investigation which his book goes some way to addressing. He believes that whilst ritual and magic have always been part of daily life there has been a reluctance to acknowledge these practices because of their association with the occult and 'fantasy fiction' (Merrifield, 1987). He recognises that his work raises more questions than have been answered and identifies it as an area with potential for further study. This suggests that this is perhaps a new and emerging area of research, hence most of the published literature comes from journal articles reporting on specific projects.²⁰³ Some of these rituals involve hiding objects and garments, particularly within the structure of buildings, but whilst the identified projects have established precedents to encourage the reporting of such finds they had different objectives and offer little in the way of interpretation of this phenomena. This study attempts to fill the gap between these reporting undertakings and Merrifield's archaeological-based work.

²⁰¹ www.concealedgarments.org

²⁰² The Guild of Traditional Upholsterers and the Association of Master Upholsterers; the two leading organisations representing traditional upholstery in the UK.

²⁰³ In particular the Northampton Museum Shoe Index and the Deliberately Concealed Garments project.

Throughout the chapter I have sought to explore the relationships between deliberate concealments and the emotional value that is placed on apparently inanimate objects. The section on myth, ritual and symbolism considered how these influences might provide a context for the behaviours connected to concealment, and the connection between forced confinement with the production of art or craft-based artefacts ; an outpouring of emotions.

Daniel Miller (2010) asserts that if the accumulation of stuff is to do with life, then it is just as relevant to reflect on how we divest ourselves from things when dealing with death and the loss of a loved one. He challenges the view that material culture tends to focus on objects as symbols and maintains that things have personal meaning too and possessions acquire meanings throughout their lifetime. He argues that more emphasis should be placed on what actually *matters* rather than the more usual route of searching for meaning (Miller, 2010).

The psychology of concealment is interesting; how the emotional gets projected or expressed through materiality as revealed by the examples highlighted in section 3.2.3. It lends support to the view that 'the act of consumption is only the starting point in objects' lives. Thereafter they are transformed and invested with new meanings that reflect and assert who we are' (Attfield, 2000) and it could be argued that the act of concealment performs a therapeutic function.

Overall this chapter has revealed that there are patterns of behaviour which connect the different forms of concealment, that there is an emotional investment in material things, and Miss Smith's cache would appear to have parallels with the other examples of concealment which have been studied. The next chapter researches the life and times of Miss Smith, to situate her in an environment.

4. A study of provincial life:²⁰⁴ the middle classes in Victorian England

4.0 Introduction

At the core of this research is a Victorian chaise longue containing a cache of artefacts; identified and investigated in Chapter 2. The chapter aimed to establish that this was a deliberate concealment and subsidiary research attempted to put some of the items found into the context of their original purpose and the way in which they were used by their original owner. Following on from this, chapter 3 researched deliberate concealments in different forms, exploring possible reasons for this practice, reflecting on the meaning we attribute to our possessions and investigating rituals and influences encountered from childhood which could shape a person's character, their behaviour and therefore their actions. The inclusion of an address label in the cache suggests that the person who carried out the work on the chaise was a Miss Smith of Leamington Spa and for the purposes of this chapter Miss Smith is being used as a case study, representative of a particular type of person – a middle-class, unmarried woman living in middle England.

As set out in chapter 1.2, the external rationale for the research, historically the chronicling of the lives of the middle classes has been relatively overlooked and the third element of this research aims to address this to some extent, to establish what daily life would have been like for a person of Miss Smith's type and to ascertain what social activities would have been open to her and how she would have fitted into society. Studying people's possessions, and the way they are used, it is possible to gain an insight into 'real' lives as opposed to those of more prominent or famous people whose histories may be embellished and not always recorded in a totally accurate way (Miller, 2009). The study aims to research an ordinary life to try to make a connection between the

²⁰⁴ Eliot, G. (1871) *Middlemarch: A study of provincial life*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and sons. The novel was based on a fictitious Midlands town.

person and the serendipitous result of her handiwork and to do this it is important to research her family and social background, looking back to her roots to gain a complete picture.

Published works on social history provide a great deal of information on Victorian times generally but to gain an insight into what it actually felt like to live in those times one has to turn to the literature of the period. Charles Dickens is probably the most important writer of the period whose work served as a commentary on social problems – mainly of the plight of the poor, whilst Thackeray's characters are more middle class.²⁰⁵ Victorian writers had a tendency towards bleak themes but there was nearly always an underlying lesson in morality involved with good eventually triumphing over evil.²⁰⁶ Consequently, existing literature has been used as a background and combined with contemporary (to the time) works of fiction to try to provide an accurate picture of this way of life. This has been supported by government, county and local archives using information from sources including census returns, wills and probate records, street directories and local papers, and is further personalised by oral histories, diaries and photographs. One particularly valuable source of information has been the diary written by a young woman called Adelaide Pountney who lived in Leamington with her family in the 1860s (Pountney, 1998) which was around the time when Miss Smith and her family moved to the town. She not only wrote an account of her day-to-day activities but also illustrated them, thus providing a visual record of the fashions, furniture and the environment at that time.

Relating to the previous chapter, anthropologist Daniel Miller maintains that increasingly people's lives are becoming more private, lived out behind closed doors, but he believes that our possessions and the way we use them communicates a great deal about the way our lives are lived, potentially

²⁰⁵ *Vanity Fair*, a novel by William Makepeace Thackeray published in 1848.

²⁰⁶ Another example of this type of novel is *Haunted Hearts* by Maria Cummins, first published in serial form in 1864. Many of the novels were published in this format during this period, including those of Dickens and Thackeray, and then later published as a complete volume.

providing a more accurate record than traditional histories of an age (Miller, 2008). He enlarges on this by saying that it is sometimes difficult to persuade people that things we do, or use, or wear every day are actually often of more interest than less usual things, simply because we take them for granted and therefore pay them scant attention (Miller, 2010), and this chapter aims to pay attention to some of the ordinary things that Miss Smith may have been associated with. The next section outlines the evolving of the middle classes and this is followed by sections on family background and then traces Miss Smith's life in Leamington where she seemingly created her 'spiritual midden'. Particular emphasis is placed on the period when Miss Smith was living at 20 Russell Terrace, both because this is the address identified in the cache and also because, in a sense, this would have been a turning point in her life following the death of both her parents, a 'coming of age'.

The function of the first part of this chapter is to explore Miss Smith's family background, possible influences and the environment in which she spent her early life. The second part focusses on her life in Leamington.²⁰⁷

4.1 The Middle Classes: House and Home

The nineteenth century saw an unprecedented growth in the middle classes and this section aims to define what exactly made someone middle class. Opportunities for financial and social advancement were at a level never seen before, but what materialised was in fact a complex, multi-layered social strata: the upper-middle class consisted of people with incomes on a par with the landed aristocracy –bankers, merchants and industrialists. Members of professions fell into the middle category, along with senior clerks and small business owners. At the lower end of the scale were shopkeepers, non-conformist ministers, apothecaries and tradesmen etc. whose incomes were in the same range as those of skilled workers but who had ambitions to raise their

²⁰⁷ It was unusual during this period for people to move long distances, although one of Miss Smith's cousins did move to Scotland. It was more normal for people to move short distances, creating a ripple effect of migration (Best, 1979).

social standing (Burnett, 1986). The population in England in 1860 had grown to around 18,000,000 people and of these perhaps 3,000,000 would be considered to be middle-class, so these households made up one-sixth of the population. However the over-riding, and very visual, factor that defined status as middle-class was the number of resident domestic staff employed. Burnett refers to an anonymous publication entitled *A New System of Practical Domestic Economy*, covering the period from the 1820s to the 1840s, where the head of a household with an income of at least £150 a year was called a 'gentleman' and his wife a 'lady' (Burnett, 1986, p.99).²⁰⁸ Children of middle class parents would call them 'Mama' and 'Papa'²⁰⁹ and this is almost certainly the way Miss Smith would have addressed her parents (Burnett, 1982).²¹⁰ An approximate guide to domestic staff levels in relation to income for the first half of the century is given in the table below, fig. 91 (Burnett, 1986).

Fig.91

Guide to numbers of domestic staff employed in relation to income in first half of nineteenth century

annual income	domestic staff employed
£150	a servant for occasional char work (wage £3/year)
£200	a responsible maid-servant (wage £16/year)
£300	2 maids
£400	a horse and occasional groom
£500	a full-time man-servant
£1,000	3 female servants, a coachman, a footman

²⁰⁸ When Miss Smith's brother was married in 1882 her father, Charles Smith, was described on the marriage certificate as 'Gentleman'.

²⁰⁹ 'Mater' and 'Pater' was the form of address used by upper and upper-middle class offspring when addressing their parents with 'Ma' and 'Pa' being used by the working classes.

²¹⁰ In her diaries Adelaide Pountney always refers to her mother as 'Mama' (Pountney, 1998).

It follows that the more domestic staff employed, the larger the house needed to be to accommodate the size of household, thus two requirements of the house were to provide shelter in a practical sense, and to provide identity in a social/status context (Briganti and Mezei, 2012). There was a third element required of middle-class housing and that was location. Surveys in the 1840s had highlighted the spread of disease caused by the unsanitary and squalid conditions in which the poor lived and it was consequently seen as undesirable to live in close proximity to areas occupied by the poor (Burnett, 1986). However, in many instances these slum areas formed pockets amongst well-to-do districts and were difficult to avoid. As Leamington developed as a spa town, hotels and shops were built in order to accommodate the visitors to the town and these establishments required workers. The Parade was one of the most prestigious areas of the town but at the back of the hotels and shops courtyards developed with housing for the workers, much of it with no sanitation, and these quickly developed into appalling slums, in addition to other areas such as this around the town (Cave, 1988).

The Industrial Revolution created an influx of people moving from rural areas into the towns and this prompted a programme of house building on a scale never seen before (Flanders, 2003). This coincided with a change in attitude to the house with the Victorians increasingly seeking to separate their work from their home life and the unique solution to this challenge was terraced housing. Whereas continental countries solved their housing problem by building large apartment blocks, this involved a certain amount of communal living with shared entrances and staircases, and that type of housing would not have fulfilled the English desire for privacy. This need was noted by the French philosopher Hippolyte Taine who wrote 'it is the Englishman who wishes to be by himself in his staircase as in his room ... and who, even in London, plans his house as a small castle, independent and enclosed ... he is exacting in the matter of

condition and comfort, and separates his life from that of his inferiors' (quoted in Flanders, 2003).²¹¹

Consequently the Victorians attached enormous importance to the home; it provided a space between their public and private lives, it was a place to be comfortable and above all it was a place in which to raise a family with a set of Christian-based values endorsing 'moral rectitude' which covered the characteristics esteemed by the Victorians of polite behaviour: industriousness, duty, thrift and sobriety (Burnett, 1986). The home, then, became central to the lives of the Victorians and the house had to reflect the moral compass of the family. It is interesting to trace the progression of the Smith family as they moved from one location to another, in particular within Leamington and this is expanded upon later in the chapter in section 4.4. Their first appearance in Leamington is recorded in the 1861 census return, which was conducted in the April of that year, living in Ranelagh Street, but it was not until eight months later that the local newspaper included them as 'new arrivals'. Their first address was not a particularly 'good' area²¹² so it could well be that they didn't 'announce' their arrival until they had found accommodation which they felt was more suitable for their status. It is also interesting to note how many churches/chapels can be seen, in every direction, from the upstairs windows in Russell Terrace. As Leamington developed as a spa town, it was necessary to cater for the religious beliefs of the visitors to the town, hence the diversity of the religious establishments at the time and by the mid- to late-nineteenth century the parish church, All Saints, could accommodate a congregation of 1,000 people. The Pountney diary records church attendance several times a week and twice on Sundays, which supports the idea that Christian belief was an intrinsic part of Victorian life (Pountney, 1998). Miss Smith's will shows that she left the bulk of her estate to two charitable organisations, both of which were affiliated to the Church of England; consequently it could reasonably be

²¹¹ Hippolyte Taine, *Notes on England*, trs W F Rae (3rd edn., London, Strahan & Co., 1872, p.18).

²¹² Opinion expressed by Judith Harridge, Local Studies Librarian, Warwickshire Libraries.

assumed that her religious beliefs lay within that establishment. In Leamington the family was well provided for with places to worship - the Smith's first address in the town in Ranelagh Street was very close to the parish church, All Saints, but the closest place of worship in their first 'proper' address, in Beauchamp Terrace, was Holy Trinity church, which was a daughter church to All Saints, or Christchurch (Episcopal Chapel)²¹³, both of which were situated on Beauchamp Square on opposite sides and just a few minutes' walk from their home. The following section traces Miss Smith's family background and situates her in the middle-class environment described above.

4.2 Family background

The research into Miss Smith's genealogy has shown particular links to her mother's side of the family but none to the paternal side, other than her grandfather being a witness at her parent's wedding. When Miss Smith died he will shows that she left the bulk of her estate to two charities, however, smaller bequests were also made to some family members and these recipients all came from her mother's side of the family. In order to contain the case study, the scope of this chapter therefore is restricted to those members of the family where it can be shown there was contact but traces her lineage from her maternal grandparents in order to explain the relationships. For clarity, an abridged family tree is given below (fig. 92).

Miss Smith's parents – Charles Smith and Sarah Haynes – married in Warwick in 1840. Charles Smith was born in Offenham in 1813 and his father is recorded as a witness on the marriage certificate and is shown as William Smith, a miller from Evesham but no other details are known about him. Sarah Haynes was born in 1816 and census returns show her place of birth variously as Astwood or Feckenham but these locations are less than four miles distance so the boundaries may well have been blurred. Her father was also recorded as a witness to the wedding and is identified as John Benton Haynes, a

²¹³ The Episcopal church is the ancient national Church of the land.

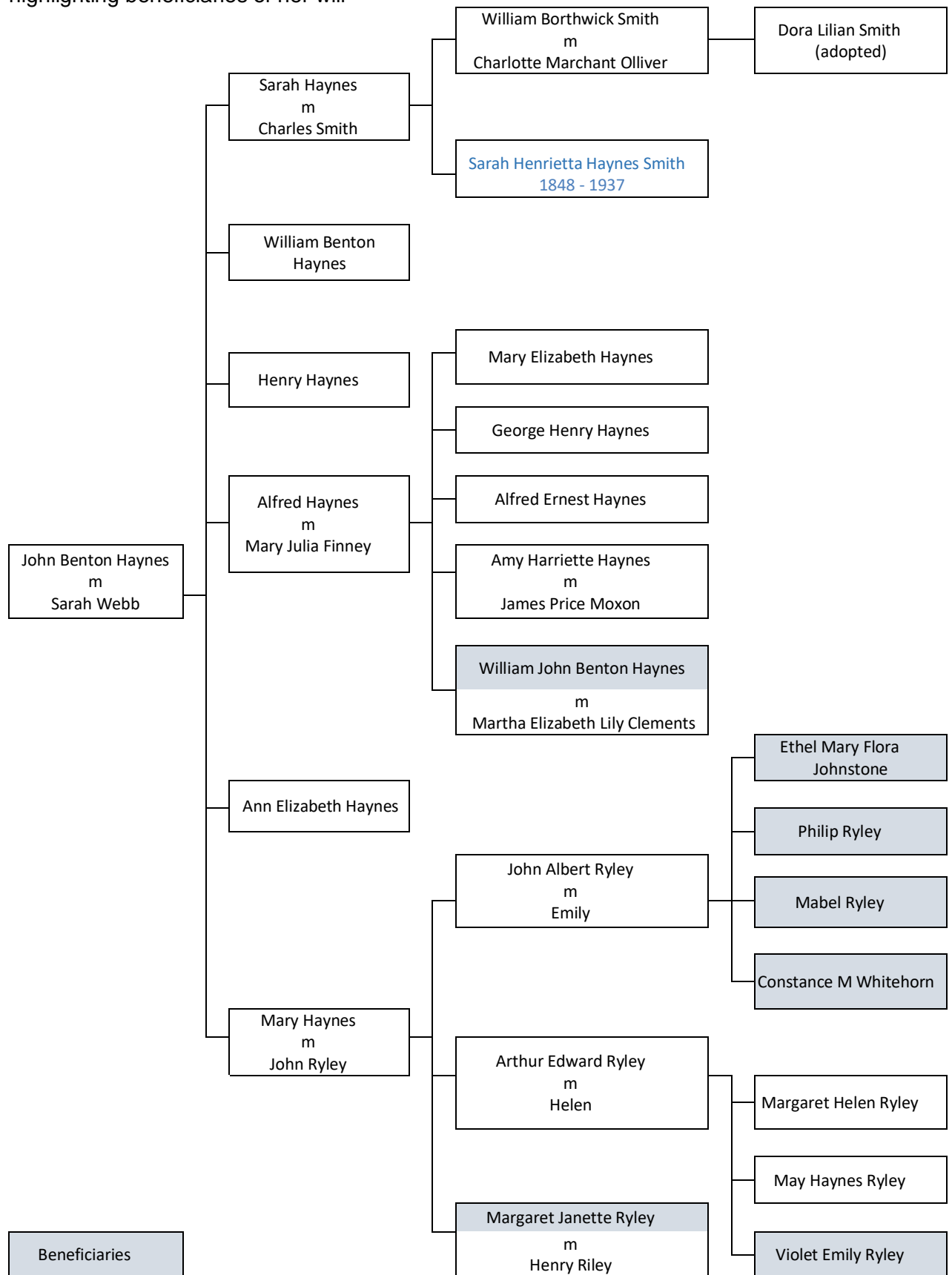
geometer²¹⁴ - although he was always shown in census returns as a farmer. In the census returns the use of the term 'farmer' (usually including the number of acres) indicates that he owned or rented land and was an employer rather than an employee – employees were shown as agricultural labourers - which would have made the family middle class. The 1841 census records him living in Haselor with a household which numbered nine people: himself (farmer), his wife, two sons described as farmers, three male servants (agricultural workers), all aged 15 years, and two female servants, one aged 20 years and the other 15 years. The census also includes the number of acres owned and other details but unfortunately the quality of the record is poor and undecipherable. Nonetheless, using fig.91 above as guidance, this would seem to put the family well into the middle layer of the middle classes.

Agriculture was key to the area and, whilst it has changed considerably today, the traditional customs and practices of country life continue to be celebrated through the fictional place of Ambridge in *The Archers*, which is widely recognised as being Inkberrow (Palmer, 2005) where Miss Smith's maternal grandfather was born.

²¹⁴ A person skilled in geometry.

Fig.92

Abbreviated family tree for Sarah Henrietta Haynes Smith 1848-1937
highlighting beneficiaries of her will



Both of Miss Smith's parents were born in Worcestershire, an area rich in folklore, and it is likely that many of these legends featured in Miss Smith's upbringing. Although it's uncertain what comfort these stories about spirits would have given, they may have provided a sense of having a past, a heritage, and therefore afforded a sense of belonging. One myth which could possibly have had a connection with Miss Smith relates to someone who may have been an ancestor - in the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for villages to have a healer and one such person was Nanny Haines of Feckenham who had the gift of second sight and was attributed with the gift of being able to foretell the future (Palmer, 2005). Given the fact that these were small communities in rural areas, many of the inhabitants would have been related to one another and the fact that she was called Haines could mean that she had a connection with Miss Smith's family as her mother's maiden name was Haynes.²⁰⁹

Another local legend claims that the astrologer and herbalist Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654) lived at Astwood Court (Miss Smith's mother's birthplace) at one time and a circular depression in one of the fields, known as Spirit Pit, is where spirits came to help with his potions (Palmer, 2005). It is said that the meadow adjoining the farm still contains useful herbs which could come from plants grown during Culpeper's time there and until very recent years there were a number of shops specializing in selling Culpeper's herbal remedies and a book of his 'natural remedies for ancient ills' is still available to buy.

At some point the Haynes family moved to Haselor in Warwickshire where the 1841 census records a population of just 357 people (182 male, 175 female) living in 78 dwellings – an average of around 4.6 people per abode. Although at the time of the 1841 census only two of the Haynes' sons were recorded to be living at home, the household still numbered 9 people – as it did at the following census in 1851 – so it was clearly one of the larger households in the area, being almost double the average. It is well documented that child mortality

²⁰⁹ Variant spellings of names often occur in the census returns with Haines/Haynes being one example.

rates in the 19th century were high²¹⁰ but a search through the parish records for Haselor provides a very personal interpretation on the statistics. The records put names to the numbers and with such a small community the same family names occur with regularity. In the period investigated (1824 – 1849) there were 257 infant baptisms - over 7% of which were recorded as illegitimate – and 207 burials, more than 30% of which were children under the age of five years. The Haynes family lost at least one child in infancy (Ann Elizabeth who was baptised 22 February 1828 and buried on 7 March 1828 aged 9 weeks). No record has been found to date of Miss Smith's mother, Sarah, being baptised although her younger sister, Mary, appears to have been baptised twice: the first time at two weeks old and the second with her three surviving brothers who were all baptised on the same day – 13 February 1848 (the year that Miss Smith was born) – when they were adults. There is only one other account in the parish records searched of an adult being baptised so it would seem to be an unusual occurrence at that time and to date no obvious explanation has been established. Overall the records paint a picture of a small rural community many of whom married within that community; meaning that a fair number of them were related to each other either by birth or marriage and would naturally have had an interest and empathy with each other's lives. Insofar as life expectancy was concerned, the most dangerous time for a woman was during childbirth with the most common cause of death recorded as childbirth fever (or puerperal fever), now known as septicaemia. During the period 1847 to 1876 for every 100 live-births five women died (Flanders, 2003), but the infant mortality rate was worse. There were no mass epidemics in 1850, so it could be regarded as a comparatively healthy period, but in that year 146 infants from 1,000 live births died within a year of birth and as many again died before the age of five (Burnett, 1986). Miss Smith was seven years younger than her brother and whilst no records have been found of siblings in

²¹⁰ 1850 was a relatively healthy year, with no recorded mass epidemics, yet the mortality rate in infants was 146 out of every 1,000 within the first year of birth and many more deaths occurred within the first five years of life (Burnett, 1986).

the intervening years it is very possible that there were other babies which did not survive.

