

Irish or English? The rise and rise of John Fitzmaurice Petty in the 1750s. *

Nigel Aston

University of Leicester

From the wilds of county Kerry to Hanover Square in the west end of London, from being the fifth son of an Irish peer to securing an Irish earldom for himself and then trumping the senior line with the grant of a British barony, are pretty remarkable leaps for anyone to make. Yet John Fitzmaurice managed it, even if his remarkable ascent to rank and wealth in his own right does not quite count against a central thesis of John Cannon's classic survey of the eighteenth-century peerage *Aristocratic century*: that social mobility and aristocracy seldom went together (1). His is less a story of rags to riches than of a resourceful Irishman from a family of Anglo-Norman pedigree riding his luck and skilfully repositioning himself in London society to take maximum advantage of an extraordinary piece of good fortune. He was so successful in confirming his own family's pre-eminence that the Fitzmaurice-Pettys procured a British peerage in one generation and in the next, office as British First Minister in the person of his son William Petty, second Earl of Shelburne (2). Indeed, to understand John Fitzmaurice's social ascent and his claiming a place in fashionable London circles, is also to throw light on how his son, the cosmopolitan outsider as his many political detractors liked to depict him, was well-positioned in his youth to make the exceptional head-start in public life that he did (3).

To examine the rise and rise of John Fitzmaurice is not least a study in Anglo-Irish integration and socialisation within aristocratic circles in eighteenth-century London, a subject area that awaits systematic investigation: the mechanisms of assimilation remain imprecisely charted. The Shelburne family provide a major instance of that process, but their ascent has parallels and contrasts with those of other members of the Anglo-Irish elite making headway in Britain, the Hillsboroughs and the Palmerstons among them, individuals and clans who conform to Ian McBride's definition of the 'real' Anglo-Irish, as 'those with estates on both islands' (4). Such chose deliberately to make London rather than Dublin the locus of their activities.

John Fitzmaurice was not so much ready to immerse himself in the London Irish networks of the 1750s than to make use of them while keeping his distance and emphasising his English inheritance. To do otherwise could jeopardise his pursuit of the highest prizes on offer in mid-eighteenth-century Georgian high society. To put it bluntly, being an absentee landlord did not bother him, his uncle Henry had been conspicuously one, and the prizes potentially on offer in England were worth any amount of sniping from Irish peers and gentlemen who did not have his opportunity. From his subsequent conduct after inheriting the Petty inheritance, it is clear that Fitzmaurice was not at all uncomfortable about taking up what was near enough permanent residence in London. Which is not to say that on his occasional return visits to Ireland in the 1750s he did not revert to conduct that might comfortably disclose aspects of Irishness that would be socially unexceptionable (5). This calculating but explicable behaviour is a reminder to historians of the extent to which Irishness in a London context – except in a low key – could easily be deemed (by themselves or their friends, neighbours, and coevals) a social liability for aspirational individuals like John Fitzmaurice, unless it was strictly confined to client relationships (6). He himself was adroit (his access of wealth clearly did no hurt) enough to deploy a protean, porous identity as he hurtled up the *cursus honorum*. Irishness could be put on or put off as occasion demanded, while the elements of ancestral Englishness in Fitzmaurice's background were never willingly obscured. Indeed, his willingness to change his surname back to the English 'Petty' tells us a great deal.

John Fitzmaurice (later Petty), first Earl of Shelburne of the second creation (1706-1761), was a scion of one of the oldest families in Ireland: the Fitzmaurices, headed by his father Thomas, twenty-first Baron and first Earl of Kerry (1668-1742). With a rent roll of thousands and a massive estate ownership embracing much of the south-west of Ireland, Lord Kerry dominated the social and political life of his eponymous county from his spacious mansion at Lixnaw, where he lived out his declining years in semi-feudal splendour, every inch the *paterfamilias* (7). As the fifth son, John's prospects of ever inheriting the Kerry patrimony were initially slender but crept closer following the deaths of his three next elder brothers. The first Earl of Kerry passed away in 1742 and his first son and heir, William, styled Viscount Clanmaurice, followed him only five years later unleashing a series of destabilising succession crises and expensive litigation that would permanently weaken the pre-

eminence of the earls of Kerry (8). The first earl may seldom have removed himself from Kerry let alone Ireland but his wife was regularly in London, staying with her brother Henry, Lord Shelburne, mixing in society, and thereby ensuring that her English origins were never obscured by marriage into the Irish aristocracy (9). She was Anne Petty, Countess of Kerry (d. 1737), the daughter of the multi-talented Hampshire man, Sir William Petty, secretary to Henry Cromwell, the effective governor of Ireland between 1655 and 1659, and probably the richest commoner in the country by the late 1670s with immense landholdings in the far west of Ireland (10).

Lady Kerry was every inch her father's daughter: "...of an ambitious active disposition", whose conduct "was a perfect model of sense, prudence and spirit, [she] furnished several houses, supported a style of living superior to any family whatever in Ireland, and with all this improved his [the first Earl's] fortune" (11). And it is clear that that Lady Kerry did not intend to downplay her nationality and its accompanying cultural pre-eminence in the next generation. The family decision to have young John educated at Westminster School between 1715 and 1719 ensured that his accent and vocabulary would be those of an English gentleman and brought him into contact with boys from families that might be of material assistance to him in making his way in the world (12). It was a rising school with nearly 400 boys on the books c.1720, well patronised by the aristocracy, its annual Latin play part of the calendar of fashionable London. Fitzmaurice had among his contemporaries Charles Wesley, Richard Robinson, the future archbishop of Armagh, and Lord Chief Justice Mansfield (13). Therefore even as a minor, between the ages of nine and thirteen, Fitzmaurice became familiar with several aspects of elite London life and impressed his teachers (14). Whether he remained in the metropolis between 1719 and 1727 is as yet uncertain, like so much of his life before he succeeded his uncle in 1751. He appears not to have graduated from any British or Irish University. Instead he was admitted to the Middle Temple in January 1727. Any would-be lawyer from Ireland was required to spend terms at a London Inn of Court before returning to Dublin for call (15). Middle Temple was packed with Irishmen throughout the eighteenth century and Fitzmaurice would be among friends who often experienced jaunty professional prejudice from their English coevals (16). The expectation was not that he would practice at either the Irish or the English bar, but that he would gain sufficient legal

proficiency to be of use to his family in estate management on one side or the other of St George's Channel.

John Fitzmaurice was only occasionally in London during the 1730s and 1740s. Rather than being at the centre of a nexus in his own right John, as a younger son, took his place within the existing family networks of clientage and patronage focused principally on county Kerry and Dublin itself. His father's status in early Hanoverian Ireland had been confirmed by promotion within the Irish peerage to an earl's coronet during the viceroyalty of the second duke of Grafton in 1722 and his sons were expected to act dutifully and both uphold and extend the reach of the senior branch of the Fitzmaurice clan. It was, then, primarily inside Ireland and as an Irishman that John Fitzmaurice operated in these years, a trajectory confirmed when he married his first cousin, Mary Fitzmaurice, daughter of Lt. Col. the Hon. William Fitzmaurice (a younger brother of the first Earl of Kerry) and Deborah Brookes of Gallane, county Kerry, on 16 February 1734 (17). A dramatic opportunity to strike a grand figure in Kerry itself that Fitzmaurice could not resist arose when he was named high sheriff of the county in 1732/3 and famously comported himself splendidly in his *pays* as if he was an old Irish Chieftain. His progress across country to receive the judges of the assize court at its boundary received the full mock epic treatment in the anonymous 'The Kerry Cavalcade: or, the High Sheriff's Feast': (18)

'Assist me, ye Muses, Fitzmaurice to sing,
A Sheriff most glorious, as great as a King,
Tho' some of his brethren were taller & bigger,
Not one in all Ireland, made half such a figure,
As Folks may observe, when I've rightly displayed,
The wonderfull pomp of his grand cavalcade,
Oer mountains & Quagmires, & ditches he trudges,
To shew what a bow, he could make to the judges,'
Fitzmaurice was attended by Lord Kerry's steward and gentleman waiters along with
'Twelve men in ye family colours, true tawny,
on black horses mounted, sleek, long tailed, & brawny'
They proudly wore:
'The Crest of Fitzmaurice (O were it an ass),
On ye caps and the housings, was a centaur in brass,'

Yet all ended in chaos and bathos when the Fitzmaurice procession was thrown into disarray on encountering heavy rain near Listowel. The whole retinue took shelter in an inn and sat down to the dinner provided by Fitzmaurice when news arrived of a flood and they scattered again before grace could be said (19).