At the time of her marriage in 1840, Miss Smith's mother and her family were living in Wedgnock Park, an area to the north of Warwick, and the wedding was held at the parish church of St. Mary's in Warwick. Miss Smith's father, Charles, was a grocer and living in Evesham (approximately twenty-five miles from Warwick) and this is where her parents returned after their marriage.

4.3 Evesham

The birthplace of Miss Smith was Evesham, a horse-shoe shaped town in Worcestershire standing within the natural flow of the River Avon. As such it has always been prone to flooding, and still is. The soil is extremely fertile which lends itself to market gardening, which was the main occupation in the nineteenth century, and has earned it a reputation for its production of fruit and vegetables. However, this type of work is generally poorly paid and it is likely that this was not a particularly wealthy area. Folklore from the area seems to corroborate this with tales that the ladies of Worcester were 'poor, proud and pretty' and the mention of several places in the area prompting the remark of 'God help us' due to the poverty of the inhabitants (Palmer, 2005).

In the middle part of the nineteenth century the population of Evesham did not change a great deal, as illustrated in the table below (fig.93). Year on year there was a small but steady increase in numbers. In 1837 the Evesham Union workhouse was built on the south bank of the river designed to accommodate two hundred people, so with a population of around 4,000 people that would account for around 5%. Whilst a figure of two hundred people in the workhouse in such a small community might seem like a large number, a paper published in 1873²¹¹ suggests that three-quarters of agricultural workers would receive

²¹¹ George Bartley (1874) *The Seven Ages of a Village Pauper* [s.l.][s.n.]

public relief at some stage of their lives (Burnett, 1986) and as many as one in five would end their days in the workhouse (Burnett, 1979).

4.3.1 Family life

The marriage certificate of Miss Smith's parents records her father as a grocer and living in Evesham. The first record of the Smith family (Charles and Sarah) living in Evesham comes from the 1841 census which was taken on Sunday 6 June; at this date Evesham was a small town of just over 4,000 inhabitants. The census shows Miss Smith's parents, Charles and Sarah, living in Bridge Street (figs.94 and 95 below) in the All Saints area of the town, which is one of the principle roads in the town.

Fig.93: Population of Evesham showing a relatively small but steady increase			
year	population	increase over ten years	percentage growth
1831	3,971		
1841	4,245	274	6.9%
1851	4,405	160	3.8%
1861	4,680	275	6.2%
1871	4,877	197	4.2%

The household consisted of just four people: Charles Smith, his wife Sarah, a domestic servant (aged 22 years) and a 20 year old shop server. A son, William Borthwick Smith, was born later that year on 29 July²¹² but no other children are recorded until Miss Smith's birth on Wednesday 3 May 1848.²¹³ Her full name was registered as Sarah Henrietta Haynes Smith, Haynes being

²¹² Birth Certificate

²¹³ Birth certificate

her mother's maiden name. The main 'world' news during this period was centred on revolution sweeping across Europe, although probably it would have seemed very remote to the inhabitants of rural Worcestershire. One piece of news which may eventually have been reported in the area was the phenomenon of Niagara Falls standing still (March 1848); this was due to an ice jam in the upper regions of the river and is the only recorded time of this occurring.

In 1851 the family were still living in Evesham and the census shows the father's occupation as 'grocer and baker'. The household at this time numbered seven people:²¹⁴ Charles Smith and his wife Sarah, their son William (aged 9 years), daughter Sarah Henrietta (Miss Smith, aged 2 years) and three employees – a baker (aged 20 years) an apprentice to the grocer and baker (aged 16 years) and a house servant (aged 23 years). Charles Smith's livelihood, along with the number of employees, would classify the family as middle class (Burnett, 1986).



Fig.94

The left hand image is believed to be the premises where Miss Smith and her family lived in Bridge Street, Evesham in the 1850s and 1860s (now known as Bridge Court). Her father was a grocer and baker at this time.

On the right is a view of the building looking down Bridge Street towards the river. The timbered building on the right, neighbouring the Smiths, was an inn called the *Duke of York*, the landlord operating as both an innkeeper and hat maker.

²¹⁴ 1851 Census return

Bakers were amongst the group of craftsmen catering for the personal needs of the rural community; a lack of fuel²¹⁵ and, especially, a lack of suitable ovens in the cottages meant that most bakers enjoyed a profitable business (Horn, 1984) but lack of fuel was not the only reason why people were no longer making their own household bread. During the first half of the century the population of England doubled but, at the same time, the balance of rural and urban living was rapidly changing; in 1801 four-fifths of the population were rural dwellers, by 1851 only half and by 1901 the balance was reversed with four-fifths of the population living in towns (Burnett, 1979). As the country became more and more industrialised the urban dwellers were dependent on the rural communities to provide their food but, with a dwindling population in the countryside, Britain had to rely on foreign imports and the arrival of the railways and advancements in shipping meant there was an enormous increase in imported produce both in volume and in variety. The availability of new foodstuffs changed the eating habits of people, particularly amongst the population living in the towns, and two prime examples of this are white bread and tea. Previously only the wealthy classes had been able to afford these luxuries but by the middle of the century brown 'household bread'²¹⁶ had virtually disappeared, being replaced with white bread, and tea had become the national drink (Burnett, 1979).

²¹⁵ This was due to the ongoing Enclosure Acts whereby land which had previously been classed as 'common' land became enclosed, thereby denying the poor of a free supply of wood and kindling for their fires.

²¹⁶ The flour used for making white bread has been milled to remove all the bran content and is therefore much more processed than the flour used for 'household' or brown bread which retains all the wheat grain.



Fig.95

Two views of the back of Bridge Court, Evesham today – believed to be the premises where Miss Smith lived with her family in the 1850s.

To return to the Smiths and the life of a baker. In the 1850s there were more than 50,000 bakers in the country, almost all of which operated as small businesses using an average of just ten sacks of flour a week, a figure which hadn't really changed since 1815 (Burnett, 1979). Mechanisation was not immediately embraced by the bread making trade; which was a long process with the dough continuing to be kneaded by hand and this work was often carried out by journeymen who worked long hours in unsanitary conditions. An 1862 parliamentary report into bakeries²¹⁷ described 'their extreme dirt' and recorded:

... in many places the almost total covering of the entire space between the rafters with masses of cobwebs, weighed down with the flour dust that had accumulated upon them, and hanging in strips just above your head. A heavy tread or a blow upon the floor above, brought down large fragments of them ... and as the rafters immediately over the troughs in which the dough is made are as thickly hung with them as any other part of the bakehouse, masses of these cobwebs must be frequently falling into the dough. ... Animals in considerable numbers crawled in and out of and upon the troughs where the bread was made, and upon the adjoining walls ... (quoted in Flanders, 2003 p.89)

²¹⁷ H Seymour Tremenheere, Report addressed to H.M. Principal Secretary of State for the House Department, relative to the Grievances complained of by the Journeymen Bakers, 1862.

As if that wasn't damning enough the report went on to say:

In addition, the air of those small bakehouses is generally over-loaded with foul gases from the drains, from the ovens, and from the fermentation of the bread, and with emanations from (the bakers') own bodies (quoted in Flanders, 2003, p.89).

The bread was baked in domed brick-built ovens and once the baking was complete it was common practice for villagers to be allowed to cook their own pies and stews in the residual heat. The ovens were sometimes also used for cooking Sunday dinners for a charge of around 1½d (36p) (Horn, 1984). Apart from the filth, there must have been very little privacy for the family with the live-in servants, the business and the home being under the same roof, and a constant flow of customers possibly seven days a week.

The 1851 census return shows that there were seventy-four dwellings in Bridge Street, of which nine were uninhabited. Although the properties weren't numbered, by following the route taken by the census enumerators and matching occupations recorded, combined with available descriptions of the street from archives,²¹⁸ it has been possible to identify the property which is very possibly where the Smiths lived. Bridge Street is on an incline which drops down to the river and the Smiths home was towards the bottom end. Fig. 94 above shows the property today which has a small shopping precinct running through the building, which may have been an original opening to allow access to the rear of the property for deliveries, and the buildings which remain to the rear of the property may well have been the bakehouse and storage areas for flour etc. The Smiths' neighbour lower down the hill was a wood turner and, on the other side, a victualler and hat manufacturer.²¹⁹ The landlord of the inn (*The Duke of York*),²²⁰ Charles Badger, made hats to order and customers would buy a pony pelt at the annual Evesham horse fairs which would then be made-up

²¹⁸ In particular, a publication by the Vale of Evesham Historical Society which provided a collection of articles written in the 1950s.

²¹⁹ The inn was called the *Duke of York* and the innkeeper's name was Charles Badger.

²²⁰ Now operating as the *Lantern Eating House*

into the latest style to be collected at the next fair (Bayliss, 2008). A familiar sight for Miss Smith must have been Charles Badger's son, Thomas, who was described thus: 'The good old man used to stand outside his shop, always wearing a top hat beneath which obtruded showy curls.' (Barnard, 1911). Bridge Street appears to have been the main street for trade in 1851 with the occupations of other inhabitants including four more grocers, blacksmiths, a tailor, dressmaker, shoemaker, two chemist and druggists, a watch and clock maker, an ironmonger and a hairdresser. Other residents included a solicitor and a Justice of the Peace. One of the properties which helped to locate the area where the Smiths lived was the Crown Hotel (fig. 96 below) – two properties apart. Whilst this no longer functions as a hotel the exterior is still immediately recognisable. The archway through the building originally lead to stabling and the left hand side of the building, by the roadway, was the tap room which would have supplied sustenance to coachmen.

Analysis of the census return indicates that the surrounding roads appear to have housed a poorer class of people with less diverse occupations; the majority shown as labourer, gardener, launderess and gloveress (glove making). The county town of Worcester, approximately fifteen miles north-west of Evesham, was a centre for glove making and whilst the work was varied it was extremely poorly paid. It is reported that for an average sixteen-hour week, after buying materials the gloveress would have only around 2s 10d left over for all her living expenses²²¹ and that in order to survive the women had to turn to prostitution to make up their wages (a letter written to Reynold's Newspaper²²² in 1852 claimed that, in Worcester, gloving was synonymous with prostitution).²²³

²²¹ In 1850, £0 2s 10d would have had the same spending power as £8.29 in 2005 (The National Archives currency converter).

²²² A Sunday newspaper founded in 1850

²²³ <https://19thcenturyhistorian.wordpress.com/2014/02/14/g-is-for-gloveress/>



Fig.96

The Crown Hotel, Evesham, occupied a site two premises away from the Smiths'. The image above shows The Crown c.1845. (source unknown)

Top right: The building today is visually remarkably unchanged.

Bottom right shows the front of the building looking down towards the Smiths grocery and bakers shop and the river.



Until 1870 education was not compulsory. Prior to this, elementary education was provided by individuals who offered private tuition, dame schools or voluntary organisations which were mainly connected to religious establishments, and children were often taught by their mothers. Many people felt that it was not necessary for girls to be educated, indeed some thought it was positively harmful (Burnett, 1982). Draznin (2001) writes that even if a girl did live near a day school her formal education would have been very limited, almost certainly for no longer than a year, but maintains that girls did receive an education somewhere because there is evidence that, as adults, they were able to read books and periodicals, write to their friends and manage the household accounts (Draznin, 2001). Nevertheless, two examples of Miss Smith's handwriting have been found – her signature as a witness to her brother's wedding and, secondly, on the 1911 census return – and she does seem to have an 'educated hand'. Interestingly though, neither Miss Smith nor her

brother were ever shown in census returns as a 'scholar'.²²⁴ Conversely, the 1861 census shows that one set of cousins had a live-in governess.²²⁵ Social historian John Burnett reports that prior to 1870 the Sunday Schools were the main providers of education and it was exceptional for children not to attend.²²⁶ As a consequence nearly all children were influenced by religious doctrines and Burnett believes that these teachings became entwined with the folklore and rituals which surrounded them and provided a sense of protection and comfort from the sometimes harsh existence in which they lived (Burnett, 1982). Whilst it is not possible to say how Miss Smith was educated she does appear to have retained a connection to religious organisations, living her later years at a Girls Friendly Society (GFS)²²⁷ home and also leaving the bulk of her estate to two organisations affiliated to the Church of England.

4.3.2 Community life

There was often friendly rivalry between the towns and villages and little rhymes have been recorded to emphasise that some towns felt they were better than their neighbours with Evesham often bearing the brunt, such as –

*There was a church at Honeybourne²²⁸
When Evesham was but bush and thorn* (Palmer, 2005, p.3).

²²⁴ Given that there are ten years between each census return it is highly likely that the brother, at least, did receive some schooling, particularly in view of his careers first as an engineer and later as a finance broker.

²²⁵ Miss Smith's uncle, Henry Haynes, is shown as having four children aged between 4 and 9 at the time of the 1861 census. Henry Haynes was described as a 'thrashing machine proprietor' and the family had a live-in governess.

²²⁶ The 1851 Religious Census records that there were 2,400,000 children on the registers of which 1,800,000 were in regular attendance (Burnett, 1982).

²²⁷ The GFS was founded in 1875 originally to support young working-class country girls moving to the towns for work. It expanded its work following the First World War opening homes and hostels and organising conferences, training and retreats.

²²⁸ Honeybourne is a village about five miles east of Evesham.

Even so the customs and rituals over the area followed similar patterns, albeit with slight variations in order to maintain individuality, with various fairs and festivities taking place throughout the year.

4.3.2.1 Church bells

Church bells must have been part of Miss Smith's life from the moment she was borne; they played a prominent part in everyday life ringing to sound the start and the end of the day (Palmer, 2005)(fig. 97 shows the Bell Tower in Evesham). The bells were also used to signify that a death had occurred and at funerals, with slight variations depending on the village. At Offenham for instance, where Miss Smith's father was born, the bells were tolled using three bells in sequence (two bells if the deceased was a woman) and this was followed by the tenor bell being rung for as many strokes as the person's age. Finally, the bell was tolled for five minutes whereas at Inkberrow, the birthplace of Miss Smith's maternal grandfather, a similar formation was used, again differentiating between a man or a woman, but with the addition that a bell



Fig.97

The Bell Tower in Evesham (Image: Vale of Evesham Historical Society)

would toll once for each minute of the hour between sunrise and sunset on the day of the death, resuming half an hour before the funeral and again for half an hour afterwards, with the pace of the tolling quickening as the funeral party approached the churchyard (Palmer, 2005). Palmer also records that at one time the passing bell was sounded to warn of an imminent death in order to give people the opportunity to pray for the soul of the person about to depart this earth – he observes that this practice must have been disturbing for the person concerned (Palmer, 2005).

Something Miss Smith must have seen many times whilst growing up in Evesham are a pair of 'Quarter Boys' or 'Jacks' (fig. 98 below) – which struck the chimes every quarter of an hour. They were carved in oak, whitewashed, just over a metre high, and originally stood on a platform above the clock-face on the western aspect of the Bell Tower of Evesham Abbey. In the mid 18th century the Jacks had ceased to function and underwent some restoration work but around 1860 they were taken down again, then taken to the Abbey Manor and are now on display at the Almonry Museum²²⁹ in Evesham.

Fig. 98

The Quarter Boys which once struck the chimes every quarter of an hour in the Bell Tower of the church in Evesham. They are now on display in the Almonry museum in the town. (Image: The Almonry Centre)



Jumping forward to December 1861, which was just as the Smith family had been recorded in the local paper as a 'recent arrival' in Leamington, church bells were utilised to relay the news of Prince Albert's death across the country. His death, at the age of just 42, shocked the nation: flags were flown at half-

²²⁹ This 14th Century building was once home to the Almoner of the Benedictine Abbey that was founded at Evesham in the 8th Century.

mast, theatres cancelled performances, shops closed their shutters and the middle classes wore black as the country mourned the death of someone who was in all but name the King.²³⁰

4.3.2.2 Wakes, festivals and fairs

These festivals were major events in the lives of the rural population. They were originally religious festivals intended to be a time spent in prayer but they gradually evolved into social events in the villages, an occasion for people to gather together and enjoy themselves – and also an opportunity for young people to meet potential spouses. Wake Sunday in Feckenham (the area where Miss Smith's mother was born) was held towards the end of June and was such an important event that it was regarded as second only to Christmas.

As stated above, fairs often coincided with religious festivals, such as Easter week, or linked to the feast days of saints. There was a great deal of ceremony attached to them, often starting with a procession by the mayor and local dignitaries preceded by the Town Crier. Evesham held cheese and wool fairs on the second Monday after Easter Monday and again on the second Monday in August. Produce was exported by river and canal which was the main means of transport until the railways arrived in the 1850s. Products exported included corn, cake and cheese, boots and shoes and locally grown produce. Imports included coal, sugar, oil, tobacco, iron, lead and wood, therefore river traffic was very important for the supply of these basic necessities.²³¹

May Day was one of the most popular festivals of the year and in 1858 it was reported that Evesham was 'en fête' (Palmer, 2005). Miss Smith would have been 10 years old; her birthday was on 3 May, and whilst birthdays were not normally celebrated during this period this could have provided a special way to mark the occasion. The Queen of the May was carried through the town on a vehicle decorated with flowers and streamers and with her was a little boy

²³⁰ <http://www.historyextra.com>

²³¹ Information displayed at the Almonry Museum, Evesham.

sweep. They were escorted by a number of sweeps, all in fancy dress, wearing ribbons and hats, dancing and making music, and carrying the tools of their trade. Hundreds of people came into the town from the surrounding area to join in the celebrations (Palmer, 2005). It is alleged that Charles II escaped from the Parliamentary soldiers after the Battle of Worcester in 1651 by hiding in an oak tree. He was restored to the throne on 29 May 1669 and in many areas this date, which became known as Oak Apple Day, was celebrated as the real May Day with maypole dancing and everywhere decorated with oak sprays (Palmer, 2005).²³²

Hiring fairs conventionally took place on the four 'quarter days' in a year.²³³ In Worcestershire the annual hiring fairs, or 'mops', were traditionally held in the autumn and in Evesham the event was held on the Friday before Old Michaelmas Day which was 10 October; for farmers Michaelmas marks the end of the growing season and the beginning of a new cycle. For workers hoping to be hired it must have been an anxious time but it was also a big social event and provided an opportunity for people to take a break from their daily routines. The Evesham Journal, reporting on the mop in 1862, recorded that the entertainments included a 'hurry-scurry', swing boats and roundabouts. The following year, whilst reporting on the enjoyment of the day it also commented unfavourably on 'the attraction of those low-class and debasing spectacles which annually, at Mop-time, crowd our Market-square' and also noted that the number of people hired was declining (Palmer, 2005).

²³² There is a wooden sign hanging from one of the shop fronts in Bridge Street (previously a 17th century inn called the *Dolphin*) which claims that King Charles I stayed there in July 1644.

²³³ Lady Day (25 March), Midsummer (24 June), Michaelmas (29 September) and Christmas (25 December) <http://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/michaelmas/>

Fig.99

The Pleasure Grounds in Evesham opened in 1856 and became the location for regattas and flower shows.

(Image: Vale of Evesham Historical Society)



The Smith's home in Bridge Street was only a few buildings away from the river and in 1856 work on the building of a new bridge over the river Avon in Evesham was completed. The work had involved the dismantling of a medieval iron bridge along with a number of wharfs and warehouses. Following this, part of the site was developed to provide 'pleasure grounds' for use by the inhabitants and was also used as the site for regattas and flower shows,²³⁴ so the Smith family were well positioned to be able to take advantage of these facilities (fig. 99 above).

4.3.2.3 Recreational pursuits and the exodus to the towns

Apart from the fairs, Worcestershire had a strong tradition in folk music and in Worcester, in Victorian times, there were several printers who produced ballad sheets which were sold on the streets, although many singers composed their own songs. The songs reflected life at the time and people's experiences and made a valuable contribution to the oral history of the area (Palmer, 2005). Another popular pastime was Morris dancing; when the waterways were frozen in the winter, the boatmen would go round the grand houses performing their

²³⁴ <http://www.valeofeveshamhistory.org/articles/bell-tower-history/>

routines and Evesham had its own stick and handkerchief dances which were performed in the streets until the turn of the century (Palmer, 2005).

In 1851 whilst Miss Smith and her family were still living in Evesham, her maternal grandparents and two of their sons and younger daughter were farming 27 acres at Old Park, which is an area to the north of Warwick. The remaining son, Henry Haynes, was working as a draper and grocer in Bulkington, near Nuneaton.²³⁵ By the time of the 1861 census Henry Haynes had moved to Dosthill, near Tamworth in Staffordshire, and his occupation is shown as 'thrashing machine proprietor' – an occupation also attributed to Miss Smith's father thirty years later when he was 78. Agricultural labour was extremely cheap in the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly in the southern half of the country and because of this the introduction of farm machinery was slow. However, the steam-powered threshing machines (see fig.100) became the cause of riots in 1830²³⁶ due mainly to the practice of tenant farmers who were gradually introducing labour-saving machinery whilst simultaneously lowering the wages of the labourers (Mingay, 1990). The threshing machines were used to remove the grain from the wheat plant, a task previously carried out by hand taking several months to complete but providing winter employment for the labourers. With the threshing machines the time taken to complete this task was reduced to just a few days, hence people feared for their jobs. These machines would have been too expensive for farmers to own so they were hired when needed and moved from farm to farm.²³⁷ Henry's brother Alfred was farming 32 acres of land in Allesley along

²³⁵ 1851 census return. Footman and diarist William Taylor believed that in large families the farm could not provide a living for all the children so the 'spare' family members had to find other work. He writes that the towns acted as a magnet for these people (Taylor, 1837).

²³⁶ The riots began at the end of August 1830 and became known as the Swing Riots after a fictitious 'Captain Swing', the name attached to threatening letters sent to farmers and other people in authority. In a two month period from this date one hundred threshing machines had been destroyed in Kent alone. However, according to Mingay (1990) the Midlands were hardly affected by the rioting, probably because it is an enclosed part of the country, with the main areas involved being in the south and the east of the country.