But for all the presumptuous panache of his year as high sheriff, John Fitzmaurice was turning himself into an efficient, capable man of business with a foot in both kingdoms (20). Self-interest as well as affection and consanguinity impelled him to maintain cordial relations with his maternal uncle, the immensely wealthy Henry Petty, first Earl of Shelburne (1675-1751), a largely non-resident Irish peer. Fitzmaurice appears to have acted as his uncle's agent in Ireland on several occasions and crossed to London on business from time to time becoming an important part of Shelburne's circle and gaining respect for his professional competence. The bond between uncle and nephew flourished as the years passed increasing Fitzmaurice's prospects of receiving a legacy from the earl to underpin his own pretensions to high living (21): he had a house on St Stephen's Green in Dublin handy for his work in the Irish House of Commons as one of the M.P.s for County Kerry between 1743 and 1752 (22) and for the seaside mansion of his formidable sister and supporter, Lady Arbella Denny, at Peafield Cliff House in Blackrock (23). Fitzmaurice did not remove himself to London permanently. He was more useful to his uncle in Dublin and Kerry. The likelihood of the nephew succeeding to the Shelburne estates in England and Ireland looked fanciful when Shelburne had a son and heir himself in the person of the rakehell James Petty, styled Viscount Dunkerron (ca.1708-50). Even supposing that the latter's only son and heir predeceased him (which turned out to be the case), the likely inheritor of the Shelburne estates was likely to be his great-nephew, the third Earl of Kerry (b. 1740), not the latter's uncle, the Hon. John Fitzmaurice.

The Pettys may have become major landowners in the west of Ireland but the family cherished its English identity and its territorial ambitions, by the early eighteenth century, were firmly centred on England (24). They were not and never aspired to become resident Irish grandees and, though they maintained a house in Dublin, they made their town house in George Street, Hanover Square, and the High Wycombe estate in Buckinghamshire that they purchased in 1700 the focus of their lives (25). With their English lands (which included collieries in County Durham) supplemented by their Irish rent rolls and benefiting from careful investments and estate management, the Pettys under Henry, Lord Shelburne, became

one of the wealthiest titled families in Ireland, even if not normally domiciled in that kingdom (26). The besetting problem for the latter in the 1740s was that Lord Dunkerron's eventual succession to the earldom looked likely to squander the inheritance his father had sedulously built up. Dunkerron may have been a wastrel but he was family head-designate and his premature death in September 1750 left his septuagenarian father to contemplate the failure of the main family line and set up what were likely to be contentious alternative arrangements for the descent of the Petty inheritance. Henry, Lord Shelburne, turned out to have just twelve months to put these in place before he in turn expired in April 1751 aged seventy six and all his titles became extinct (27).

The lucky beneficiary of this windfall was Henry Shelburne's favourite nephew, John Fitzmaurice, but it might so easily have turned out otherwise. Here, as so often, it is impossible to understand the dynamics of familial ascent without registering the key role of capable, influential women (28): John had the good offices of three exceptional women exercised on his behalf with Lord Shelburne and his advisers. The first was his wife, Mary Fitzmaurice, who was as anxious for her husband to advance himself materially and socially as she was to hide her own hand in helping him to achieve it. His sister, Lady Arbella Denny, also lobbied astutely on her brother's behalf in Dublin, as did, in London, the earl's relation by marriage (and mistress), Mrs Honoretta Pratt (1676-1769), a Yorkshire heiress and the friend and correspondent of Swift. She was the widow of Captain John Pratt (1670-1741), one-time M.P. for Dingle (1713-14; 1715-27) notorious deputy Vice-Treasurer of the Exchequer of Ireland, who had gone spectacularly insolvent in the mid-1720s following years of living beyond his means (29). It also helped that John Fitzmaurice had been recently regularly criss-crossing to London as Henry, Lord Shelburne's indispensable agent in Ireland (30) winning the trust of his uncle's canny circle of London based agents, lawyers, cousins and nieces (31), and deploying the kind of talents on his kinsman's behalf in the 1740s that he would exert for himself (once he had become Lord Shelburne in his own right) in the following decade. At times it took all the efforts of Shelburne's advisers to prevent the curmudgeonly old earl gifting his estate elsewhere. As the London solicitor, John Paterson, reported to Fitzmaurice on this touch-and-go process:

"...I verily believe his favor to you arises as much from a desire to [illegible] his Estate from ye operation of ye Law or in other words, to prevent its being ye gift of ye

Law to his heir as from any dislike to that heir, or any other strong attachment to you. He that could see his only son dye before him & not break his heart nay not shed a tear for that loss; cannot be supposed capable of much affection to a more distant friend; Nay upon making his will he was much out of temper & said at one of ye times when I was with him abt it I don't care who has my estate lett em' scramble for it when I am gone. These are very disagreeable anecdotes but I should not deserve ye character of an honest man or merit ye confidence ye have placed in me if I concealed them from you" (32).

Fitzmaurice advisedly kept his distance in Dublin so as not to play the grasping heir as long as his old uncle lived and the tactics paid off: in due course and thus protected John became the principal beneficiary of his uncle's Trust and real estate.

Having first formally turned himself into John Petty under a British Act of Parliament (33), Fitzmaurice set out pell-mell for England resigning his seat for county Kerry and leaving his primary Irish identity behind him at his house on St Stephen's Green in Dublin. His surviving letters indicate that his good fortune was taking a while to register and he was initially very dependent on his uncle Shelburne's cousins and advisers to find him lodgings in London, signing himself hesitatingly "John Petty" and asking one executor "this name I suppose is right" (34). Though far from unfamiliar with his adopted country, he had never been a permanent resident as an adult, the connections he had made in the 1720s were arguably of limited use to him over two decades later, and yet here he was in midlife having to rise to the challenge of new responsibilities and privileges. However, his uncle Henry had judged him astutely: the newly minted Hon. John Petty [as he will be hereafter called] in less than a decade both expanded his family's territorial holdings and gave them a degree of advanced social recognition within the mid-century English political elite that was quite exceptionally speedy by comparison with his Irish coevals and made possible his eldest son's rapid launch into public life.

John Petty needed all the professional expertise he could secure in London to safeguard his fortune, estimated at a colossal £300,000, about £16,000 annually from his landed estates and over a quarter of a million in the funds. Rather than bring his own Irish advisers and agents over with him to London Petty opted to employ principally those who had worked so hard for him while formally employed by his uncle. It was a calculated decision. At one level, it suggests that Irish professionals

established in London might be deemed *infra dig* for one of their own countrymen coming to town to claim his inheritance. More pertinently, Petty needed to work with men who already knew about the Shelburne estates and investments, above all the attorney John Paterson and his uncle's sole executor, the barrister Henry Monck, who had his own advisers. And he required their assistance at once. His huge accession of wealth and status had needled his widowed sister-in-law, Gertrude, Countess of Kerry, beyond containment. As far as she was concerned, Henry, earl of Shelburne's estate properly belonged to the head of the senior family, i.e. her son, and she was willing to use her family's funds in the courts to try and rectify this perceived injustice. The challenge was ultimately unsuccessful and it cast a shadow over John's first years in London. The land and the money were obviously crucial but John's status was incomplete without the titles. He had hoped that the earldom of Shelburne would be created afresh with special remainder to himself even before his uncle was dead. He was disappointed in that expectation but not in the alacrity with which Irish honours came his way once he had settled into his new life: the Barony of Dunkerron and the Viscounty of Fitzmaurice in October 1751 and the Earldom of Shelburne [co. Wexford] on 6 June 1753 (35).

John and Mary, the new Earl and Countess of Shelburne, had simple objectives: to give themselves and, above all their sons, William and Thomas, a public profile in England that uncle Henry had never succeeded in doing. For all his wealth, he had possessed only slight influence in the Westminster Parliament. That omission had to be remedied at the earliest opportunity: John Petty was already forty-five when he succeeded his uncle and his health was not of the best. The couple seem to have determined that they would devote themselves to enhancing their importance in whichever direction an opening might lie: further land purchases in England and Ireland, a grand London address, launching their sons into the great world in hopes that these boys would reach still higher than their parents, a seat for John in the British House of Commons and through cultivation of ministers, the prize of prizes – a British peerage. They set about it with a remarkable deliberateness and achieved their coveted coronet within a decade, a successful outcome with few contemporary parallels. The Shelburnes needed all available familial goodwill to propel themselves to the front rank of British society in the 1750s, and there would be none forthcoming from their Kerry cousins. It was the Horts, an Anglo-Irish family similar to the Pettys,

with their roots not in Hampshire but in Gloucestershire, that helped most. Mary Shelburne's late elder sister, Elizabeth (ca.1702-1745), had married the much older Josiah Hort (1673-1751) in February 1725/6 when he was already Bishop of Ferns. He was subsequently translated to the Archbishopric of Tuam in 1741 and would die in office a decade later a few months after Henry, Lord Shelburne on 14 December, 1751 (36). The archbishop's orphaned daughters, Maria, Frances, and Elizabeth then came into the care and charge of their aunt and uncle Shelburne. By 1755 only Frances Hort was left unmarried and still living with them. The couple seem to have been in no hurry to seek a suitor for her. She was to them the daughter they never had and their advancement was hers also. When John Petty made out his will in 1756 he left Frances £10,000 to be paid to her "as if she was his daughter, as she had behaved better, not being his child, yet conducting herself as if she was,..." (37).

Another key figure here was the archbishop's nephew, the Rev. Dr. Robert Hort, a rather shadowy Anglo-Irish cleric (he was Archdeacon of Ardagh), who seems to have been used by John Petty to undertake commissions useful for his family. Thus he accompanied Lord Fitzmaurice to Christ Church, Oxford in 1753 and, following year played an important part in securing for his kinsman, Lord Shelburne, the purchase of the estate at Bowood between Calne and Chippenham in Wiltshire, near to the main Bath to London road (38). Rather than have recourse to the London Irish, Shelburne was occasionally willing to bring in Irishmen to have a role in his projects, usually on the basis of family connection. One such was Francis de Valangin, M.D., (a connection of his kinsman by marriage, Sir James Caldwell (39) to whom in 1757 he was paying a very generous salary for a loosely defined supervisory role at Bowood that, nevertheless, "put a vast deal in his power". There was much local curiosity in the neighbourhood about his estranged wife who had followed him over, taken lodgings close by, and was presumed to be not his wife but his much younger mistress known for "her finery"! (40). Shelburne's wariness about tapping into London Irish networks was not particular exceptional among Anglo-Irish noblemen who already had a degree of familiarity with professionals and tradesmen in the capital that represented a cross-section of their presence there irrespective of national origins. Interestingly, Shelburne turned wherever he could to family members like Hort and de Valangin to represent his interests locally and they do not seem to have disappointed him.

The purchase of Bowood was all part of the Shelburnes' scheme to build up the family patrimony in England. If John was, as he fully intended, to play the part of a *grand seigneur*, then extending his land ownership portfolio was its essential foundation (41). Bowood was intended in time to become his principal country residence, a grand house in a grand setting, an affirmation of his individual personality and taste, a purchase that would be free from any shadow of what he owed to his uncle Henry and symbolic of his membership of the English elite (42). The first Earl died just before he could take full possession of a rebuilt and refurnished Bowood. In his life-time, the English hub of the Shelburne inheritance was the one inherited from his uncle Henry: Loakes House, on the edge of Chipping (now High) Wycombe, in the Chiltern hills of Buckinghamshire, about 30 miles north-west of London and on the Oxford road. For John Petty né Fitzmaurice to take possession of the family mansion and estate at Loakes, represented a major reconfiguration of his formal identity, one that was the physical counterpart to his new surname of Petty and, more broadly, amounted to the assumption of a primary identity as an Englishman with a major stake in the kingdom. And, his kinsmen and women apart, he had no intention of intruding Irish cronies or dependents on to the estate. In fact the new earl chose less to reside at Wycombe, than to beautify the town, which he represented in Parliament from 1754 (43). John Petty wasted no time in showing his constituents that he took pride in his adoptive borough (44) and wanted them to be the material and spiritual beneficiaries of his largesse, employing Henry Keene (Shelburne was one of his foremost patrons in the 1750s) to construct a Guildhall (1757), an octagonal market-house (1761), and to undertake major alterations to the parish church (to which he held the right of presentation (45)). Its citizens were also reminded emphatically how much Wycombe owed to the Petty family in the immediate past as well as the present by the construction of a colossal monument to his late uncle and his family in the aisle of the parish church.