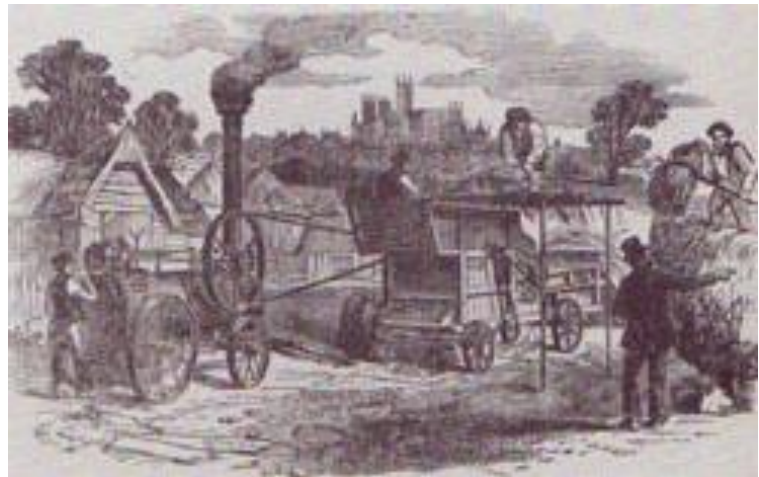
²³⁷ Despite the widespread protests when these machines were first introduced the threshing machines eventually became accepted. BBC2 *Victorian Farm*, episode 1: 1-8 January 2009. The purchase of one of these machines was probably a wise investment for farmers

with his wife, two children and three servants. The younger daughter, Mary (Miss Smith's aunt) had married John Ryley who was a farmer of 57 acres in Allesley, and the household consisted of two children and four servants at this time.

1857 saw a period of economic crisis when many businesses went bankrupt and it is possible that this contributed to the Smith family's move away from Evesham.²³⁸ The hub of the town consisted mainly of cramped, narrow streets flanked by medieval buildings and with market gardening being the main employment in the area there would appear to have been little opportunity, both logistically and financially, for development; there were also very few opportunities for middle-class employment in the market towns (Drazin, 2001). Leamington, by comparison, would have seemed like a new, thriving location

Fig.100

By the 1850s large-scale farmers were hiring steam driven machines to thresh their corn. These machines would be moved from farm to farm as required. (Image: Mingay, 1990)



and was pronounced by Nathaniel Hawthorne²³⁹ as 'the prettiest, cheerfulest, cleanest of English towns' (Hawthorne, 1997, p.260) and enthused further 'To

like Miss Smith's relations; it would mean they had a machine readily available when needed for their harvest and it would have provided an income from hiring out to other farms in the neighbourhood.

²³⁸ The 1851 census recorded 74 properties in Bridge Street of which nine were uninhabited (i.e. just over 12%).

²³⁹ Nathaniel Hawthorne was American Consul in Liverpool between 1853–1857, but stayed on in England until 1859. He enjoyed several sojourns in Leamington which he recorded in *Passages from the English Notebooks*.

say, in truth, unless I could have a fine English country-house, I do not know a spot where I would rather reside than in this new village of midmost Old England' (Simpson and Lloyd, 1977 p.114). Mid-nineteenth century illustrations of the town show imposing buildings and wide streets which were described by Hawthorne again as 'so cleanly, so set out with shade trees, so regular in its streets, so neatly paved, its houses so prettily contrived and nicely stuccoed, that it does not look like a portion of the work-a-day world. 'Genteel' is the word for it ..' (Hawthorne, 1997). An additional attraction was perhaps that the town was surrounded by fields and countryside whilst still being within relatively easy reach of Coventry and even London: the Pountney diary frequently features rural scenes in the surrounding area and fig. 101 below shows Adelaide Pountney and friend sitting on a 'farm implement' in a nearby field (Pountney, 1998). Whatever the reason, by 1861 the Smith family had moved 27 miles across the county border to Leamington in Warwickshire.



Fig. 101

Adelaide Pountney and friend sitting on a farm implement in the fields at Leamington Spa. May 22, 1864. (Pountney, 1998)

4.4 Royal Leamington Spa²⁴⁰

Leamington, with a population of over 17,000 at that time, was nearly four times the size of Evesham and whilst its heyday as a spa town was waning the population continued to grow due to industrial expansion; benefitting from its rail links and close proximity to Coventry which was the centre of the watch making industry at that time. In developing towns such as this there were economic opportunities connected to this growth – speculation in land, supplying building materials etc. (Burnett, 1986), and Charles Smith appears to have acquired business interests in this area. The family were newly arrived in Leamington at the time of the 1861 census where Charles Smith was described as ‘independent’. However, subsequent census returns describe him as a ‘proprietor of land and houses’ (fig.103 below shows a town plan of the time).

Leamington Spa is considered by many to be the true centre of England and in the north-east part of the town, at the junction of Lillington Avenue and Lillington Road, there is a blue plaque marking the site of the ‘Midland Oak’ (N 52° 17.999 W 001° 31.801). Centuries ago an oak tree had been planted on that spot claiming it to be the centre of England²⁴¹ and although there are one or two other sites which also vie for that distinction a look at a map of England shows some justification for this for declaration. So what was life like in Middle England at the beginning of the 19th century? Data shows that it was a rural area, illustrated by the watercolour reproduced in fig.102 below which shows the original post office in Leamington which was on the corner of Mill Street and New Street. In 1808 none of the dwellings in Leamington had tiled roofs, they were all thatched (Clarke, 1947). Whilst the sight of such cottages may have appeared enchanting to town dwellers the reality was often very different and behind the quaint exteriors the country dwellers were frequently living in abject

²⁴⁰ Only three towns have been granted permission to append ‘Royal’ to their name, the first being Leamington (in 1838) following an overnight stay by Queen Victoria in 1830 which, allegedly, was the first time she had stayed away from home. The other two towns are Royal Tunbridge Wells (1909) and Royal Wootton Bassett (2011).

²⁴¹ www.geograph.org.uk/photo/27563

poverty with their standard of living bearing no relation to the overall state of the farming economy (Burnett, 1986).

Fig.102

Sketch showing the original post office in Leamington and the rural setting c.1783 (Image: Cave, 1988, p.29)



Data from census returns shows that in 1801 the population of Leamington totalled just 315 people living in 50 dwellings. In the following two decades it experienced an astonishing rate of growth due to the development of its mineral springs, transforming from a small village into a large and fashionable spa town, and by 1821 the population numbered just over 2,000, an overall increase of nearly 600%. It is hard to imagine the impact that this development had – and in particular the speed of the development – on the village inhabitants. Roads were widened and tall, elegant buildings replaced agricultural land. Local historian H G Clarke writes that ‘the effect of this block of masonry was as if an invisible agency had removed one of the streets of London and set it down amid the corn fields of Leamington’ (Clarke, 1947, p.11). This trend continued until 1851 when numbers continued to rise but at a slower rate. The population figures and percentage increase are given in fig. 104 below (Clarke, 1947) and fig.105 gives a better visual illustration of the rate of growth of the town.

Fig.103

Town plan of Leamington c. 1857. Leamington was the first town to be awarded the prefix 'Royal' following a visit by Queen Victoria. (Cave, 1988)

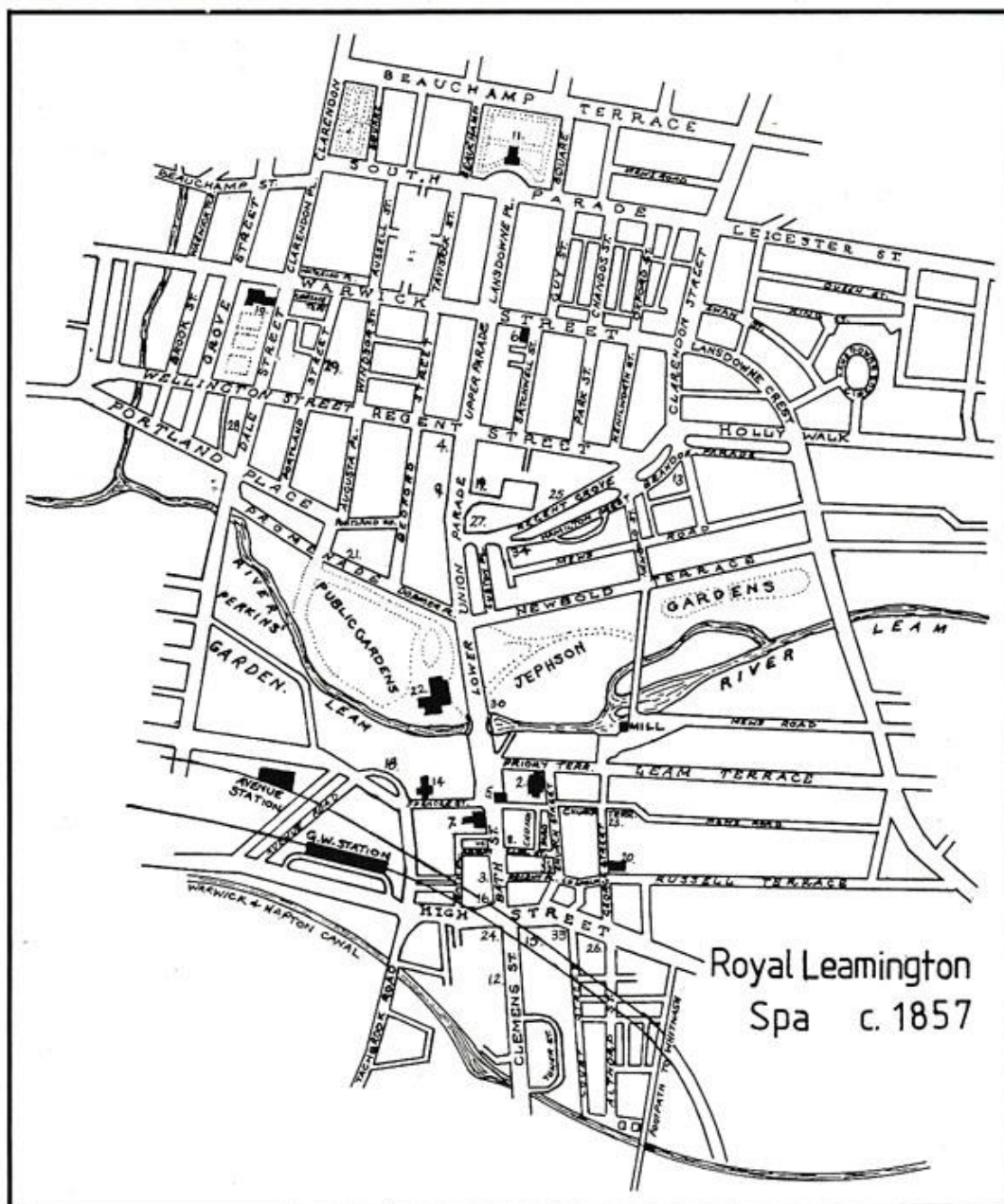
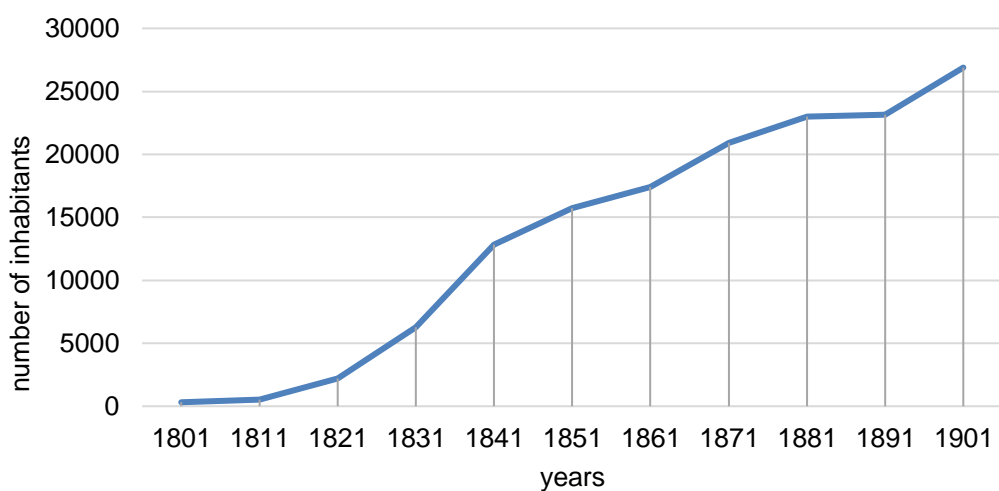


Fig.104: The population of Leamington from 1801 – 1891*

year	population	% increase	year	population	% increase
1801	315				
1811	543	72.38	1861	17,402	10.68
1821	2,183	302.03	1871	20,917	20.20
1831	6,269	187.17	1881	22,976	9.84
1841	12,812	104.37	1891	23,124	0.64
1851	15,723	22.72	1901	26,888	16.28

*Information taken from the census returns.

Fig.105 Graph showing the population growth in Leamington Spa over the 100 year period 1801-1901*



The main reason for this rapid growth was the developing of the mineral springs and the fashion for 'taking the waters'. Whilst Leamington was perhaps never regarded as so fashionable as Bath or Cheltenham it had the advantage of an abundance of water with a plentiful supply for both drinking and bathing – Cheltenham mineral waters were restricted to drinking only. Prior to the 19th century, continental spas had been particularly popular with fashionable society

but the Napoleonic wars curtailed European travel and this benefitted and contributed to the growth of towns such as Leamington. In addition, the town was visited by such well known people as Charles Dickens²⁴² (who subsequently included reference to the town in his novel *Dombey and Son*), John Ruskin, who lodged in Russell Terrace in 1841 whilst undergoing treatment in the care of Dr Jephson,²⁴³ (the house now being marked with a blue plaque), and numerous members of the nobility which helped to raise the profile of the town. Leamington also benefitted from being the centre of the Warwickshire hunt which meant that it enjoyed two seasons – visitors for the waters/health from May to October and the hunting season for the rest of the year (Cave, 1988).

The first record of a mineral spring at Leamington was about 1480 (Cave, 1988) so the saline water was known about, but it was not until the hugely successful enterprises at Bath and Cheltenham were established that the inhabitants of Leamington realised the potential of utilising the facilities. Initially the only known spring was on land owned by the lord of the manor, the Earl of Aylesford, and he had no interest in the commercial aspect and insisted that the spring should be available to all the poor people in the parish - and at no cost (Cave, 1988). However, once the development of the mineral springs did get under way, it necessitated the building of bath houses and other facilities to expand and support them: accommodation for the visitors, assembly rooms and other places of entertainment, shops and, of course, accommodation for local residents and the people servicing the thriving tourist trade, hence the new town was developed to the north of the river Leam (Cave, 1988). It should be noted though that whilst the development of the town included grand houses and hotels, at the same time, in amongst the well-to-do parts of town, slum areas were developing where the workers who serviced these establishments were living.

²⁴² The hotel's guest book contains a copy of his signature.

²⁴³ Dr Henry Jephson (1798-1878) was a physician and philanthropist who lived and worked in Leamington, moving there in 1818 and remaining until his death in 1878.

The building work was carried out mainly by local land owners and entrepreneurs who often invested funds trying to locate mineral springs and, once found, raised money to develop the surrounding area by selling shares – often relatively small amounts but to large numbers of people (Cave, 1988). The local paper, *The Leamington Courier*, substantiates this with the first pages being made up of advertisements for a multitude of purposes: goods and services, people seeking employment and others seeking staff, clergymen looking for a duty, the local prisons and workhouses inviting tenders for supplying flour, meat, coal etc. and entrepreneurs seeking subscriptions for their latest ventures. Searches in local archives²⁴⁴ indicate that many of the people involved in these enterprises went bankrupt but, even so, they appear to have been undeterred, continuing to undertake new ventures when opportunities arose. Building was also affected by the national economic climate and this meant that there were times when the development of the town came to a virtual standstill. Although the first mineral spring found was genuinely a spring where water flows from the ground naturally, the other sources were actually wells from which salt water was pumped. The presence of the saline water occurs due to a deposit of clay and lime which lies under the southern part of the town. This is separated from the sandstone under the northern part of the town by a geological fault. The line of this fault was not known about at the beginning of the century, neither was the significance of it understood, and consequently many unsuccessful attempts were made to find saline water in the north of the town.

1851 was the year of the Great Exhibition which was probably the peak of British economic dominance although the years of 1857 and 1866 saw periods of economic decline when many businesses went bankrupt. Although Leamington continued to develop, this period marked the end of its boom years as a spa and expansion continued at a steadier rate. The development of the railways throughout the country made travel much easier and fashion moved

²⁴⁴ Local newspapers, trade directories and the London Gazette, many of which are held at the public library in Leamington. The London Gazette is available to search on-line.

away from spa towns in favour of sea bathing. One result of the downturn in popularity of spa towns was a surfeit of small houses in Leamington which had been built specifically as lodging houses to accommodate the visitors to the town. These properties were gradually taken by middle class residents and although there were some areas which were regarded as lower-class, and some pockets of appalling slums, most areas in the town could provide what would be regarded as a 'respectable address' (Simpson and Lloyd, 1977). However the railway had reached the outskirts of Leamington by 1844 and with good travel links, and being close to Warwick and Coventry, light engineering developed in the area in particular in connection with the growing car industry (Cave, 1988).

The Smith family appear to have made the move from Evesham in 1860 or 1861 when Miss Smith would have been twelve years old. The 1861 census, taken on 7 April, shows the family living in Ranelagh Street, Leamington Spa with a house servant but no record found of the brother who would have been nineteen years old. As noted earlier, this would not have been a particularly good address although there were big houses nearby, and the census return verifies this. The street was alongside the Grand Union canal and had numerous wharfs and warehouses – and two public houses, with brick kilns in a neighbouring court. Many of the dwellings showed both man and wife working, mainly as labourers, boatmen and washerwomen, although there were some anomalies: such as a solicitor's clerk and a few residents, including Charles Smith, were shown as of 'independent means', there were a couple of artists and a portrait painter, and right in the centre of the area were three villas with the occupation of the head of house shown as 'gentleman'. Springfield Street was close-by, within the same enumeration district in the census return, and this was recorded in the diary by Pountney (1998) as her 'district' for charitable visits and later was one of the streets targeted in the slum clearance process (Cave, 1988). During this period, in addition to local directories, the local newspaper *The Royal Leamington Spa Courier* published lists of arrivals and departures to the town, lists of villas and residents (but only 'Nobility, Gentry etc.' – the working classes were not included) and details of 'removals' when people moved from one house to another. It is not until 7 December 1861 that

the Smith family were included in these lists, by which time their address was Stoneleigh Villa, Beauchamp Terrace (fig.106 below) and they were shown in the section 'general arrivals'. The first inclusion in the paper as established residents was 1 February 1862.

For the Victorian middle class the location of their home was an important factor, not only for social reasons but also because surveys had shown how many diseases were caused, and spread, by the unsanitary living conditions of the poor; so living in close proximity to a slum would not be a desirable location (Burnett, 1986). One of the factories located in Ranelagh Street belonged to the Company of Sidney Flavel,²⁴⁵ a major employer in the town, who manufactured cooking ranges; they exhibited at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and won a medal for their *Kitchener* stove. Interestingly, there was an advertisement for a very similar stove marketed by another manufacturer, Benhams, found under the floorboards at 20 Russell Terrace along with the newspaper, and this has been included in the archive (MSA E.09). Whether or not Miss Smith invested in this invention, or whether it was just an aspiration is not known. The Kitchener ranges were an important innovation as they were much cleaner to use than the earlier open ranges which covered every surface with sooty deposits. Nevertheless, having a large manufacturing concern in the near vicinity most likely would have detracted from the residential ambience; in fact the company was the largest employer in Leamington at that time employing around 100 workers.²⁴⁶

It is likely therefore that the accommodation in Ranelagh Street, occupied by the Smith family when they first arrived in the town, was only intended as a very temporary arrangement whilst they searched for more appropriate accommodation because their move to Beauchamp Terrace took place within a few months. During their time in Beauchamp Terrace Charles Smith's

²⁴⁵ The company is still in existence, now trading under the name of *Rangemasters*, and claims to be the market leaders in range cookers.

²⁴⁶ <http://www.leamingtonhistory.co.uk/flavels-part-one-of-two/>

occupation is recorded as 'proprietor of land and houses'²⁴⁷ and this profession appears to be the forerunner of the estate agent. In the nineteenth century it was usual for homes to be rented and it has been estimated that only 10 per cent of the population owned their own home.²⁴⁸ The principal reasons for this were that housing was usually leasehold and opportunities for borrowing money to purchase were not readily available at that time (Burnett, 1986)²⁴⁹ but it also enabled people to move more easily as their fortunes changed for better or worse (Flanders, 2003). An advertisement from 1893 shows that there were companies to assist with removals and storage of furniture (appendix 9)²⁵⁰ but in practice many people sold their furniture at an auction house or house sale prior to a move then bought new goods in keeping with their new abode – again at auction houses or house sales (Hamlett, 2016). Second-hand furniture was big business, not only because it made moving easier but it was also an opportunity to have a change without the expense of buying new (Ponsonby, 2007). In addition, if the move was prompted by an unhappy occurrence – perhaps loss of a spouse or financial difficulties – changing the furniture offered 'interest without painful memories' (Hamlett, 2016 p.186).

²⁴⁷ The 1871 and 1881 census returns.

²⁴⁸ Flanders (2003) points to F M L Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1988) pp. 168-9.

²⁴⁹ Building societies at that time did not operate in the same way that they do today. They usually comprised a group of people or organisations who pooled their funds to purchase land and build houses and then once their goal had been achieved the society was closed down. <http://www.buildingsociety.com/history.shtml>

²⁵⁰ Leamington History Group, <http://www.leamingtonhistory.co.uk/mousell-brothers-removal-contractors-and-storers/> posted February 12, 2016.

From the outside the property in Beauchamp Terrace appears fairly substantial, although just two storeys, and the family seemed to settle here for approximately twenty years, although there are two anomalies: A local directory for 1866 shows the family living at Thickthorn Cottage, Guys Cliff Road and Charles Smith's occupation is listed as 'letter of apartments'. It may be that the family moved to this address for a while but a probable explanation is that the property was in his name because he was letting it and perhaps it didn't have a tenant at the time the directory was being updated. The second



Fig.106

Stoneleigh Villa, Beauchamp Terrace/4 Arlington Street, Leamington
Miss Smith lived at this address with her parents for approximately twenty years
from 1861 - 1881

mystery relates to the property in Beauchamp Terrace. The 1881 census was taken on 2 April and shows the family living at 4 Arlington Street. However, a copy of the will of Miss Smith's mother, Sarah Smith, is dated 29 June of that year – some three months later than the census – and gives the address still as Stoneleigh Villa, Beauchamp Terrace (now Beauchamp Avenue). Arlington Street runs at right angles to Beauchamp Terrace and no. 4, as can be seen in the image above (fig. 106) is on a corner. There have been some changes to street names over the years and it could be that the property was 'reallocated' at some time to Arlington Street. Furthermore, the census enumerators tended not to go along complete roads, but rather they would branch off and work their

way up and down any side streets. Having investigated the area it seems very likely that these two addresses are in fact the same property.

The Post Office Directory of Warwickshire (Kelly, 1863) was one of the publications providing information on residents and visitors alike although it requires some determination to locate people. Names of villas were listed and these were cross referenced under the street names, but street numbers were often not used. Residents were listed in alphabetical order so it is sometimes difficult to identify an exact property, although it is often possible to work out the probable location by tracing the route taken by the enumerators for the census returns. Additionally, names of properties were allocated by the Town Hall, on application, and there are instances where people have taken the house names

Fig.107

This imposing building on the corner of Bath Street and Church Walk housed the free public library between 1858 and 1873. (Image: Cave, 1988, p.77)



with them when they moved, meaning that some names refer to different properties in different years.²⁵¹ These publications also provided details of businesses and services – rather like *Thompson's* directories and *Yellow Pages*

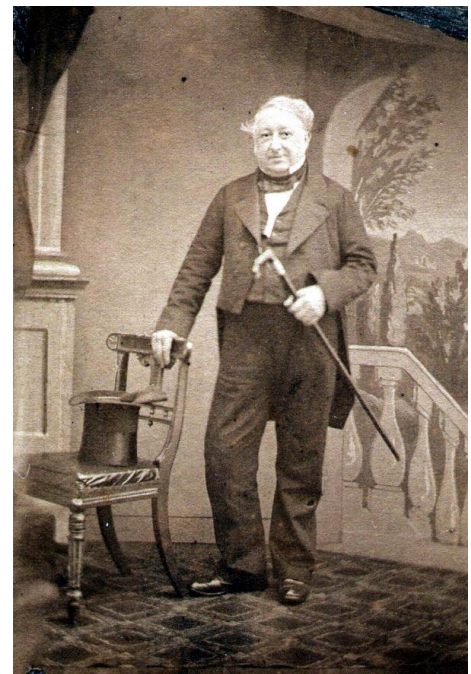
²⁵¹ For example, the *Becks* directory dated 1874 lists a Palm Villa in Russell Terrace (possibly no. 20 where Miss Smith later lived) and an Oak Villa in Leam Terrace East. The following year it records an Oak Villa in both streets but Palm Villa still in Russell Terrace. By the time Miss Smith moved into no. 20 in 1886 the name had changed from Palm Villa to Oak Villa, although coincidentally in 2003 there was a palm tree in the back garden although it has since died.

today – and advertisements from the trades and professions. The advertisements highlight the cosmopolitan nature of the town as illustrated by one for an opticians 'The Golden Spectacles', proprietor D S Margoschis (native of Poland) who claimed 'The German, French, Polish and Hebrew languages spoken at this Establishment' (Beck's, 1872).

During the second half of the nineteenth century recreational facilities began to develop and these too were listed in the local directories along with 'Places of Amusement' such as the Royal Assembly Rooms, Jephson's Gardens, Public Hall and News Room, Royal Music Hall, Tennis Court Club, Cricket Ground, a theatre in Clemens Street and a free public library (fig. 107 above). Adelaide Pountney records that she and her sister were made members of the free library by a Mr H Davis on October 17, 1864 (Pountney, 1998). The Chief Librarian at the time was Mr H T Elliston who is shown in fig.108 below. At the time that the Pountney sisters enrolled the library had a stock of one thousand books which could be borrowed. It occupied these premises from 1858-73, increasing the number of books over this period and a ladies' reading room was added in April 1863.

Fig.108

Mr H T Elliston was Chief Librarian,
Leamington Spa, 1863-64
(<http://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content>)



The reading rooms provided copies of London, provincial and local newspapers which enabled residents to have access to the latest news and it is possible that Miss Smith made use of these facilities. In 1902 a new library was built in Avenue Road; the interior is shown in fig.110. Reading aloud was a popular pastime with the Victorians, not only from a sociability point of view but for the practical reason that lighting was poor so the reader would sit close to the light source whilst the other inhabitants of room who were in less well-lit areas could listen.²⁵² Adelaide Pountney too records 'reading aloud' on several occasions although not just confined to the evenings, she sometimes sat in the fields reading to a friend or family member (fig.109). Incidentally, another popular pastime, recorded several times in the diary, is card playing.



Fig.109

Adelaide Pountney and friend reading aloud to each other in the fields
June 20, 1864. (Pountney, 1998)

Wakes and fairs continued to be popular throughout Warwickshire with entertainments such as Morris dancing, climbing greasy poles and grinning through a horse collar being on offer. However, in 1877, the Kenilworth local paper, reporting on the mop, referred to the 'usual debaucheries' of the

²⁵² Lecture by Dr Jane Hamlett, *Reading at Home*, 3 October 2012, Centre for Studies of Home: the Geffrye Museum, London.

occasion (Palmer, 1994, p.124) so it is unlikely that someone of Miss Smith's class would have attended.



Fig.110

This photograph shows the interior of the free library, a new building which was opened in Avenue Road at the end of 1902. (<http://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content>)

One custom that may have involved the Smith family (willingly or otherwise) was letting in the New Year, recorded in 1875 by the journalist J A Langford 'On New Year's morning, as everyone can sorrowfully testify, no peace or rest is to be procured after twelve o'clock, till the dawn of day'. It was the tradition for 'bands of noisy urchins' to knock at the door, they then ran in through the front door, poked the fire, ran round the table three times then ran out again (Palmer, 1994, p.154) and this allegedly secured good luck for the coming year.

Looking back now to the family in 1871, when Miss Smith would have been twenty-two, the census shows that her uncle Henry Haynes had changed his occupation again and was no longer a 'thrashing machine proprietor'. By this time he had moved to Leamington with his wife, four children and a general

servant and he was an auctioneer.²⁵³ Interestingly, on the day of the census a cousin was with them named Mary A Smith and her birthplace is recorded as Evesham, although there is no clear connection to Miss Smith and her family.²⁵⁴ Another family member had also moved to Leamington, Henry's brother, Alfred Haynes, was living in Leicester Street with his wife and family. Alfred's occupation is shown as 'maltster' and his household comprised his wife, three sons and two daughters, widowed aunt, a nurse and a general servant. Miss Smith's brother, William Borthwick Smith, was included in two locations in the 1871 census returns. One entry shows him living as a boarder with his aunt Mary Ryley and her family in Coventry. His occupation is watch manufacturer, as is Mary Ryley's husband although he was absent at the time of the census. Borthwick Smith was in several business partnerships with John Ryley and this is expanded upon below (section 4.5). Incidentally the daughter of Mary and John Ryley is Margaret Janette Ryley who appears to have maintained close links with her cousin, Miss Smith, despite there being an eighteen year age difference. The second record contained in the 1871 census positions Borthwick Smith at home in Leamington with his family. Coventry is approximately ten miles from Leamington, a journey at that time of approximately thirty minutes by train²⁵⁵ so it is possible that he was visiting his family at some point during the day but was also listed in Coventry as that was where he was actually living at the time.

The reasons for other members of Miss Smith's extended family moving to Leamington may not have been just familial. The towns offered business opportunities such as speculation in land, supplying the associated building

²⁵³ He also invested in his son's business venture manufacturing bicycles (see section 4.5).

²⁵⁴ It may be that further research would establish a connection with Miss Smith but this is the only entry found of Mary A Smith residing with the family – a quick check on the census returns reveals that Mary A Smith had siblings but a mother with a different surname - so she is not explored further here.

²⁵⁵ A journey from Leamington to Coventry is recorded by Nathaniel Hawthorne in the 1850s (documented in *Passages from the English* notebooks) in which he notes it is 'about a half-hour's travel distant'. Nathaniel Hawthorne was the American Consul in Liverpool between 1853 and 1857 but remained in the country until 1859, staying in Leamington many times.

materials, and supplying of other goods and services to the new residents such as fuel and food (Burnett, 1986) and it would seem that Miss Smith's father and her uncles were availing themselves of these opportunities. For women the home was all encompassing and was at the heart of their social life with the rituals of calls, 'at homes' and other gatherings and activities entailing social interaction (Burnett, 1986). The success of the middle class man in the Victorian era was reflected by the fact that his wife and daughters did not work. Domestic servants were employed to carry out the menial tasks, leaving the womenfolk to 'manage' the household and fill their time with a variety of leisure activities (Forty, 1986), although in practice, where there was just one servant employed, the housewife and maid would work alongside each other (Flanders, 2003).

There were a few occupations which would have been acceptable for a single woman, such as governess, but the census returns only ever recorded Miss Smith as 'daughter' until the move to Russell Terrace. Besides, although marriage was the aspiration for a woman it was customary for a single daughter to remain at home to provide companionship for her parents as they grew older (Flanders, 2004). It may also be that Miss Smith's mother was a semi invalid – her death certificate showed that she had suffered from chronic bronchitis for years – in which case it would have been seen as a duty for the daughter to care for her parent (Draznin, 2001). One of the treatments used for bronchitis was the bronchitis kettle, introduced in 1840, which had a long spout as can be seen in fig.111 below. This was placed on the fire to produce steam and the patient then sat at a safe distance with the head covered by a cloth in order to inhale the steam (Eastoe, 2010). The treatment served as pain relief as it helped to relieve congestion in the nose and chest. Patients would visit the pharmacy for treatment sessions, or some people would convert their kettle at home by forming a tube of brown paper to extend the spout.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Science Museum: Exploring the history of Medicine.

Fig.111

The bronchitis kettle was introduced in 1840 for use in the treatment of bronchitis. The steam relieved congestion in the nose and chest, thus providing some pain relief. (Image: Eastoe, 2010)



Until the move to Russell Terrace the Smith household consisted only of Miss Smith, her parents and a general domestic servant. The census returns record a different servant each time (always a young woman in her twenties) but this was not unusual. The average time for a servant to stay with a family was three years, with households employing just one servant seeing the most frequent changes as the servants tried to better their position as they gained experience (Flanders, 2003).

As stated earlier, during the nineteenth century most children attended Sunday School (Burnett, 1982) so were inevitably exposed to the ethics of Christian behaviour and this influenced the way that the Victorians conducted themselves in adulthood. In the 1871-72 Directory (Beck's, 1872) there were over twenty religious/charitable societies listed in Leamington; these included the St Mary's District Visiting Society, the Blanket Lending Society and The Society for the Propagation the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), which was affiliated to the Church of England.²⁵⁷ These organisations seemed to be part of the fabric of everyday life, not only publishing their details in the local directories but also

²⁵⁷ The diaries written by Adelaide Pountney show that in 1864 she devoted a day every week to an organisation she refers to as 'Springfield Street' (this was one of the slum areas in Leamington) and this 'clothing club' raised money to assist the poor not only with clothing but also with other necessary expenditure such as hospital visits.

placing advertisements in the local newspapers with details of their meetings.²⁵⁸

The diary written by Adelaide Pountney records her attending one of the meetings of the SPG (fig.112 below), which appears to be well attended (Pountney, 1998) and this is one of the charities to which Miss Smith left most of her estate so it could reasonably be assumed that she, also, attended their meetings.

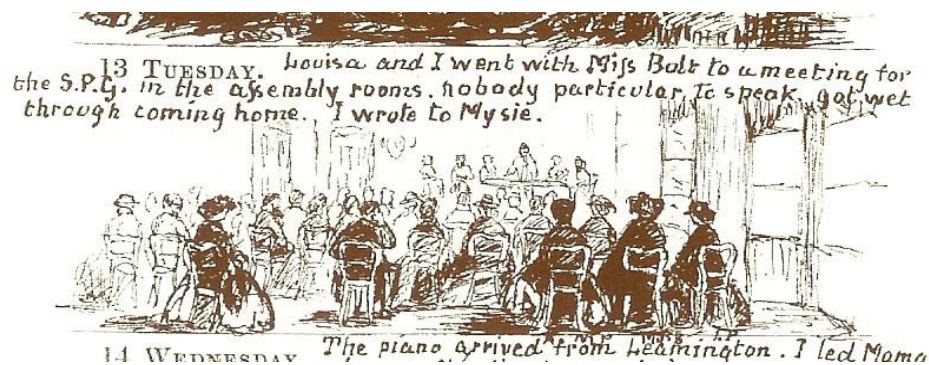


Fig.112

Diary entry illustrating a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, December 13, 1864. (Pountney, 1998)

Until 1882 married women had no legal right to make a will and in practice very few did even after this date (Hamlett, 2016). Oddly though, Miss Smith's mother made a will prior to this which was dated June 1881 (appendix 6) whilst the family were still living at Stoneleigh Villa (fig.106 above). Sarah Smith died in December 1884 aged 69, by which time the family had moved to Dale Street,²⁵⁹ (fig.113), and left her estate 'absolutely' to her husband Charles, the gross value of which was just £2. 2s. 0d (just over £100 today). Curiously though, for such a small estate, probate was not granted until two years later in December 1886 when the address given for her widower, Charles Smith, was

²⁵⁸ For example, an advertisement was placed in the Leamington Courier with details of a meeting of *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* for Saturday 29 March 1862.

²⁵⁹ The local paper, the *Leamington Courier*, printed weekly street directories which show that the Smiths moved from Arlington Street to Dale Street between 19 and 26 January 1884.

Fig.113

Titchfield Villa, 14 Dale Street, Leamington. The house where Miss Smith and her parents lived between 1884 and 1886. Many of these properties have now been turned into flats.

Below, a view of Dale Street c.1910. (WoW)



Russell Terrace. Coincidentally, the doctor who signed Sarah Smith's (née Haynes) death certificate was called Frederick Haynes (1845-1935) and he was born in Evesham where his father was a General Practitioner.²⁶⁰ Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that they were related they are very likely to have known each other from their time in Evesham.

In Victorian times it was usual when somebody died for the body to be laid out at home so that friends and relations could visit to pay their respects; it was felt

²⁶⁰ Sarah Smith's father was John Benton Haynes and Dr Frederic Harry Haynes' father was John Bishop Haynes. Whilst they share the same surnames (and middle initial) they do not appear to be related.

that being able to see the body helped with the grieving process (Strange, 2005). As soon as a person died all the blinds in the house would be drawn and remain drawn until after the funeral (Flanders, 2003). All the furniture would be covered 'becoming its own corpse, remaining in its proper location but becoming improperly other than itself' (Briganti and Mezei, 2012, p.342). Any mirror in the room where the body was lying would be covered and on the Sunday following the death it was customary for female mourners who attended church to be veiled and remain seated during the hymns (Palmer, 1994). Sarah Smith's death in 1884 was registered by her son, William Borthwick Smith, who was shown as 'present at the death'.²⁶¹ The death was presumably not unexpected given the fact that she had apparently suffered ill health for years but perhaps her condition had worsened which could explain the presence of her son who was married with an adopted daughter by this time and not living near Leamington.

4.5 William Borthwick Smith

Miss Smith's brother, William Borthwick Smith,²⁶² was born in 1841 and was 7 years older than his sister. His life is explored here because there is evidence that he maintained contact with his sister throughout his life and, also, he appears to be a good example of a Victorian engineer and entrepreneur. He would have been around 18 when the family moved to Leamington but is not shown living with them at their first address shown in the 1861 census, when he would have been 19 years of age, and there are no records in the census that could be attributed to William Borthwick Smith with any certainty.²⁶³ One

²⁶¹ Information shown on the Death certificate.

²⁶² Miss Smith had her mother's maiden name as one of her monikers (Haynes) and it is likely that 'Borthwick' was their paternal grandmother's name. The name has Scottish connections but no further information has been found at this stage.

²⁶³ The census returns for that year show three William Smiths, two born in Worcester of the right age, being quartered in camp at Shorncliffe in Kent, which was the headquarters of the 2nd Battalion 21st Fusiliers. The only other entry found with the correct name, age and birthplace is listed as a scholar at the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester where there were 20 staff and 69 scholars. This establishment is now known as the Royal Agricultural University and claims to have been at the forefront of agricultural education since 1845 and

possible option for his absence from the census returns could be that he was out of the country, nevertheless, the next 'sighting' of him comes in September 1867 when he is described as a watch manufacturer of Coventry and made a patent application for improvements to watch movements.²⁶⁴ Further patent applications followed, including one related to lever watch movements which was granted in the United States in November 1868; this document was witnessed by his uncle John Ryley, a watch manufacturer, and it is likely they had to travel to the United States for the signing of the documentation.²⁶⁵

The 1871 census records Borthwick Smith, aged 29, a watch manufacturer, living as a boarder with his aunt,²⁶⁶ wife of a watch manufacturer, and family²⁶⁷ in Coventry – his uncle John Ryley was absent on the night of the census. Coventry had been a centre for watch making but in the 1870s was going through a difficult period resulting in many watch manufacturers seeking other work. Entries in the *London Gazette* listing patent applications show that Borthwick Smith had diversified into other areas including sewing machines and bicycles and was involved in several different business partnerships. The most recorded of these was in 1871 when he set up in business with James Starley²⁶⁸ and William Hillman²⁶⁹ as *Smith, Starley and Co.*, producing around 20,000 sewing machines of various types. The partnership was dissolved in 1872 when William Hillman left but continued as *Smith and Starley* operating

the oldest such college in the English speaking world. Census returns show that William Smith's grandfather, John Benton Haynes, was a farmer and two of the sons (his uncles) are also shown as farmers, so it could be possible that he considered a career in farming.

²⁶⁴ The London Gazette, September 20, 1867, p.5169.

²⁶⁵ US Patent no. 84388 granted November 24, 1868.

²⁶⁶ Mary Ryley, younger sister of Borthwick Smith's mother and wife of John Ryley.

²⁶⁷ The family includes Borthwick Smith's cousin, Margaret Janette Ryley, aged 5, who witnessed his marriage eleven years later.

²⁶⁸ Starley is often hailed as the father of the bicycle industry (Grace's Guide to British Industrial History).

²⁶⁹ William Hillman (1848-1921) was a British bicycle and automobile manufacturer. In partnership with Louis Coatalen he founded the Hillman-Coatalen Company in 1907, later the Hillman Motor Company.

from a 'manufactory', referred to as Trafalgar Works, in Crow Lane, Coventry and also with a concern in Leeds.

The company appears to have been successful, winning medals at International Exhibitions in Lyons (1872), Vienna (1873), London (1874) and Manchester (1875), which almost certainly entailed travelling abroad. Figure 114 below shows the drawing for the patent application for their *Little Europa* model sewing machine along with a photograph of one of the machines which is now on display in the Herbert Museum in Coventry. Figure 115 shows the cover of the instruction manual for the machine which displays images of the medals awarded at several international exhibitions.

Starley was known as an innovative inventor and it has been suggested that 'the wealthy' Borthwick Smith's function was to finance the projects (Kimberley, 2015) but it is probably more likely that his input was in the field of additional technical skills as later census returns record him as 'retired engineer' and no evidence has been discovered of him being particularly affluent.²⁷⁰

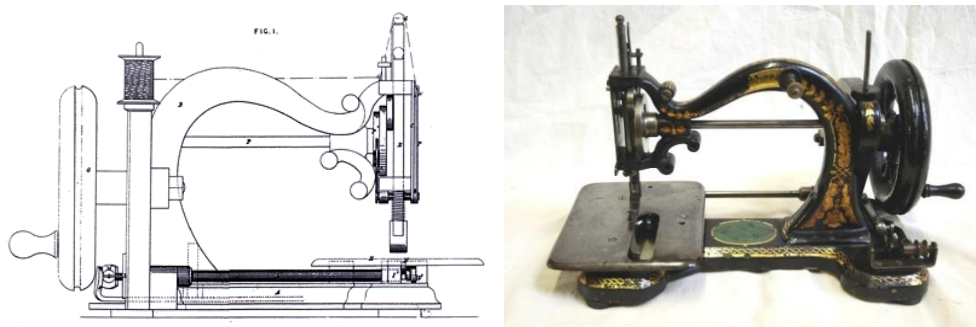


Fig. 114

Left: drawing which forms part of a patent application made by Smith and Starley for their *Little Europa* model sewing machine which was sealed in 1873.

Right: The machine relating to the patent application, one of which is currently on display in the Herbert Museum in Coventry. (Image: The Herbert Museum)

²⁷⁰ There is evidence that Borthwick Smith's uncle (and sometime business partner) John Ryley came from a wealthy background: *Articles of Copartnership* dated 21 April, 1825. Record held by Coventry History Centre so it is possible that he invested money in the partnership.

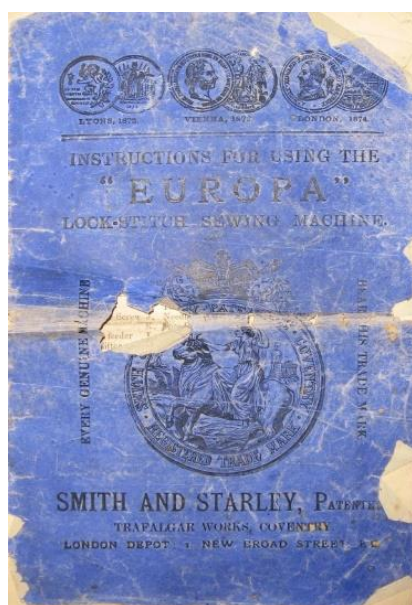


Fig. 115

Instruction manual for the Europa sewing machine which is shown above.

The company won medals with this machine at several International exhibitions, three of which are depicted along the top of the booklet. (Image: The Herbert Museum)

The early sewing machines were really only suitable for basic stitching, such as flat seams and for applying trimmings, and this had an effect on women's fashions. Dresses of the 1860s and 1870s were loaded with trimmings because with a sewing machine they were faster, and therefore cheaper to make than processes which required hand finishing (fig.116 left hand image illustrates) (Cunnington and Cunnington, 1959). There are specimens of some of these trimmings in Miss Smith's cache and the right hand image in fig.116 is a good example of one (MSA T.06).