During his decade's residence in England, Shelburne was principally to be found in Westminster and the west end of London, precisely the preference to be expected from a peer who had connections to cultivate and a place in polite and political society to affirm, and thereby emulating the high-end investment of other Irish peers such as Mountrath, Egmont, and Palmerston who considered a London town house an essential purchase (46). Again, this was also in line with his uncle's

expectations though nephew John chose not to move in to uncle Henry's town house. As in the case of a rural retreat, he wanted a metropolitan residence that reflected his individuality and his personal style, and a lot of effort went into searching for the West End dwelling. The indefatigable John Paterson was given that task and Shelburne wanted the best. When the Premier, Henry Pelham, died in March 1754, his house in Berkeley Square was inspected to check on its suitability only for it to be learnt that it was not to be sold but settled on his niece. The hunt eventually ended that summer when Petty moved into property formerly belonging to the 2nd earl of Dunmore in Hanover Square, on the edge of London and surrounded by fields: Keene was duly hired to make alterations and additions were undertaken there between 1755 and 1757 (47). Shelburne was taking up a prime market commodity, one that would permit him and the countess to participate in the capital's political and social institutions during the 'season' starting each November and ending the following June (48). He threw himself into the social whirl making sure that he wined and dined heartily those that might speak well of him in the counting houses of the City as well as the drawing rooms of the West End, proudly telling his eldest son, Lord Fitzmaurice, in 1757, for instance, that "Sixty Aldermen & Burgesses din'd with me on Monday & were all as drunk as they wish'd" (49). The year previously Horace Walpole encountered him at a London sale room busy stocking up with paintings for his new house and predictably recoiled from a man whom he presented as a vain glorious arriviste, watchful of his purse. He wrote witheringly of Shelburne having "...one of those second-rate fortunes, who have not above five-and-thirty thousand pounds a year. He says, everybody may attain some point if they give all their attention to it; for his part, he knows he has no great capacity, he could not make a figure by his parts; he shall content himself with being one of the richest men in England! I literally saw him t'other day buying pictures for two-and-twenty shillings, that I would not hang in my garrett; while I, who certainly have not made riches my sole point of view, was throwing away guineas..." (50).

The move to Hanover Square came at the right time for Petty politically coinciding approximately with his entry into the Westminster Parliament as one of Chipping Wycombe's two M.P.s. He brought with him accumulated experience of legislative life from his years in its Dublin equivalent, but it seems to have counted for little: he had no plan to use his new seat as the springboard to creating a distinctive

political identity for himself either in the Commons or in any other area of British public life. As far as Lord Shelburne, M.P., was concerned that was a task for the next generation, his sons William (styled Viscount Fitzmaurice) and Thomas (51): his ambitions were almost exclusively reserved for what he knew best from seeing his father and uncle leading the way in their time – family aggrandisement. Further enhanced status for the Pettys was best achieved in the 1750s by following one of the politicians jostling for supremacy in the confused times following the death of Henry Pelham in 1754 and the drift to war with France that followed in 1755-6 (52).

Shelburne opted, sensibly enough, to attach himself to Henry Fox, as much on the basis of political calculation as on his late uncle Henry's distant kinship to Fox's wife, Lady Caroline (née Lennox) (53). Fox eventually resigned as Secretary of State in October 1756, losing out to his great rival, the Elder Pitt, in the contest for supremacy in government, and ended up taking the subordinate but lucrative position within it of Paymaster General (1757-65) (54). He could still, therefore, be of some service to Shelburne in achieving what he really wanted – a British peerage, a prize that had eluded both Henry, Lord Shelburne and the first Earl of Kerry (55).

It was certainly not going to be achieved by giving attendance at what he might readily have come to see as a provincial institution - the Irish House of Lords - a greater priority than sitting in the British Commons. The newly minted Irish earl was in no hurry to head back to Dublin after his uncle's titles were recreated for him for prominence on College Green would not bring him further advantage (no Irish marquessates or dukedoms were created under George II). Westminster was the priority if the Shelburne dynasty was to operate, as both John and Mary intended, with England as its principal focus, just as it had been in uncle Henry's time. This behaviour amounted to a calculated, partial distancing of Irish antecedents that was confirmed by Shelburne's lack of interest in the British Commons of seeking out and consorting with other Irish peers and commoners sitting for English seats (56). Such an angle of political sociability was unlikely to achieve anything bar a reputation for Hibernian eccentricity and would assuredly work against netting the coveted British peerage. London networks of Irish parliamentarians hardly operated in the 1750s for precisely this reason and, even had Shelburne wanted to join one, he would have been struggling to find it. As a new MP in 1754, conversing with other Irish members about shared Hibernian interests was not a priority for him, and evidence for him frequenting informal institutions such as the coffee and chop houses of Westminster