During the period that Smith and Starley were operating from the Trafalgar Works manufactory, records show that there were a number of businesses operating from the same premises in Coventry (pictured below, fig.117), with the partners (often including family members) being involved in several enterprises in various collaborations. The image shows that it was a sizeable concern and it is possible that each of these undertakings operated as separate units but under the umbrella of the one site.



Fig. 116

The photograph on the left, taken in 1870, is a good illustration of the fashion for abundant trimmings (Cunnington and Cunnington, 1959). On the right is a close-up of a trimming found in the chaise cache (MSA T.06) which also highlights an area of poor tension on the machine stitching (see also fig.42)

One of these partnerships was between Smith and his uncle John Ryley, operating as *John Ryley and Co.*, 'watch manufacturers and sewing machine factors'. Another was an agreement between Smith and Starley with Mr T Haynes and Mr J Jefferis. This was for them to make the Ariel bicycle under licence, with Smith and Starley receiving a royalty, and as such Haynes and Jefferis became one of the first cycle manufacturers at the beginning of the industry in Coventry. Henry Haynes is recorded as investing in the Haynes and Jefferis venture at this time (Kimberley, 2015) and investigation of census returns shows that Henry Haynes was an uncle of Miss Smith and her brother

(their mother's brother) and Mr T Haynes was his son Thomas Alfred Haynes.²⁷¹

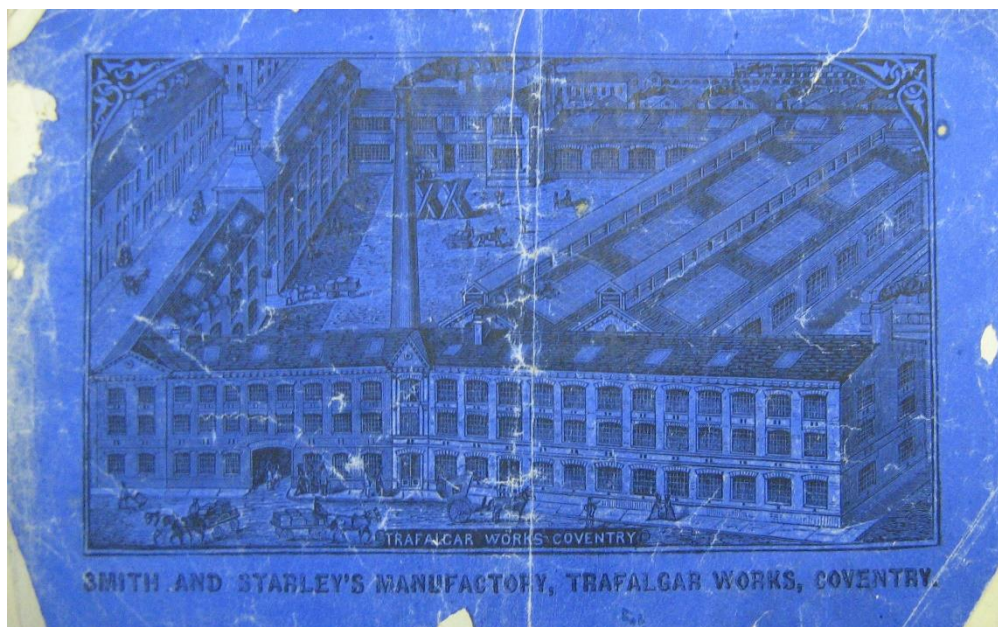


Fig. 117

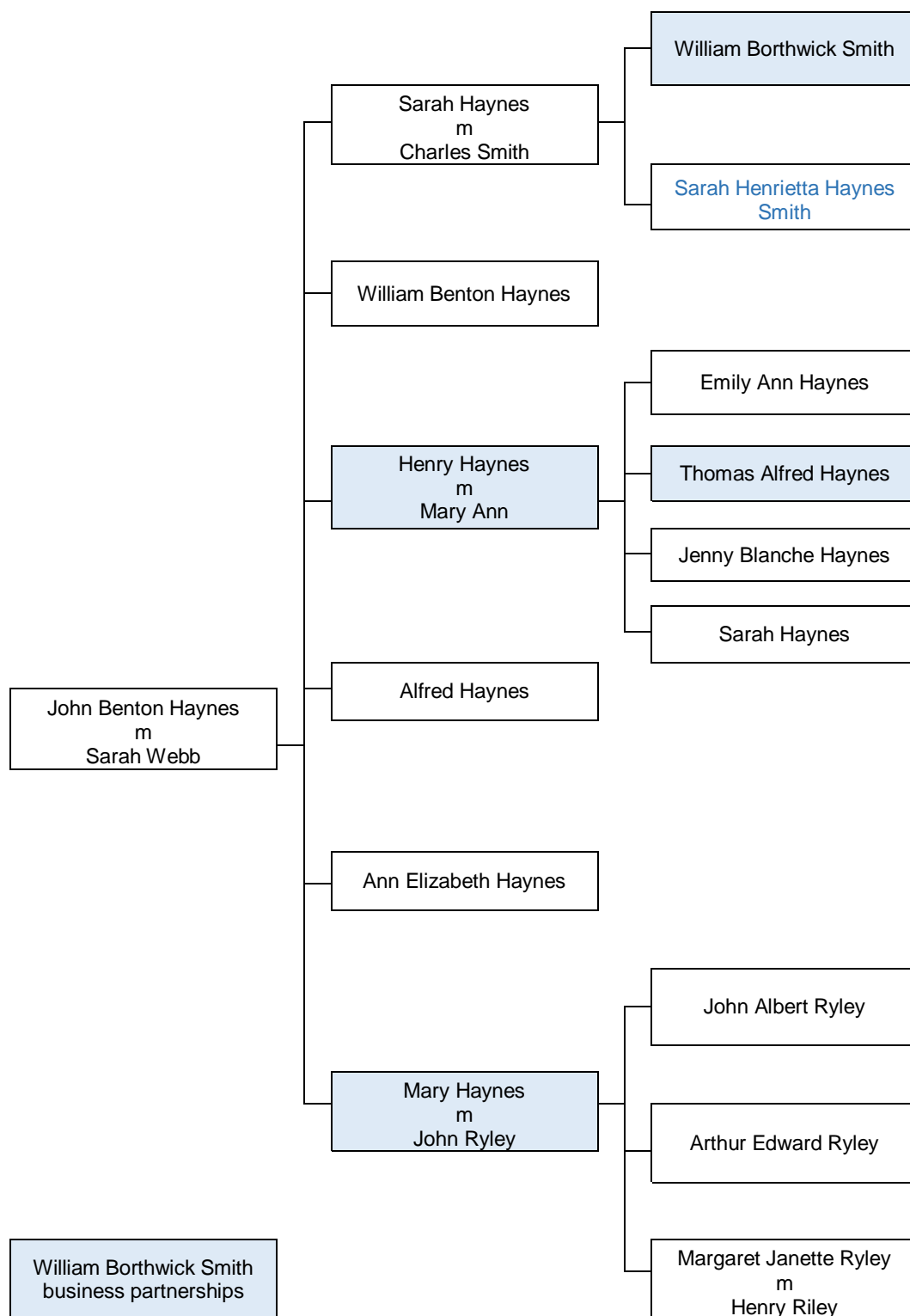
Smith and Starley's Manufactory, Trafalgar Works, Coventry
(Photograph of booklet held at the Herbert Museum, Coventry)

An abbreviated family tree is included as fig.118 to clarify the family links. A photograph of Thomas Haynes with one of the bicycles is shown in fig.121 below.

²⁷¹ Therefore Mr T Haynes (Thomas) was a first cousin of Miss Smith and her brother.

Fig.118

Abbreviated family tree highlighting some of the family members with whom William Borthwick Smith entered into business partnerships



The image below (fig.119) shows another of the machines sold by Smith and Starley. This one is called *Little Dorrit* and was a chain stitch sewing machine. Dickens' *Little Dorrit* was one of the most popular novels of the day and it was probably quite a smart marketing ploy to name one of your sewing machines after the main character who happened to earn a living by sewing. Incidentally, Charles Dickens gave readings in Leamington on more than one occasion (which Miss Smith and her family may well have attended) and featured the town in his novel *Dombey and Sons* (Cave, 1988).



Fig. 119

The *Little Dorrit* chain stitch machine produced by Smith and Starley 1875-1877.
(Image: <https://uk.pinterest.com/pin/273241902363634872/>)

The earliest domestic sewing machines were produced in the United States in the early 1850s but they were not a success (Cooper, 1976). Forty (1986) maintains that this was because they were associated with industrial use, and therefore used by lower class girls, so deemed inappropriate to have in a middle class home. In addition, the earliest machines were all handmade, and therefore costly and subsequently were sold almost exclusively for industrial use where the expense could be justified and recouped (Forty, 1986). People who could afford to buy a sewing machine could also afford to pay a

seamstress to make their clothes so had no need to own a machine of their own. However, Forty points out that design can work in reverse and can influence people's perception of an object, and the sewing machine is a good example of this kind of influence (Forty, 1986). One of the largest sewing machine manufacturers, Wheeler and Wilson, realised early on that the market for industrial machines was relatively small yet the potential for domestic sales was almost limitless. With this in mind they produced a machine with a very simple chain-stitch mechanism and sold it for only fifty dollars (Brandon, 1977) and Smith and Starley's *Little Dorrit* machine was based on this design. Advertisements placed great emphasis on the number of hours that could be saved by using a sewing machine and further attempts to 'domesticate' the machines combined smaller, lighter models with decorative ornamentation in order to show that these machines were totally different from the industrial ones (Forty, 1986). In a very short time the machines had proved their worth and become so popular that the manufacturers no longer had to emphasise the differences between the domestic and industrial models.

One of the earliest sewing machines for domestic use in England is featured in the Pountney diary (Pountney, 1998). The diary entry is from November 1864 and the writer, Adelaide, doesn't actually comment on the machine, merely writing 'Emily's sewing machine' on the page, but the illustration implies that it is something new and is the centre of attention (fig. 120 below).



Fig.120

The sewing machine illustrated belonged to the friend of Adelaide Pountney, a young lady living in Leamington Spa in 1864. It would have been one of the very earliest machines available for domestic use. (Pountney, 1998)

Whilst in partnership with Smith, Starley designed and built the *Ariel* bicycle – the penny-farthing. The machine was completed on 25 May 1874 and Starley immediately mounted it and rode it to Leamington for the Whit Monday meet, a journey of approximately ten miles, where it was ‘a very conspicuous object of interest’.²⁷²

Fig.121

Photo of ‘Mr Haynes’ c.1879 with the *Ordinary* bicycle. This is believed to be Miss Smith’s cousin Thomas Alfred Haynes, son of Henry Haynes. (<http://www.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk/>)



Patent applications continued to be filed, including a joint application in 1876 for ‘*improvement in roller and other skates which improvements are partly applicable to sledges and other carriages*’.²⁷³ Fig.122 below shows an advertisement for their roller skates. Skating was particularly popular in the 1870s with special rinks being opened across the country and the term ‘rinkomania’ being coined by the press to describe this new craze.²⁷⁴ It has been suggested that part of its appeal was the opportunity to escape the

²⁷² Starley, W. [n.d.] *Life and inventions of James Starley*. Sadly though, it does not appear to have been reported in the *Leamington Courier*.

²⁷³ *The London Gazette*, April 25, 1876, p.2636, application 1164.

²⁷⁴ BBC News Magazine: 6 April 2015.

watchful eye of the chaperon and indulge in a little harmless flirtation (Horn, 1999) but the fact that the young men were offering physical support, albeit respectfully, to the young ladies was quite shocking to the older generation.²⁷⁵

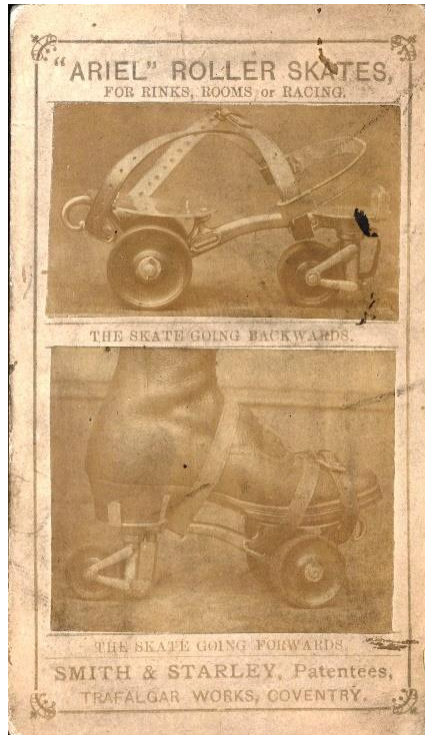


Fig.122

Advertisement for roller skates manufactured by Smith and Starley. (Photograph of original advertisement at Coventry Transport Museum)

As well as roller skating, ice skating was popular, as illustrated by the Pountney diary in the entry for 6 January 1864 which shows both men and women skating on the frozen river Leam (fig.123 below) (Pountney, 1998). Miss Smith would have been fifteen in January 1864 so she may well have been to watch the skating or even tried her hand at this pastime. Draznin (2001) writes that any outside activities undertaken required a chaperone (such as an older adult or married family member) and this stipulation would have included charity work and helping in church as well as social events such as rinking and croquet parties. Pountney (1998) makes one reference to this²⁷⁶ when she records 'I walked to Topsham to ask Mrs Houston to chaperon us tomorrow' (Pountney,

²⁷⁵ BBC News Magazine: 6 April 2015.

²⁷⁶ Diary entry for 19 September 1865.

1998) and the following day she attended an archery and croquet party. However, the accompanying sketch seems to indicate that she walked to Topsham without a chaperone and she makes several references in the diary to activities such as shopping, walking to the station to regulate her watch and even walking in the public gardens unaccompanied and her diary drawings seem to confirm that she did venture out on her own although apparently only for informal excursions.

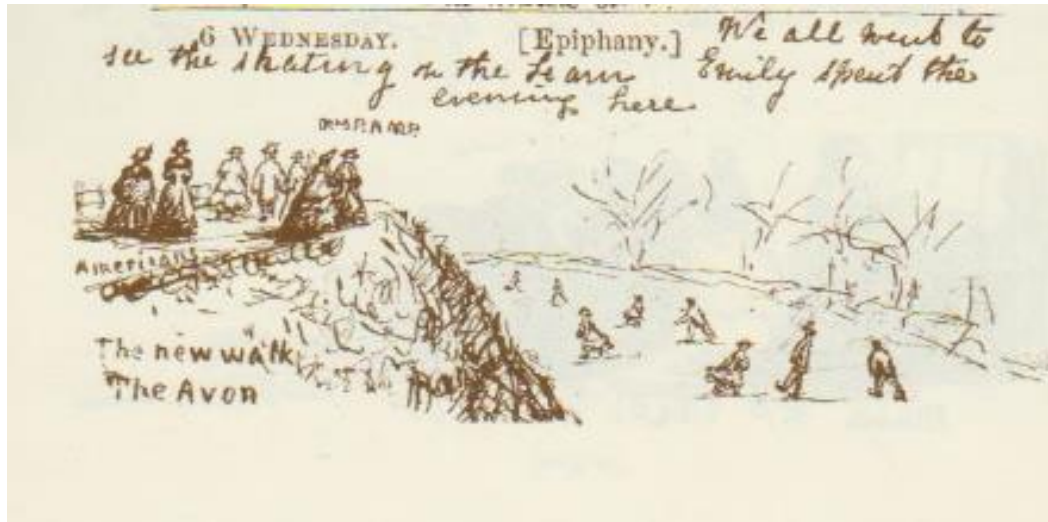


Fig.123

Illustration of skating on the frozen River Leam in January 1864 (Pountney, 1988). Miss Smith would have been fifteen at this date.

In 1877 William Borthwick Smith and James Starley, operating as Smith and Starley, Machinists and Mechanical Engineers, filed for bankruptcy.²⁷⁷ James Starley continued with his inventions and has been hailed as 'the father of the bicycle industry',²⁷⁸ William Hillman became one of the founders of the motor

²⁷⁷ *The London Gazette*, January 2, 1877, p.41.

²⁷⁸ www.gracesguide.co.uk/Smith,_Starley_and_Co. Grace's Guide is the leading source of information about industry and manufacturing in Britain from the start of the Industrial Revolution until the present time.

car industry, and William Borthwick Smith moved to London and became a finance broker.

The 1881 census was carried out on 3 April and records Borthwick Smith living in a lodging house in Millman Street, the St Pancras area of London, where his occupation is listed as finance broker. This was his fortieth year and he was still unmarried.

In the period 1840 to 1870 the average age for a middle-class man to marry was 29.9 years – and for women 25 years (Burnett, 1986). The reason for a man to delay marriage until then was to enable him to establish himself in business in order to be able to support a family. The aim was to try to achieve an annual income of £300; which would allow him to rent a small three-bedroomed terraced house the smallest bedroom of which would be occupied by the single maid (Burnett, 1986). For women, marriage was thought to be their main purpose in life and anyone who failed to find a suitable husband was thought to be incomplete (Flanders, 2003). The problem was that there were a lot more women than men and this was partly due to the fact that many of the marriageable men were 'serving the Queen in distant parts of the Empire' and therefore isolated from female company (Burnett, 1986, p.102). The result of this was that, theoretically, men seemingly had plenty of choice and should have had no problem in finding a suitable wife. To remain single was not a choice for men or women, rather they were victims of circumstance and, for a man, that reason might be that his income was not compatible with his social class. It is possible that this had been a problem for Borthwick Smith, but whatever the reason for him remaining single for so long, in July 1882, shortly before his forty-first birthday, he married Charlotte Marchant Olliver, aged twenty years, from Littlehampton. Miss Smith (who would have been thirty-four) and her cousin Margaret Janette Ryley (aged sixteen and living in Coventry) travelled to London for the wedding, both acting as witnesses and signing the register. Their journey would almost certainly have been made by train with the most likely route being Miss Smith travelling first from Leamington to Coventry (a journey of approximately twenty minutes as recorded by Hawthorne, 1857). Coventry was the industrial heartland of England and had one of the first intercity lines built by Robert Stevenson in 1837. The trains to London travelled

at 60 mph and the journey took around 1½ hours.²⁷⁹ The railways needed to be used by the masses in order to be economically viable and by 1855 it was customary for the middle classes to travel by train and by bus (Best, 1979). In order to ensure that people of limited means could also afford to travel by train there were three classes of carriage provided; mimicking the social divisions and with varying standards of comfort according to the passenger class and consequently price paid (BBC2, 2010). First class passengers could expect carpets and armchairs whereas third class originally were just open wagons. In 1875 the Midland Railway led the way by converting some second class carriages to third class and in doing so created a sensation. Whilst the standard of travel was still basic (often with wooden benches and tables) it provided a reasonable standard of accommodation even for the poorest members of society (Briganti and Mezei, 2012).

It would seem that Borthwick Smith had made a 'good marriage' – an expression normally reserved for women. The Olliver family came from Littlehampton and appear to have been wealthy. The parents, Stephen Diddlesfold Olliver and Harriet née Groome married in 1838 and the 1841 census gives their address as 'Manor House, Littlehampton' where they had four servants. By the time of the next census they also had a groom who stayed with them for the next thirty years. The father, Stephen Olliver, was successively shown as a shipbuilder, rope maker, ship owner and farmer in the census returns. There were six children: the second oldest a boy with Charlotte being the second youngest child. Although twenty was still a young age to be married, it has to be contemplated that Charlotte Marchant Olliver might also have been a victim of circumstance; her social standing would seem to be in a higher class than Borthwick Smith's, he was twice her age and he had been declared bankrupt a few years earlier. Research has revealed two possible considerations: The first is that the only son, Groome Olliver, may have discredited the family name. The census return shows that in 1861, aged

²⁷⁹ Great British Railway Journeys presented by Michael Portillo. BBC Two, Series 1, episode 19. First shown 28 January 2010.

seventeen, he was a gentleman cadet at Sandhurst and his subsequent army promotions were by purchase, which was a normal route for promotions. He married in 1863 and had three children but in 1874 his wife successfully divorced him on the grounds of adultery (many times and with various unknown women) coupled with desertion of his wife for 'over two years without reasonable excuse' and this would have been one of earliest cases of a wife divorcing her husband.²⁸⁰ Groome Olliver died in 1879 aged thirty-six.²⁸¹ Whether the divorce proceedings had an effect on the family is not known but his parents seemed to separate after this with the mother at a new address in Littlehampton, listed as a land owner in the 1881 census, and the father moving to the Azores where he died in 1883.²⁸² The second point is that Charlotte Marchant Olliver may have had delicate health, or even been a semi-invalid. This is based on the observation that she and Borthwick Smith had no biological children but adopted a daughter, Dora Lilian,²⁸³ apparently fairly soon after the marriage. Furthermore, her death certificate shows the cause of death as mitral heart disease and septic endocarditis, which is a rare and potentially fatal infection of the inner lining of the heart; the latter of which she had suffered for two months. At the time of her death in 1910, aged 50, Charlotte was at the home of one of her married sisters where she had made a will just one month

²⁸⁰ This was potentially a high profile case for several reasons: Until the 1857 Divorce Act it was virtually impossible for a woman to divorce her husband. When couples did divorce the husband could claim any property or money that the wife had taken to the marriage and he could also ban the wife from ever seeing her children again.

<http://www.historyofwomen.org/divorce.html>

It was not until 1882 that married women were granted rights which included being able to dispose of their own property and write a will, and 1886 when married women could claim maintenance payments and become a guardian to her children in the event of the husband's death (Flanders, 2003). The Divorce papers for Groome v. Groome were filed on 25 June 1873 and were highly unusual in that the wife served the papers, she sought custody of the three children, and she sought maintenance in the form of a share of a trust which her husband had inherited. The divorce papers are included in appendix 4.

²⁸¹ The divorce papers also show that Groome Olliver had contracted a venereal disease due to his extra-marital liaisons and the causes of death shown on his death certificate indicate that he died from syphilis-related infections (see appendix 5).

²⁸² The last Will and Testament of Stephen Diddlesfold Olliver is included in appendix 6.

²⁸³ Dora Lilian Smith, born c. 1884 in Stepney.

before she died²⁸⁴ (appendix 6). In it she refers to her husband and a marriage settlement, but this is not explained, and leaves just £5 to her daughter (and £3 to her sister's housemaid).²⁸⁵

Returning to 1891 and the census return, Borthwick Smith hasn't been traced for that year but his wife and adopted daughter are shown living in Richmond with one domestic servant. By 1901 the family are shown living in Elmstead in Essex with a boarder, William Robert Redfern, who was described in the census as 'feeble minded'. Smith would have been 50 years of age and was recorded as a 'retired engineer'.

In 1906 the adopted daughter married Henry Davidson, a stoker in the Royal Navy on HMS Tiger;²⁸⁶ the marriage taking place in Portsmouth. The marriage certificate does not record the parents being present (appendix 3), neither does it show her father's name or profession. According to Flanders (2003) wedding ceremonies during this period were not the big occasions that they often are today and the fact that the parents did not attend would not have been unusual – incidentally Borthwick Smith's parents appeared not to attend his wedding, although his sister and cousin did.

By 1911 the census shows that Borthwick Smith was widowed and living in Emsworth, Hampshire with his married daughter whose occupation is shown as house keeper domestic – presumably housekeeping for her father. This move of around one hundred miles may have been made to be closer to Portsmouth where the daughter's husband was based with the Royal Navy. The same

²⁸⁴ Leaving a gross estate of nearly £950.

²⁸⁵ She also bequeathed £50 to her brother-in-law, who was a barrister and presumably fairly wealthy, and the residue of her estate to her sister.

²⁸⁶ Sixteen months after the marriage, on 2 April 1908, the HMS Tiger was involved in a collision with another ship during night time channel manoeuvres resulting in HMS Tiger being cut in half and sinking within three minutes. Thirty-five sailors were drowned but twenty-two were rescued from the water. However, the record of crew members does not include the name of Henry Davidson so it must be assumed he was not on board that night. In addition, his wife is recorded in the 1911 census return and is shown as married, rather than widowed although no further trace has been found of her husband.
(<http://www.old-merseytimes.co.uk/hmstiger.html>)

boarder, William Robert Redfern, appears to have made the move with them as he is also recorded on the census return.

4.6 20 Russell Terrace: the home of the chaise longue

4.6.1 The house and location

The move to Russell Terrace appears to have taken place between 19th and 26th January 1884,²⁸⁷ when Miss Smith would have been 38 and her father 73, and a photograph of the street, taken during the time when Miss Smith was living there, is shown in fig.124 below.²⁸⁸ Russell Terrace is a broad tree-lined street to the south of the river and clearly was, and still is, a desirable location. It was one of two new roads developed in 1825 on land originally owned by the Willes family,²⁸⁹ extended two years later then gaps filled-in at later periods. According to the *Abstract of Title* (included as appendix 7), number 20 was built around 1868 so is one of the in-fill properties. It is a four storey semi-detached house with high spacious rooms and fig.125 below shows the property today. The external style is very similar to the house in Dale Street which Miss Smith and her father had moved from but it is semi-detached as opposed to terraced and Russell Terrace was purely residential whereas Dale Street is a main road.

²⁸⁷ Leamington Spa *Courier* 'removals' column.

²⁸⁸ <http://www.search.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk/Details.aspx?&ResourceID=993&PageIndex=1&Keyword=russell%20terrace&DateFrom=1900&DateTo=1910&SortOrder=0&ThemeID=0>

²⁸⁹ At the beginning of the 19th century most of the land in Leamington was owned by just four families: Willes, Greatehead, Wise and Read. The Willes family were the largest landowners and Russell Terrace was built on land which had belonged to them (Cave, 1988).



Fig.124

Photograph of Russell Terrace taken around 1910 which was the period when Miss Smith would have been living there. No. 20 is located approximately by the second lamp post on the right-hand side of the street. (Photo: WoW)



Fig.125

20 Russell Terrace, Leamington Spa – A large attractive Victorian villa located to the south of the river Leam.

For the middle classes in the mid-nineteenth century the house ‘conferred and announced status’ (Burnett, 1986, p.110) and this could be demonstrated by features such as the width of the house frontage, the height and type of

windows, mouldings, cast-iron railings and distance from the road (Burnett, 1986). No. 20 Russell Terrace has these features in abundance. The *Abstract of Title* stipulated that the land could not be used for trade purposes and should be for dwelling houses only. It further specified that, when completed, the properties should be 'of at least equal value with and of as good an elevation as Hampton Villa (fig.126 below) in Russell Terrace aforesaid and that the fronts of such houses should be set back at least 7 feet from the said North boundary of the said piece of land ...'. In addition, burning bricks or tiles at the property was prohibited as was 'anything that should or might grow to be a nuisance or annoyance to the neighbourhood' (*Abstract of Title*).

The Victorian middle-class pursuit of privacy meant that ideally the house would be detached and shielded from the road. Where this was not possible the solution was pairs of semi-detached houses which were designed to look as though they could be one large house (Burnett, 1986) and 20 Russell Terrace fits that description. One significant aspect of these houses was the bay window which was important to the middle classes in order to differentiate the property from the flat-fronted terraced houses occupied by the working classes.

Fig.126

Hampton Villa in Russell Terrace, Leamington, the benchmark for new houses in the street when it was being developed.



However, bay windows presented problems: they allowed sunlight in which faded the furniture and furnishings and they 'invited prying eyes from passers-by' (Burnett, 1986, p.110). The solution to these problems was to have net

curtains²⁹⁰ or fit blinds or shutters. Looking at photographs of Russell Terrace in the later part of the nineteenth century there is a mixture of all these choices with some houses appearing to have muslin-type curtains covering just the lower half of the windows. No. 20 does not have shutters and there is no evidence that it ever did but there were examples of lace curtains in the cache (MSA T.10 - T.13) so it would appear that that was Miss Smith's solution. In recent years there have been half blinds fitted (visible in fig.128 below) and they were very effective without blocking-out too much light. Because there is a semi-basement the ground floor is higher than the pavement – there are several steps leading up to the front door – so the room is not as exposed to passers-by as it would be if it were on the same level as the street.

4.6.2 The interior

Figure 127 below is a painting by artist Alexander Mark Rossi, dated c.1885, which formed part of an exhibition at the Geffrye Museum in 2003 (Dewing, 2003). The painting appears to show a young mother in mourning²⁹¹ and is included because it features several aspects of a Victorian middle-class living room and a middle-class life. Firstly it shows a typical Victorian window treatment – a Venetian blind to provide some privacy whilst still being able to look out, decorative lace curtains to filter harsh sunlight and to provide further privacy, heavy drape curtains to exclude draughts and keep in the warmth from the fire, and the ubiquitous rubber plant.²⁹² Furthermore the painting illustrates the subdued lighting levels which would result from this type of window dressing which would affect the atmosphere and character of the room and which is rarely seen, and this makes the painting particularly interesting (John, in

²⁹⁰ The introduction of mechanisation revolutionised the manufacture of cotton textiles and by the early nineteenth century muslin curtains, which would protect furniture from sunlight but at the same allow daylight into the room, had become a feature of middle-class homes. By 1840 Manchester had established itself as the Capital of Cotton (Parissien, 2009).

²⁹¹ The original title of the painting is unknown but is shown as *Interior scene with mother and baby* in the Geffrye catalogue.

²⁹² Plants such as the rubber plant (*ficus elastica*) and aspidistra were favourites during the nineteenth-century due to their ability to survive the often cold, draughty, gloomy and extremely dusty environment of a Victorian drawing room.

Dewing, 2003). Another feature illustrated is the use of mirrors and gilding which would reflect light and help to brighten what could otherwise be a gloomy environment. A further feature of the painting is that it shows that the young woman holding the baby is in mourning, illustrated by her black dress and mourning cap²⁹³ and on the right-hand side of the painting there is a bust (just visible) standing on the marble topped table which has had a black veil placed over it which is a further sign of mourning.



Fig.127

This painting illustrates a typical window dressing of a Victorian middle-class home – a combination of Venetian blind, net curtains and finally heavier curtains, drawn back in the daytime. The armchair which is partially visible on the left-hand side has carved cabriole legs of the same design as Miss Smith's chaise longue. The woman who is holding the baby, probably the mother, is in mourning which is revealed by her black dress and a mourning cap. On the right of the picture, standing on the marble-topped table, can just be seen a bust which has been covered by a black veil – a Victorian custom during the mourning period. (Image: The Geffrye Museum, 2003)

²⁹³ Incidentally, she also appears to be wearing a detachable collar and cuffs.

Returning now to number 20 Russell Terrace, structurally the layout of the interior appears to be largely unchanged from the original design (see appendix 8 for floor plan). There are steps at the front of the house leading up to a small vestibule and the front door; the vestibule was significant in that it provided a threshold between public space and private space and thus created a boundary (Briganti and Mezei, 2012). The hall was a 'transitional and connecting space' (Ames, 1992, p.8); it both connected public life from private life whilst simultaneously keeping them separate when required. Hall furniture was important to the Victorians because it gave a first impression of the household which was being entered and immediately signalled the values and social standing of the occupants. Once visitors had passed through the front door there would usually have been a small table or some other piece of furniture on which to leave visiting cards. The ritual of leaving cards was a fundamental way of life for middle-class Victorians and essential for anyone wishing to enter (and remain in) society (Ames, 1992). These calls were acknowledged as brief visits; women would keep on their shawls and bonnets (illustrated in the Pountney diary several times) and when men made calls they would carry their sticks and hats with them into the drawing room. There are numerous entries in the Pountney diary of making and receiving calls, often two or three in the same afternoon, and if the person was not at home the caller would leave her card. For young women their name would normally be printed beneath her mother's on her mother's card. Normally only older, unmarried women would use the title *Miss* on a card (Ames, 1992) and this is likely to have been the way Miss Smith was shown on her visiting cards after her mother's death.

Social etiquette was extremely important to the middle class Victorians and evident in the layout of their homes which would have had 'public' rooms for receiving guests and private areas for use by the family. Traditionally, in a house the size of Russell Terrace, the best drawing room or 'front parlour' would have been on the ground floor at the front of the property often with double doors leading to the dining room and the kitchen and scullery at the back of the property. Going inside no. 20 demonstrates this arrangement with the drawing room, accessed through a door to the left of the hallway, which features a large square bay window to the front and a fine marble fireplace,

typical of its period.²⁹⁴ Not everyone was a fan of these marble fireplaces however: Victorian author Mrs Orrinsmith who published several manuals on 'good taste' wrote: 'The cold, hard, unfeeling white mantelpiece, surmounted by the inevitable mirror, varying in size only with the means of the householder, totally irrespective of any relation to the shape or proportions of the apartment; the fireplace a marvellous exhibition of the power of iron and black lead to give discomfort to the eye' (Orrinsmith, 1878, pp.1-2). The photograph in fig.128 below illustrates the high fold-back wooden doors leading to the drawing room which enables the room to be opened-up when more space is required or kept as two separate rooms, which would help to keep the room warm in colder weather.



Fig.128

The left hand image shows the 'front parlour' looking through from the dining room – note the fold-back partition to the right of the picture.

The image on the right shows a closer view of the room and, in particular, the original white marble fireplace.

²⁹⁴ Many of the paintings in *Home and Garden* (Dewing, 2003) feature fireplaces which appear to be like the one in 20 Russell Terrace.

Facing in the opposite direction, and looking towards the back of the house is the dining room (fig.129 below) which has, in more recent years, become a kitchen with dining area. Ideally, in Victorian times, all the rooms would have been single function but in practice the dining room would have also functioned as the family sitting room and the front room would have been kept for entertaining or special occasions.

Fig.129

This room would have been the dining room in Miss Smith's time in the house.



It was usual for the dining rooms in middle class homes to have easy chairs and sofas and other items connected with female pursuits such as sewing machines and work boxes (Hamlett, 2016) and this is one possible location for the chaise longue. At the end of the hall is a small room which had doors to the cellar and to the veranda leading off it, which also had two windows side by side looking onto the garden, and this room would have been the kitchen or pantry in the period when Miss Smith was living there.

From the dining room there are French windows leading out on to a covered veranda and steps down from there into the back garden. From the garden there are steps giving access to the semi-basement (fig.130) which would have provided some living accommodation (pictured in fig.132 with original tiled fireplace) along with the kitchen and scullery and areas for laundry and storing coal and/or wood. Incidentally, there is still a Victorian cast iron pump in situ in this area (fig.131 below) which would have been the original means of drawing water during Miss Smith's time in the house.



Fig.130

Steps leading down to the semi basement at the rear of the property. The doors to the living accommodation and former kitchen and scullery are to the left. On the right-hand side is a coal store.



Fig.131

The water pump located in the semi-basement. This area would originally have been the kitchen and scullery.

Fig.132

The spacious living area in the semi-basement is still furnished with a Victorian fireplace – believed to be the original.



By the time Miss Smith moved to Russell Terrace in 1884 most middle-class homes were connected to a water company's pipes, although in the early days this was limited to a few hours a day and a few days a week - which never included Sundays (Flanders, 2003). The supply usually went into the scullery – which would support the suggestion that the area where the pump is situated was the original scullery – and mainly provided water for kitchen work and laundry (Flanders, 2003).

The other utility which we take for granted today is electricity but when Miss Smith moved into Russell Terrace in 1886 that would not have been available. Cave (1988) quotes the *Abel Hayward Guide* in 1910 which stated that 'Leamington is one of the towns in England where electric light has been adopted with success as an indoor illuminant', so it would appear that the town was at the forefront of technology. However the first attempt to provide electric lighting for the principal streets in 1887 was a commercial failure due to the considerable cost and the scheme was abandoned at that time in favour of gas lighting (Cave, 1988).

The bedroom that had 'hosted' the newspaper under the floorboards was on the first floor at the back of the house (fig. 133) and from the window there is a view of the properties in a parallel street and two chapels. Looking out of the upstairs windows at the front it is possible to see four churches within half a mile of each other (see fig.134 below).

Fig.133

Back bedroom on the first floor. The newspaper and stove advertisement were found under the floorboards in this room.



At the beginning of the century Leamington was served by the parish church, All Saints, but with the increasing population and the influx of visitors not only were more church places required but a wide range of denominations needed to be catered for. During the century new churches were built and existing ones enlarged almost constantly with some of the larger ones capable of accommodating congregations in excess of a thousand people (Cave, 1988). The clergy were responsible for raising the necessary capital for building works but it was in their interests to do so because their income was dependent on the renting of pews,²⁹⁵ so the greater the number of pews rented out the higher their remuneration would be.



Fig.134

View from the top floor of 20 Russell Terrace looking towards the Parish church. The four-storey building opposite with the metal 'plant balcony/window boxes' was home to a lady 'upholsterer' at the turn of the century.

²⁹⁵ It was common practice for parishioners to pay rent in order to have exclusive use of a pew.

Christian devotion and church attendance seems to have been an important part of Victorian life as illustrated in the Pountney diary, with going to church generally occurring several times a week and twice on Sundays. Pountney also records going to church to choose a pew²⁹⁶ (Pountney, 1998). The clergy played an important role in the community and in 1877 when the vicar, the Rev. Craig died 10,000 people paid their respects,²⁹⁷ all the shops closed, the parish church was crowded, and hundreds stood outside and lined the route to the cemetery (Cave, 1988).

When Miss Smith was living in Russell Terrace – and in her twilight years in Church Street – the Parish church of All Saints was virtually on her doorstep so she may well have rented a pew for her exclusive use. In 1909 however, the new incumbent, the Rev. W. Armstrong Buck declared that ‘all are equal within the church’s gate’ and so, excepting two rows on either side of the nave, all the seats were free for the first time in almost a hundred years (Cave, 1988, p.162).

4.6.3 Daily life

It may be that the move to Russell Terrace was to provide Miss Smith with an income; previously she had no visible means of support other than her parents, and her father was elderly by this time. Smaller households were at a distinct disadvantage with the death of the main provider and single women in particular often had to manage on a small income (Ponsonby, 2007). Hamlett too stresses the damage to a household when a parent or husband died; the material hardships often faced and the necessary economies required to maintain middle-class values (Hamlett, 2016). The 1891 census shows Miss Smith as head of the house for the first time with, again for the first time, an occupation (‘lets apartments’) and her father recorded as ‘proprietor of thrashing machine’. Apart from a general servant the household included a boarder and a lodger and details of the occupants for the three relevant census

²⁹⁶ Diary entry February 27, 1864.

²⁹⁷ Almost half the population of the town.

returns that are available are included in fig.135 below. The change for Miss Smith must have been considerable. If her mother had suffered poor health prior to her death, which seems probable, Miss Smith may well have already assumed household responsibilities but not only did she have the care of her aged father, she also had a lodger and a boarder and a very young, probably fairly inexperienced, general servant.

Household manuals of the period paint a picture of the mistress of the house giving instructions to and supervising the servant(s) and generally overseeing the running of the household but not participating in the manual work. In reality, in a small household such as Miss Smith's, the mistress would work alongside the servant, particularly in tasks such as cooking and washing (Hamlett, 2016). Servants were always present and would have had an intimate knowledge of the family moreover, in smaller households, servants sometimes ate with the family at the table and it is possible that with a single servant and mistress situation they might build-up a close relationship (Hamlett, 2016). At the beginning of the Victorian period diet was dictated by the seasons and what was available locally or food that had been preserved or pickled, but with the advent of the railways in the 1830s came a transformation in available foodstuffs. (Burnett, 1979). This was further aided by the invention of the steam ship and, in particular, refrigeration which facilitated the supply of fresh meat and fish from overseas.²⁹⁸ Consumption of items such as tea and coffee showed an enormous increase in the second half of the century with cocoa, which was virtually unknown at the beginning of the century, having the greatest rise (Burnett, 1979). Fish and chip shops became popular towards the end of the century and it is probable that fish was a secondary option on the menu of hot-pie shops initially but quickly took over as the favourite choice (Burnett, 1979).

²⁹⁸ The Smith family had a connection with shipping transport through William Borthwick Smith's father-in-law who owned a ship building yard and shipping company. The first successful consignment of frozen meat came from Melbourne to London in 1880.

Fig.135

Summary of the census returns for 20 Russell Terrace during Miss Smith's occupancy

Information taken from the 1891 England Census Town of Leamington, Parish of St Mary's						
place	name	position in house	marital status	age	occupation	where born
20 Russell Terrace	Sarah H Smith	Head	Single	42	lets apartments	Worcestershire Evesham
	Charles Smith	Father	Wid	78	proprietor of thrashing machine	Worcestershire Offenham
	Sarah J Brindley	Boarder	Single	53	living on own means	Staffordshire Burton
	Ellen J Avery	Servant	Single	16	general servant	Warwickshire Ladbroke
	Sarah A Fathers	Lodger	Wid	60		Northampton
Information taken from the 1901 England Census Town of Leamington, Parish of St Mary's						
place	name	position in house	marital status	age	occupation	where born
20 Russell Terrace	Sarah H H Smith	Head	Single	52	lodging house keeper	Worcestershire Evesham
	Charles Smith	Father	Wid	88	retired grocer	Worcestershire Offenham
	Eliza Aston	Servant	Single	25	general servant domestic	Warwickshire Tredington
	Mary Kench	Lodger	Single	91	living on own means	Warwickshire Dunchurch
	Emma Ranelle	Companion	Single	49	entire charge sick, aged, invalid person	Warwickshire Wilmcote
	Charlotte Elers	Lodger	Single	77	living on own means	Warwickshire Coleshill
Information taken from the 1911 England Census Town of Leamington, Parish of St Mary's						
place	name	position in house	marital status	age	occupation	where born
20 Russell Terrace	Henrietta Smith	Head	Single	62	lodging house keeper	Worcestershire Evesham
	Ethel Wallington	Servant	Single	27	domestic help (general servant)	Warwick
	Charlotte Elers	Lodger	Single	87	private means	Warwickshire Coleshill

Traditionally provisions were bought from small local shops: grocers who sold goods such as tea and coffee, rice and sugar, butchers sold meat and dairy shops sold milk, cream, butter, cheese and eggs. Often the assistants from the shops would call on customers in the morning to take an order and would then deliver the goods later in the day. Burgis and Colbourne made daily deliveries within a fifty mile radius of Leamington with three deliveries a day being made within the town and until the introduction of their first motorised delivery vehicle in 1925 horse-drawn vehicles were used (Gibbons, 1985). In addition, street sellers would hawk their wares in the streets and call door-to-door selling items such as watercress. It was unusual in this period to have completely 'new' meals more than two or three times a week. Each morning the mistress of the house would assess any leftovers from previous meals then decide on the way to re-use them and there were publications giving advice on cooking with leftovers (BBC2, 2009).²⁹⁹ The middle-classes were often referred to as 'mutton eaters' due to the popularity of the dish among that class (BBC2, 2009) with the name also indicative of people who were reasonably well off (hence eating meat) but not upper class who presumably would have eaten lamb. A diary written by William Taylor, a footman, in 1837 gives an indication of everyday fare with mutton featuring in several different varieties – roast, cold, minced, hashed. Beef and duck also featured and also curry (Wise, 1998). When Nathaniel Hawthorne visited Coventry he records having luncheon at the Red Lion which consisted of cold lamb and cold pigeon-pie (Hawthorne, 1857). Other culinary basics included eggs, bacon, beef and suet puddings.

Dirt would have been a daily struggle both inside and outside the home. Before the 1860s roads were formed with cobbles or stone flags and the use of these were slowly changed to granite sets, wood blocks and eventually asphalt, although some of the photographs of Leamington streets appear to show compacted soil. The reality of this meant clouds of dust in dry weather and mud in wet weather, hence the need for the water-cart and crossing sweepers (Best,

²⁹⁹ One such volume was Philp, R. K. (1861) *The family save-all: a system of secondary cooking* (highlighted on BBC2, 2009).

1979). The practical implications for a woman walking along the streets meant that her skirt swept along the ground gathering dust and mud which had to be brushed off on returning home and this could easily take over an hour to do (Flanders, 2003). Inside the home heating and cooking were facilitated by open coal fires with the resultant dust and oily soot covering every surface (Flanders, 2003) necessitating a never-ending cleaning routine³⁰⁰ – without the benefits of running water or electricity. The practicality of having separate collars and cuffs (such as MSA C.06, C.07, C.13) and sleeve protectors (MSA C.04) becomes apparent when wash ‘day’ is actually a process that began on a Monday and ended on Friday, just in time to start again after the weekend.³⁰¹ Another problem which required constant vigilance and treatment was the extermination of vermin.³⁰² Bedding consisted of several layers which were made from organic fibre – wool, animal hair or straw mattresses – and these attracted bedbugs. This meant checking, shaking and turning the bedding on a weekly basis. Kitchens attracted bugs such as beetles, fleas and crickets – beetles would hang from the ceiling like a swarm of bees – the prevention/treatment for this was scrubbing with copious quantities of carbolic on a daily basis (Flanders, 2003).

Part of a girl’s education would have included the practical skills required for running a household. These would have included hand sewing and repairing garments (although more skilled needlecraft such as embroidery would not usually have been essential for a middle class girl) and basic cooking (Draznin, 2001). Magazines often featured dress patterns but there was such a lot of work in making clothing that women would probably only start work on a new

³⁰⁰ Coal was cheap and plentiful and it burns longer and hotter than wood. This makes it ideal to use in the cooking range but whereas wood burns cleanly, coal emits black oily smuts which cover every surface, every day.

³⁰¹ BBC2 television *Victorian Farm*, episode 2 first shown 15 January 2009. The process begins with spot cleaning any stains (i.e. milk on ink stains, alcohol to remove glue, ammonia and washing soda for fruit stains) and the washing is then put to soak overnight to soften the dirt. This is followed by washing, rinsing, the final rinse using synthetic ultra-marine (artificial blue) to counteract the yellowness of the soap, and once dry the ironing.

³⁰² The Victorians’ use of the word ‘vermin’ refers to what would now be called insects: beetles, bugs and fleas etc., rather than rats and mice.

dress every two years and have just three or four dresses at a time (Victorian Farm, 2009).

Sewing was one of the occupations recorded in the Pountney diary with several references to buying trimmings and stitching braid on hats and dresses; the entry for December 19, 1864 recording 'braided my jacket' (Pountney, 1998). Some of the fabrics in Miss Smith's cache also had hand-sewn trimmings attached, an example of which is illustrated in fig.136 below which is a decorative tie from a lady's dress (MSA C.15). This trimming is a narrow weave braid which would have been made on a very specialist machine weaving on a small scale, so would have been shop bought and then applied by hand, potentially by Miss Smith or her mother.

Fig.136

A decorative tie from a ladies dress with additional trimming applied with hand stitching (MSA C.15).



Women were responsible for providing and maintaining the soft furnishings and linens for the home and it has been suggested that, rather than this being seen as a chore, it offered a release from the daily routine (Prichard, 2010). Further evidence of sewing for pleasure is confirmed by the large number of patchwork quilts which now form part of many museum collections and this activity also demonstrated the value attached to fabrics together with evidence of the virtue of thrift (Bailey in Prichard, 2010³⁰³) - it could be that the creation of the cache in the chaise longue was Miss Smith's version of a patchwork quilt. Referring

³⁰³ Joanne Bailey, *Stitchers in time and space: women in the long eighteenth century* (chapter 4).

back to section 3.1.6.1 and the *Quilts* exhibition, each of the items on display had a narrative but told in a variety of ways: some were straightforward, depicting aspects of daily life or chronicling national incidents; some appeared to use new fabrics and ones specially chosen for the project: others told their story through the use of symbolism, such as the Sudeley Castle casket referred to in section 3.2.3.1: another category appeared to have utilised recycled textiles – perhaps from a favourite dress or bed covering which, to the creator, would tell her life story. Textiles were also regarded as a valuable asset and were often bequeathed to family members, thereby becoming a family heirloom (Smith in Prichard, 2010). In 1895 Miss Smith was a witness to the will of one of her lodgers, Mary Kench (see appendix 6), in which she bequeathed all her wearing apparel to two of her nieces. In 1912 another of Miss Smith's lodgers, Charlotte Elers, wrote a will in which she bequeathed all her wearing apparel to 'Eleanor Webster of Leamington, spinster' (see appendix 6). Although Miss Smith did not specify wearing apparel in her will the cache contained a mixture of clothing and furnishing textiles. Clothing fabrics were cheaper and more easily obtainable than furnishing fabrics and would have been bought in general draper's shops and also from itinerant traders who would have sold their wares door-to-door (Parry in Prichard, 2010). Pountney (1998) records several instances in her diary of these travelling salespeople, including a weaver and a lady selling lace, and the sketches she drew indicate that these people were invited inside in order to display their wares.³⁰⁴ Moreover, Miss Smith has identified a connection with a local draper, Alfred Baker, by the inclusion of a sample of calico (MSA E.03) referred to in chapter 3 (section 3.1.6.2) and pictured in fig. 79.³⁰⁵ Leamington's only cotton mill opened in 1792 but closed at the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1799 - 1815) (Cave, 1998) and it is probable that the calico for sale in Leamington during the nineteenth-century was

³⁰⁴ Diary entry for November 15, 1864 is an example of this.

³⁰⁵ The sample shows that the calico is only 32" wide – upholstery quality nowadays is usually 75" - and the size would have been dictated by the width of the loom. It is a nice quality fabric and the price is shown as 3¼d per yard which is equivalent in today's money to around 80p and that is comparable to today's prices for calico.

transported by canal from Lancashire which was the centre of the cotton industry (Rose, 1996).³⁰⁶

Local trade directories show that a draper named Alfred Baker,³⁰⁷ occupied the premises at 84 Warwick Street from 1885 – 1886 so this item can be quite accurately dated, therefore the inclusion of the calico label in the cache also verifies that the chaise could not have been reupholstered before this date. Interestingly, the street directories from 1887 and the 1891 census show that the premises were taken over by Smith Brothers, general drapers, with the new occupant named Thomas S Smith and operating with an assistant and two apprentices. However, by the time of the 1901 census this Thomas Smith was back in his home region of Gloucestershire and there is no evidence to suggest a connection with Miss Smith's family. In the cache, the calico label had been folded and placed in a small hand-sewn bag along with other small pieces of fabric so it appeared to be a very deliberate placement. What Miss Smith's connection was with the draper cannot be known – perhaps she was just a customer, but why would she choose to immortalise a shopkeeper? It could be surmised that Miss Smith was friendly with the family, they were about the same age and perhaps she met them at church, or perhaps they were friendly

³⁰⁶ Manchester became known as Cottonopolis due to its status as the international centre of the cotton and textile trade during the nineteenth century.

³⁰⁷ There are two contenders for this draper: firstly Alfred Baker born c. 1853 in Odiham, Hampshire recorded in the census returns in 1871 as a draper's assistant in Maidenhead, married in 1878 to Eliza Farmer from Bilston, Wolverhampton and thereafter shown as a draper and employer in Kings Norton, Wolverhampton. However, they had eight children, six of whom lived to adulthood, with two of the younger ones (Walter and Frank) being born in Leamington in 1886 and 1887 respectively, so these dates would fit with the calico sample and the street directory listing.

The second candidate was an Alfred Baker who was actually born in Leamington c. 1851, wife's name was Lizzie and had three children, two of whom survived to adulthood, one of them named Frank b. 1878. This Alfred Baker listed his profession as 'Draper's Clerk/Draper's Confidential Clerk' and he was an employee. He lived at several different addresses in Leamington until the 1911 census when he and his wife were shown living with their elder son, Percy, in Caversham, Berkshire.

On balance the calico sample is more likely to be the Alfred Baker born in Odiham as he was an employer and the fact that he probably only spent a short time in Leamington before setting-up in business near his wife's family would explain why the street directories show the business for just one year 1885-1886.

with one of her cousins who lived in the town and had children of the same age. Unfortunately this is question which cannot be answered.

Dating the chaise longue was considered in chapter 2.1 with a proposal that it was likely to have been made around 1850. The original top covering was thought to be a crimson chenille fabric (MSA T.01) which would have been very fashionable at the time but by the 1880s such dark, rich colours were eschewed in favour of lighter tones (Forty, 1986).³⁰⁸ Having addressed the question of date of manufacture the next consideration was whether or not the chaise was new when it was bought by the Smith family and the suggestion that this was unlikely is explored further here. The Smith family were living in Evesham in 1850 which is around the time when the chaise was made and it is doubtful that they would have gone to the expense of having large pieces of furniture transported to Leamington, particularly as it was customary for Victorians to buy second-hand furniture and especially when moving house (see section 4.4). Whilst used furniture may not have been in the latest fashion, if it was in good condition this was seen as an acceptable practice and an opportunity either to re-furbish the current home or to furnish a new home in a style appropriate to the house.

The house in Russell Terrace has been identified as the home of the chaise longue through the inclusion of the address label which formed part of the cache and possible explanations for the extensive restoration work which was carried out to the upholstery are explored. An argument that the chaise would not have needed to be fully re-upholstered was put forward in chapter 2 but this is briefly re-emphasised here: the shaping of the arms and legs and the quality of carving on the chaise indicates that this would not have been a cheap piece of furniture when new, in which case it could be expected that the original upholstery was completed to a reasonable quality. Whilst thirty years is a realistic lifespan for a top covering, the internal traditional upholstery could last

³⁰⁸ 'Art' furnishing came into fashion in the 1880s, the principle of which was to create the illusion of more space by limiting the amount of furniture in a room and using lighter, more natural, colours.

for a hundred years or more. Moreover, the backs of seating take considerably less wear than the seats and for a sofa with a buttoned back, which the chaise is, the original internal upholstery could last indefinitely. It is impossible to say how the chaise came to be in Miss Smith's possession: she may have been given it, she may have bought it at auction (her uncle, Henry Haynes, has been identified as an auctioneer and living in Leamington so he may have alerted her when one came for sale) or she may have bought it from one of the numerous stores which dealt in second-hand furniture. Incidentally, in 1889 the local street directory³⁰⁹ included a Mrs Garrett who was living at number 21 Russell Terrace, which is around the time that the chaise was reupholstered, and her occupation is shown as 'upholsteress'; although at that date she was probably employed in making soft furnishings rather than traditional upholstery work.³¹⁰ The house is almost opposite to number 20 (see fig. 134 above) so it is reasonable to assume that she and Miss Smith at least knew each other and it is a possibility that Mrs Garrett offered advice or assisted with the re-covering of the chaise.

The company identified on the address label in chapter 1 (MSA E.02) was Burgis and Colbourne, 'General Providers' who were the forerunners of the departmental store and an advertisement for the store, dated 1896, is included as Appendix 9. The store was formed in 1874 when two Leamington grocers - Messrs Richard Burgis and James Colbourne - formed a partnership in order to expand their businesses, adding new departments as the business grew (Clarke, 1947). One of the items found in the cache was a small piece of hand-made paper which had been folded in half and appeared to be a template of some sort. It had two words written on: the first is 'Baileys' but the second is indecipherable. No record for a business called Baileys in Leamington could be found for that period but trade archives from 1878 show a Joseph Bailey from Leicester who was a furniture broker although Leicester is over thirty miles from Leamington so there is probably not likely to be a connection. However, an

³⁰⁹ Spennell's Almanack and Annual Directory, 1889.

³¹⁰ In this period traditional upholstery work would have only been carried out by men.

advertisement in the Leamington local paper, *The Courier*, dated 27 December 1884 advertised a clearance sale of 'Bailey's Stock' (fig.137 below) and the chaise may have come from such a sale. Messrs Burgis and Colbourne acquired several businesses neighbouring their own in order to accommodate their growing establishment (Clarke, 1947) and it is possible that they sold off the stock and fixtures of those premises and that is what the clearance sale refers to. Miss Smith is unlikely to have been interested in this particular sale however as her mother had died just nine days earlier on the 18th of December.

In 1875 the subject of a new Town Hall in Leamington Spa was broached and, eventually, nine years later saw the official opening of the new building.³¹¹ The process had been controversial from the start with disagreements about the location, the size and the style – even the type of wood used for the panelling - and a local election was partly fought on issues relating to this building. The new Town Hall was conspicuous in the town centre not only because it was large but also because of its contemporary style (Victorian Gothic) situated in the midst of the original Regency buildings. However, the day of the grand opening provided an opportunity for celebration and to mark the occasion a special edition of the local paper was published covering the day's events. There was a procession through the town and apparently 'much pushing and shoving' amongst the crowds so that it was impossible to hear the mayor's speech (Cave, 1998, p.136). Many shopkeepers decorated their premises and closed early to allow their staff to participate in the celebrations. Miss Smith would have been 36 at the time so it is possible that she and her wider family in the town joined in with the spectacle.

³¹¹ The official opening of the new Town Hall was on 17 September 1884

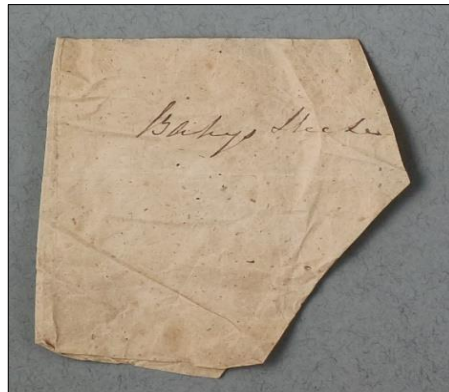
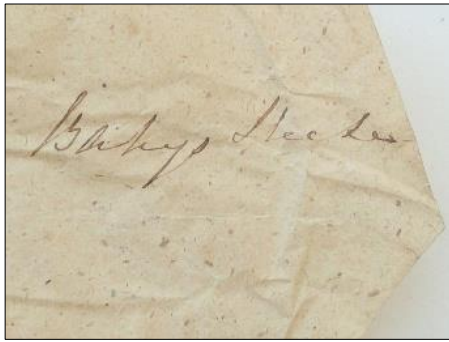


Fig.137

The image above shows one of the items from the cache – a small piece of hand-made paper with the name of 'Baileys' written on it. The paper had been folded in half and looked as though it could have been a pattern for something (MSA E.10).

To the right is an advertisement from the local paper advertising a clearing out sale of 'Bailey's Stock'.

<p>ROYAL LEAMINGTON.</p> <p>FIVE DAYS CLEARING OUT OF BAILEY'S STOCK.</p> <p>The remainder of this Stock WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE AT QUITE NOMINAL PRICES, For Five Days only, Commencing MONDAY next, December 29th, From Ten a.m. to Five p.m., and an AUCTION SALE Will be held EACH EVENING at Six by MESSRS. COOKES AND SOUTHOORN.</p> <p>THE BEDFORD STORES for NEW YEAR CARDS.</p> <p>THE BEDFORD STORES for NEW YEAR'S PRESENTS.</p> <p>THE BEDFORD STORES for WINES AND SPIRITS.</p> <p>THE BEDFORD STORES for FRUITS, Fresh or Dried.</p> <p>Enquire for everything at the BEDFORD STORES.</p> <p>PROPRIETORS— BURGIS AND COLBOURNE.</p>	<p>M.</p> <p>7A</p> <p>ES</p> <p>SE</p> <p>E.</p> <p>Co was i worn</p> <p>For made Satur teain</p> <p>The court has n may count</p> <p>"The Home Egan wick penal been of Eg and b for th bourd speak previ eviden those being was a move the tr for as the jo inves</p> <p>Pe be gl took much near and i thoug remati tion t again with into t</p>
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1897 provided another opportunity for festivities in the town. Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated enthusiastically in Leamington due to its special title of 'Royal' which had been granted in 1838. A new park was opened in honour of the occasion (Victoria Park) and the day (20 June) started with a church service of thanksgiving followed by a procession of dignitaries through the town to the new park. 4,500 school children thronged the park – there were sports activities, street decorations, and a band played in the Jephson Gardens which were illuminated with fairy lights and Chinese lamps – and the procession returned to the Pump Room Gardens where there was a dinner in a marquee for those aged over sixty-five for which Charles Smith would have qualified (aged 84) and possibly attended.

In December of 1901 Miss Smith's lodger Mary Kench died, aged 91, at 20 Russell Terrace. Miss Smith had been a witness to her will which she made in 1895 but was not a beneficiary. Just two months later on 3rd February 1902, Miss Smith's father died aged 89 and Miss Smith registered the death two days later. There is no evidence of a will being made and no record at the Probate Office who would normally make a record of a person's estate, even if there was no will, unless the estate was exceptionally small. Miss Smith's mother left only £2. 2s. 0d. yet she made a will so it would be surprising if her father did not also make one.

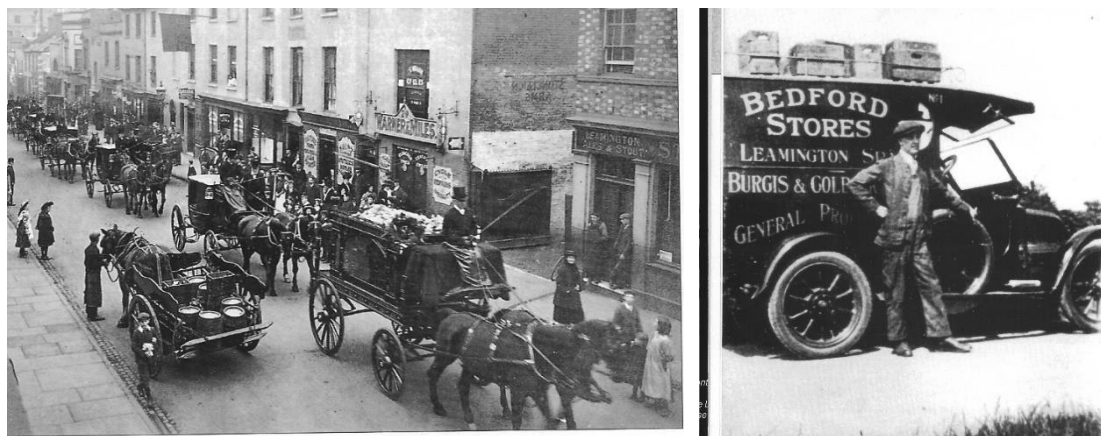


Fig.138

Funeral of Mr Burgis passing along Clemens Street, 5 November 1908 (Gibbons, 1985)

Prior to 1925 the Bedford Stores (Burgis and Colbourne) used horse-drawn delivery vehicles. The image on the right shows their first motorised delivery van. (Gibbons, 1985)

Another occasion which saw a procession through the town was the funeral of Mr Burgis, from the store Burgis and Colbourne, in November 2008 (fig.138). The photograph shows numerous carriages in attendance and passers-by apparently standing respectfully whilst the cortège passed by. Figure 138 (right-hand image) also shows the first motorised delivery vehicle used by Burgis and Colbourne in 1925.

In 1909 the spa town of Tunbridge Wells in Kent became the second town awarded the prefix of 'Royal'. Later that year saw the inauguration of a new Mayor, Alderman Frederick Wadham Elers, details of which (and photograph) are included in chapter 2 (2.6.12) along with details of the associated newspaper which was hidden under the floorboards in 20 Russell Terrace (the bedroom where the paper was concealed is at the back of the house and is shown above in fig.133). During Alderman Elers' year in office King Edward VII died and was succeeded by George V – the third monarch in Miss Smith's lifetime.

Probate records show that Miss Smith's brother, William Borthwick Smith, died on 24 February 1916 at the St Marylebone Infirmary, Notting Hill. He was aged 74 and his home address was still in Emsworth.³¹² It is curious why he should have been in the St Marylebone Infirmary but attempts to trace his death certificate have faltered so his cause of death remains unknown.³¹³

³¹² It is perhaps just coincidental but William Borthwick Smith's address in Emsworth was Goodrest Park Crescent. His mother's family (John Benton Haynes) were shown in the 1841 and 1851 census returns as living at Old Park, Wedgnock Park which includes Goodrest Farm and Goodrest Lodge. Finally, the land on which 20 Russell Terrace was built belonged to local landowner Edward Willes. His widow's address on the Abstract of Title is given as Goodrest, Berkshire.

³¹³ The National Probate Calendar provides the details of William Borthwick Smith's death and confirms his home address was still in Emsworth (notice was also published in *The London Gazette*, 8 August, 1916 p.7829). However, the death certificate issued against this information is for a William Bosworth Smith. It would seem to be too great a coincidence for two people with very similar names and the same age to die on the same day in the same hospital and whilst the name could be a transcription error the occupation for this person is shown as general labourer with an address in NW London so it would appear that two entries have somehow been muddled together. The cause of death is entered as (1) senile and (2) heart failure which may or may not refer to Miss Smith's brother.

Interestingly, William Borthwick Smith had left a will in which he left 'all my household furniture, goods and chattels at my last place of abode' to his adopted daughter but the residue, or whole of his property and estate to his sister, Miss Smith.³¹⁴

1919 was an eventful year for Miss Smith. Firstly, her long-term lodger Charlotte Elers died aged 95. The second event involved the ownership of 20 Russell Terrace. The Abstract of Title (included as Appendix 7) shows various amendments over the years recording mortgage agreements beginning in 1867 when two brothers lent the builder, James Gray, the sum of £1,000. Subsequent changes in ownership are recorded and the documents dated 1912 record Miss Smith being in occupation (but not ownership). The final document is dated 1931 and shows that by 1908 possession of the house had passed to a Mr S C Lendon and on his death in 1931 his brother and brother's daughter were Executors; the daughter's address given as 20 Russell Terrace. From these documents it appears that Miss Smith would have moved from Russell Terrace at a date after 1919 (when her lodger died) and before 1931 when Eveline Melinda Lendon is recorded living there on the Abstract of Title. Where she lived in the intervening years is not known but her final place of abode was just round the corner from Russell Terrace in Church Street.

The 1901 census shows Miss Smith's cousin, Margaret Janette Ryley, living as a companion with her great-aunt Margaret Ann Ryley in Bournemouth. By 1911 they were living in Clifton, Bristol where the great-aunt died at the end of December 1922. Probate records reveal she left an estate of £21,000³¹⁵ and her great-niece was a beneficiary in her will (appendix 6), inheriting all her jewellery and trinkets etc. and all her wearing apparel as well as a financial legacy. During the 1920s and 1930s several members of Miss Smith's family appear on the passenger lists of ships travelling to countries such as South

³¹⁴ Detailed in William Borthwick Smith's will (Appendix 6). The gross value of the estate was just over £79.

³¹⁵ Equivalent to approximately £450,000 today.
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results>

Africa and the United States and Margaret Janette Ryley is shown returning from Sydney, Australia in 1926. In 1929 an occasion that would probably have pleased Miss Smith greatly was the marriage of her cousin Margaret Janette Ryley, aged 64, to a widower Henry Riley who was a quantity surveyor.

4.7 3 Church Street: Girls Friendly Society (GFS) Lodge

Sarah Henrietta Haynes Smith was born 3 May 1848 in Evesham, Worcestershire but lived all her adult life in Leamington Spa and never married. She died 28 July 1937 (aged 89) at 3 Church Street, Leamington Spa and this address is listed in the street directory of the time as 'GFS Lodge and Home of Rest for Girls' (shown in fig.139 below). Archival material relating to this address has not been found so it is not known when Miss Smith moved into the Home or whether she was able to take any of her own furniture with her – the chaise in particular - or even the criteria for admittance. Her domestic servant from Russell Terrace, Ethel May Wallington, was still with her and was the person who registered the death. The GFS³¹⁶ is affiliated to the Church of



Fig.139

3 Church Street, Leamington Spa. In 1937 this building housed a GFS Lodge and Home of Rest for Girls. The image on the right shows the side elevation of the building which also shows the proximity of All Saints Church which was just across the road in Church Street. The building also housed the office of the Property Manager of Leamington Slum Clearance Ltd.

³¹⁶ <http://girlsfriendsociety.org.uk/history.html>

England and was originally established in 1875 to offer help and guidance to working class girls from rural communities who were moving to the towns seeking work.³¹⁷

Probate records show that Miss Smith left an estate valued at £2,268 6s. 7d. which is equivalent to around £84,000 today.³¹⁸ Miss Smith left small bequests to a few of her cousins and second cousins, including Margaret Janette Riley who was an executor, but the bulk of her estate was left to two charities³¹⁹ – the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Universities Mission to Central Africa, both Anglican charities and regarded as ‘high’ church. However, the personal beneficiary to whom Miss Smith left the largest amount - £100³²⁰ – was her ‘friend’ Ethel May Wallington. The 1911 census return records Ethel Wallington as Miss Smith’s house servant in Russell Terrace so they had been together for nearly thirty years and it is a measure of their relationship that Miss Smith should refer to her as a ‘friend’ rather than a servant. Ethel Wallington would almost certainly have known about the cache and perhaps even helped with the task.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has tried to create a context for the two previous chapters; the chaise longue and its contents and the meaning we attribute to things as well as the importance of order (or ritual) in our lives. It has done this by using Miss Smith as a representation of a certain type of person living a provincial middle-class life, researching her family and social background to paint a realistic picture of an ordinary life. Artist and writer Edmund de Waal inherited a collection of netsuke from a great-uncle and had a desire to trace their history.

³¹⁷ The building also housed the office of the Property Manager of Leamington Slum Clearance Ltd.

³¹⁸ The National Archives currency converter

³¹⁹ See fig.92 section 4.2 for beneficiaries.

³²⁰ Equivalent to around £4,500 today

He wrote:

... the way you lose your sense of time when you are researching, are pulled on by whims as much as by intent. It makes me think of the rummaging that I am doing through *his* life as I track the netsuke, the noting of other people's annotations in the margins. I vagabond in libraries, trace where he went and why. I follow the leads of whom he knew, whom he wrote about... In Paris I go and stand outside his old offices (de Waal, 2011, p.72).

Because this research is multi-disciplinary it has needed to be open to the idea of branching out in a multiplicity of ways when opportunities presented themselves whilst all the time 'back-stitching' to draw all the strands together. De Waal writes of rummaging through his great-uncle's life and this sentiment is also acknowledged by Masters (2016) whilst trying to write a biography of an anonymous person whose diaries had been found in a skip. Firstly, he made assumptions; that the person was male and that he had died. As it turned out, both of these were incorrect and once he had realised that the writer was a woman his interest 'rocketed' and he asks 'What man hasn't wanted to rummage inside a woman's thoughts?' (Masters, 2016). It was the same with Miss Smith and the cache. It was nothing to do with owning the artefacts, just a very strong sense that they should be saved and that they should be allowed to tell their story. I too 'vagabonded' in libraries and record offices, I stood outside the houses where she had lived – and went inside the one identified in the cache, many times, looking out of the windows to see what she would have seen. I walked the route from her brother's lodgings in London to the church where he married, just to see what she would have seen and what it felt like. I crossed the road from her house in Russell Terrace and went along the alleyway into the Jephson Gardens, then crossed the road into the Pump Room gardens where she surely went to listen to the band (fig.140).

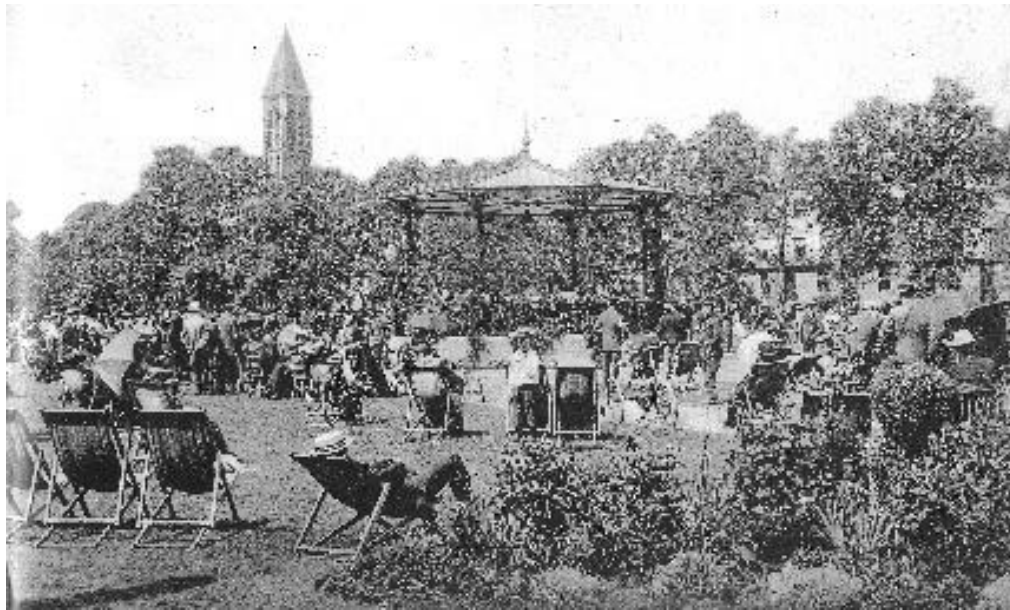


Fig.140

The Pump Room Gardens and Band Stand c.1910.
(Gibbons,W.G. 1995, p.45)

Daniel Miller's (2009) anthropological study involved thirty people living in a London street and explored how people use possessions to express themselves and the role that these objects play in our lives. One of the participants had a small table in the corner of her room which had been made by her grandfather and has always been a part of her life. Miller writes that often her grandfather's ghost is at rest on the table which represents both past generations and the ones to come (Miller, 2009). Miss Smith's chaise is like that, it represents her ancestors but the contents have the capacity to connect with the future too, sparking people's interest whilst telling the story of their past.

5. Conclusion

This thesis represents an interpretation and contextualisation of a cache of artefacts discovered in the upholstered back of a chaise longue with the intention of adding to knowledge of the period covering the lifespan of the contents. Rather than just aligning it with well-reported histories of the period I have tried to capture the true feeling of a life and to gain new insights of the Victorian middle classes and their behaviour. The research has used the new lens of the found artefacts and considered the practice of concealment to provide a unique perspective of a practitioner.

This chapter summarises each area of the research, evaluates the methodology and structure of the thesis and the results. It identifies further research potential and future opportunities for the cache.

Edmund de Waal wrote that:

How objects are handed on is all about story telling. I am giving you this because I love you. Or because it was given to me. ...Because you will care for it. Because it will complicate your life... What is remembered and what is forgotten? There can be a chain of forgetting, the rubbing away of previous ownership... (de Waal, 2011, p.17).

All of the above could apply to Miss Smith's cache: this is a story but it hasn't given me a complete picture: I have cared for it, it has complicated my life, but I have tried not to rub away the previous ownership. As in Marghanita Laski's novel *The Victorian chaise-longue* the chaise is the hinge between two planes of existence (Laski, 1953) from Miss Smith's (probable) daily use of the chaise with its secret hidden from prying eyes to its discovery over one hundred years later, and then a new chapter in its life through this research and through any further opportunities in the future. Daniel Miller observed that every day thousands of ordinary people live out their ordinary lives doing ordinary things and then once in a while something extraordinary comes along and he recalled the Saturday morning John Peel Radio 4 programme *Home Truths* which featured ordinary people responding to happenings in a spontaneous way (Miller, 2009). In 2006 I was invited to participate in the programme to recount the story of Miss Smith's cache following which the production team added a link from their web site to the DCGP. This created a surge of interest which

suggested that there was an underlying relationship between people and things about which people were everlastingly curious, creating 'a landscape of experiences vastly beyond intentionality or intelligibility' (Miller, 2009, p.275). Having given presentations at several conferences and displayed the contents of the cache over the last few years I found that the topic always generated a great deal of attention and, through sharing the experience, prompted discourse and leads to other directions of thought.

Author Alexander Masters was questioned over the identity of the person who had written the discarded diaries he was researching and was asked what would happen if she had turned out to be just an ordinary person. He responded that that was the best result. The reason why she was so interesting was because of her ordinariness, 'the faceless person next door' (Masters, 2016, p.5) and this was Miss Smith's place in this research, she was an ordinary person but she did something extraordinary and by exploring the contents of the chaise this study aims to add to our knowledge of social history through the interdisciplinary influences of material culture and the practice of concealment.

As a practitioner of traditional upholstery it was immediately obvious that the stuffing used in the chaise was highly unusual and as the removal of this material progressed the realisation grew that the contents may have had a particular significance. The range of artefacts: date-wise, gender-wise and outerwear/underwear, appeared to offer a comprehensive record of a lifespan and the manner in which selected items had been folded and/or wrapped again implied a certain significance. The discovery of the name and address prompted the first question as to whether or not this was a deliberate concealment³²¹ and, if it was, it would appear to be the first recorded example of such a phenomenon. It could be argued that using worn-out textiles to stuff a piece of furniture was an exercise in economy perceived as typical of the Victorian ethos. Consequently, the first aim was to consider this and to establish whether there was evidence to suggest otherwise. It is a tangible fact

³²¹ The claim that this was a deliberate concealment was initially challenged by both June Swann (former curator of the shoe and boot collection at Northampton Museum and leading authority on historic shoes) and furniture historian Bernard Cotton who felt that several instances of a phenomenon were needed before it could be classified as a deliberate concealment.

that the contents of the cache are old – the items of clothing can be historically dated – and even if they did not come from Miss Smith they came from a real person and could be put into a context. The creation of the archive served not only to preserve the find but also offered the opportunity to become familiarised with the contents which provided a starting point for this research and at the same time enabled the subject to be widely disseminated; thus advancing the potential for further research. The methodology employed for the archive followed guidelines set out for archaeological digs (albeit retrospectively) with the result that detailed information about each of the artefacts has been recorded and all the items have been photographed and categorised. Several systems for recording the details were investigated and, in particular, the creation of a relational database was considered but discounted due to the complexities of the available systems at the time. If the research were starting now this would probably be a good option as it would allow manipulation of the data more easily than the *Word* programme used and would avoid unnecessary handling of the textiles, many of which are in a delicate condition.

The photographing of the textiles from the cache proved to be problematical.³²² A short course with a professional photographer only served to demonstrate that it was a specialised job and that my camera and abilities were inadequate. However the cost to have the work carried out by an expert was prohibitive so a great many hours were spent trying to achieve an acceptable standard. Eventually, with the benefit of specific advice on lighting,³²³ the purchase of some new equipment and some assistance, the job was completed.

Having established what was contained in the cache the question of whether or not it was a deliberate concealment was considered and there were several indications which appeared to confirm that it was. To summarise briefly: firstly, when the chaise was newly made the stuffing used would almost certainly have been horsehair; as discussed in chapter 2.3, a commodity that had been found to provide a firm but comfortable foundation and does not break-down or

³²² Initial advice was that each piece should be photographed alongside a right-angled measure but unless the camera was directly overhead the image was distorted with the measures appearing to be around 45°. If the camera was directly overhead then the dark colours had no definition and just showed as silhouettes.

³²³ From James Davies, Photography Manager, Historic England.

degrade in the way that other materials do (coir/coconut fibre for instance). Whilst horsehair was never cheap to buy it could be, and is, habitually re-used because it never wears out. In addition, when new, the back of the chaise would have been buttoned which would have held the original stuffing in place and whilst it may have required a new top covering it is highly unlikely that it would have warranted a complete restoration job at that time. Reference to published sources on traditional upholstery techniques,³²⁴ underpinned by some current research into materials used,³²⁵ has not found any suggestion of textiles being used in this way. The choice and placing of clothing and the manner in which the small pieces of textiles had been wound and bound together suggested a certain ritual activity and the label with the name and address (folded and placed inside a cotton bag) identified a particular person and address which suggested that for some reason the person responsible wanted to be acknowledged.

The sorting and categorisation process had uncovered several items of clothing from the cache which were researched through published sources and discussions with people who had specialist knowledge in the fields of textile and dress history. Together with this, the artefacts provided the primary source material and by combining the two it was possible to put the pieces into a context and to provide an account of the way they were used in their original manifestation.

The aims of chapter 3 were to examine the practice of concealment, exploring the psychology behind the phenomenon. Various historic case studies were studied with particular consideration to ritual and symbolism and the meaning attributed to things. The first part of the chapter explored different forms of concealment and found that when concealments appeared to have a ritualistic or symbolic purpose there was often a pattern of items chosen and also positioning, whether in buildings or marking boundaries. Objects were often folded (as were items in Miss Smith's cache) or sometimes bent or damaged in such a way as to render them useless in their original context (Merryfield,

³²⁴ Including Palmer (1984) and James (1999).

³²⁵ Brewer, P. J. (2001) *An investigation into significant developments in period upholstery practice – with special reference to the nineteenth century and illustrated by provenance examples*. PhD thesis. Brunel University.

1987). Previous projects provided a useful benchmark, in particular, the DCGP which had personalised the narratives associated with the finds by means of oral histories and photographs.

The literature review highlighted a considerable lack of bibliographic material relating to ritual practices and symbolism and whilst Ralph Merrifield's book on the subject systematically surveyed archaeological evidence of these practices he too acknowledged there were still many more questions to be answered and suggested that there was scope for further research. Examples of ritualistic practices were explored, particularly where fabrics had been used in symbolic ways and this study attempts to fill the gap between these reported undertakings and Merrifield's archaeological-based work. The second part of the chapter explored the subject of material culture and the meaning and emotional value we attribute to our possessions. Material culture is a field of study which has increasingly invited research in recent times with the resultant publications providing a varied insight into the subject. Studies carried out by anthropologist Daniel Miller were particularly enlightening where his research was based on case studies, observing the way that individuals interacted with their possessions and the explanations of why some things were particularly important to them (Miller, 2008). As Miller writes in *The comfort of things* 'These relationships include material and social routines and patterns which give order, meaning and often moral adjudication to their lives; and order which, as it becomes familiar and repetitive, may also be a comfort to them' (Miller 2008, p.296).

The methodology also encompassed several exhibitions relating particularly to textiles and their significance³²⁶ and found a strong link between creative processes and 'incarceration' of different sorts whether it was physical (for example, for political reasons) or psychological. The importance of memento mori was considered which included ways in which people maintain relationships with the dead as well as potentially trying to ensure that they leave a mark of their own existence.

³²⁶ In particular, The Fabric of Myth at Compton Verney, *Threads of Feeling* at the Foundling Museum and *Found* exhibition at the Foundling Museum.

Chapter 4 provided further context for the artefacts from the chaise by examining the family history of Miss Smith and exploring her social background and possible influences in her life, and archival research was employed as the foundation for this chapter. The research found there was often a link between family members and business partnerships as well as a surprising number of changes in people's occupations and locations, which perhaps suggested that as a family there was a willingness to adapt and try new experiences in what was a period of rapid change. The availability of genealogy websites has flourished in very recent years which means that there is access to archives at all times and new information is being added regularly. One of the drawbacks of these records is that there are often variant spelling of names recorded and sometimes they have been incorrectly transcribed. Consequently it can sometimes take a great deal of persistence and an equal measure of luck to find the information being sought.

A problem when starting this research was that I really had little idea about what I was going to find and subsequently the direction the research would take. It was necessary to be open to the idea of branching out in a multiplicity of ways when opportunities presented themselves and throughout the research a process of backstitch methodology was used to draw all the strands together. Whilst trying to gain an understanding of what everyday life would have felt like for Miss Smith, it was important not to view things from a modern day perspective. Times were very different in the nineteenth century and some things which would be accepted as normal now may have been abhorrent then, and vice versa. Social historian John Burnett maintains that without contemporary sources of information myths are created (Burnett, 1979) and he used histories of diet as an example as detailed in chapter 4.³²⁷ Advice books of the period were written almost as though they were laws (for example the number of servants required and their duties) whereas in fact they portrayed an ideal situation and the reality was usually quite different.

One question that the research hasn't been able to answer is where Miss Smith's money came from – she left the equivalent of over £84,000 in her will

³²⁷ Briefly, Burnett suggests that our perception of the diet enjoyed by the Victorians is that it was 'cheaper, more plentiful and more wholesome than either before or since' (Burnett, 1979, p.9) whereas in reality it was often dirty and heavily adulterated.

which is a significant amount. The census returns never recorded her as having an occupation and probate for both her mother and brother reveals that their estates were small. There is no trace of her father having made a will but it is possible that perhaps he started to lose his mental faculties towards the end of his life and so his assets were transferred to Miss Smith prior to his death. Miss Smith would have gained an income from her lodgers but it is unlikely that this would have amounted to a significant amount of money. It is possible, too, that she was a beneficiary from someone's will. Further research might uncover some answers in this respect and if further genealogical research were undertaken it would provide a solid base for a book – the story of her life perhaps.

Miss Smith's intentions when creating the cache can only be surmised, but it is speculation based on fact; an amalgamation of the physical artefacts, material culture and social history combined with the human need for ritual. Edmund de Waal was challenged on his decision to embrace his inheritance of netsuke when it was suggested that the 'right' course of action would be to return them to their place of origin – Japan. He refuted this idea saying that objects have always been used in numerous ways – bought, sold, carried etc, - and that 'People have always given gifts. It is how you tell their stories that matters' (de Waal, 2011, p.348).

Miss Smith's chaise longue has had an eventful life; it is probable that she was not the original owner and she may have bought it second hand. The remnant of red chenille found on the frame indicates that, when new, it had a top cover typical of its period (c. 1850). Miss Smith's choice of top cover again would have been typical of the late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century when lighter colours as advocated by the Arts and Crafts movement were influential and at that time it also became the receptacle for her spiritual midden. There is then a gap in the biography of the chaise because its next incarnation was a typical 1960s makeover – white painted frame, gold-coloured velvet fitted over the top of the cache - then 'updated' again in the 1980s with the walnut frame re-emerging and a beige velvet top cover being applied. It has been 're-born' several times and always maintained its secret until its last reincarnation in 2003 when it underwent much-needed structural repairs and was then glamorised with the addition of a cream silky top fabric. It also contained

another deliberate concealment – a copy of my original dissertation, in a calico bag, with an outline of its story to date (2004).

Attempts have been made to publicise this find in order to trace descendants of Miss Smith: an article in the *Courier*, the Leamington local paper, another article in a regular Newsletter produced by the Leamington Local History Group, and a slot on the local television news programme after the producer heard the *Home Truths* broadcast but sadly these did not elicit any response. Miss Smith had relations from her mother's side of the family who lived in Leamington who had several children. Moreover, Miss Smith left bequests to several second cousins and it is likely therefore that there are still descendants, given that Miss Smith lived until 1937. It is possible therefore that further targeted research could trace people who may have heard stories of a great-aunt, or great-great-aunt who recounted the family history via a hidden cache. New information is regularly finding its way on to the internet.

Close inspection of the textiles found that many are particularly beautiful and this raised the question of how we value objects. At face value the stuffing materials in the main were never high quality fabrics and now they are old, worn and dirty and would have little financial worth. However, the real value lies in the emotional importance both to the *concealer* when making her selection of artefacts and also to the *finder* trying to decipher the original intentions; deciding the best course of action for the future of the cache whilst respecting any possible intentions of Miss Smith. The creation of the cache perhaps provided a space alongside the exigencies of everyday living but whether Miss Smith intended it to be a spiritual midden, a memento mori, or just wished to leave her mark, it seemed important to respect her intentions.

It has been suggested that 'worn-out clothing has the potential to be transformed into a memory object and that there is a link between these things and dedicated memorials' Hallam and Hockey, 2001, p.12-13) and this is an area which perhaps warrants further research. Many of the garment pieces offer clues to their original style which invites speculation about their previous shape and this may form part of a future project to interpret the original form and to make replica pieces. It would be possible to do further archival work relating to the textiles, for example thread count, structures and yarns or even

Pantone matching,³²⁸ but this is outside the scope of this research and is probably more appropriate for a textile historian and could create a whole, new separate project.

This thesis has attempted to add to our knowledge of social history through the interpretation and contextualisation of the artefacts found hidden in the chaise longue. The Geffrye Museum used portraits as a key source of evidence when researching interiors for their period rooms and this medium could be contemplated for extending the study into Miss Smith's life; with consideration given into whether the paintings are true to life or perhaps using symbolism, or possibly conveying a coded message about what the sitter would like you to think. Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of this research any of the strands offer the opportunity for extending the research. Informal suggestions have been put forward about the feasibility of mounting a display or exhibition in a museum and that too could be a further chapter in the biography of the cache which could also include an associated publication. As outlined above, there may also be opportunities for the artefacts to be connected to future research projects, perhaps as part of a dress and textile study and potentially recreating some of the items of clothing if further research verifies probable styles. At the moment the objects are kept in storage and it would seem fitting for them to become visible again.

³²⁸ Pantone matching would be difficult to do accurately on old fabrics such as these due to the variation in colours on individual pieces through age, wear, break-down of dyes, water damage during concealment.

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