where he might have encountered them has not come to light. What one can say is that Shelburne, like the majority of his compatriots, attached themselves to one or faction or another at Westminster, within which their 'Irishness' should barely be visible as an easy target for abuse from rivals and detractors. And the possession of an Irish earldom was certainly no necessary protection against what could be savage raillery (57).

Apart from Henry Fox, Shelburne made the most of the limited English elite connections that his uncle Henry had set up and cultivated. Principal among them in London was his uncle Charles, 2nd Baron Cadogan of Oakley (1685-1776), younger brother of Marlborough's talented right-hand man during the War of the Spanish Succession, William, Earl Cadogan, a minor Irish land owner whose British public prominence had rather overshadowed his status as an Anglo-Irishman. Charles Cadogan was likewise a man with a military background but also a patron of natural philosophy. His wife, Elizabeth, was daughter and eventually joint heir of the wealthy patron, collector, Royal physician, ~~secretary~~ [Newton's successor as President](#) of the Royal Society, and Irishman (in ancestry, an Ulster Scot) Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753), inheriting, with her sister, the lucrative manor of Chelsea on his death in January 1753. It was obviously appropriate for him to act as Sloane Trustee of the British Museum from 1753 until his death (58). Cadogan was not short of connections into London society. It says much for John Petty's *savoir-vivre* (and, undoubtedly, Lady Shelburne's) that the Cadogan family adopted him as a social equal very promptly after his arrival in London society. He could so easily have squandered that other, immeasurable benefit conveyed to him by his uncle: the social capital that flowed from his adopted status as the Petty heir. Instead, he built upon it and extended his own entrance into the English acceptance world to the potential advantage of his sons, William and Thomas. The eldest, William, was not given an English schooling, but Thomas went to Eton and both boys were sent on to Oxford (Thomas later studying at Glasgow with Adam Smith); both were expected to take their places in the *British* Parliament while owing their wealth principally to *Irish* endowments and money, Thomas being earmarked for his mother's estates and the surname of Fitzmaurice in what was intended to be the establishment of a Shelburne secondogeniture (59). As far as John Petty was concerned, irrespective of the location of the family's principal land holdings, there was no question that the future of his family lay in England and therefore his sons were to be, as was appropriate for the

great-grandsons of Sir William Petty, Englishmen first and Irishmen (if it had to be admitted) very much second.

Thanks to the Foxes, the Cadogans and the rest, John and Mary Shelburne may have made themselves at home in the highest social echelons of London society. They made sure that John in the English capital became conspicuous for the same philanthropic and charitable reasons as his sister Arbella in Dublin. Thus he was elected a governor of the Foundling Hospital on 27 December 1758 (60). However some evidence suggests that none of this quite satisfied Lord Shelburne. As befitted a member of the Royal Dublin Society (1757), he craved the company of the ingenious and the talented, natural philosophers of a practical bent, hence the connection with Sloane, hardly surprising as the descendant of Sir William Petty. And, in return, his encouragement of the arts and industry did not go unacknowledged (61). While not disowning the status of the British peerage – and emphatically coveting a niche within it for himself – Shelburne was under no illusion about the necessary connection of rank and education. As he told Adam Smith, in requesting him to act as tutor to Thomas Fitzmaurice at the University of Glasgow: "The great fault I find with Oxford and Cambridge, is that Boys sent thither instead of being the Governed, become the Governors of the Colleges, and that Birth and Fortune there are more respected than Literary Merit;" (62). Lord Cadogan brought him into peripheral connection with some collectors and antiquarians in the circle of Sir Hans Sloane, and he was also much in the company of his old Dublin companion, Thomas Sheridan, once the latter was more often in London (63). Sheridan later told another newcomer to London society, James Boswell, that conversation with people of fashion was easily reduced to "a system of Inspidity, where you just repeat the most insignificant common-place things, in a sort of affected delicacy of tone [.]", and instanced Lord Shelburne to make his point. The latter, when he had been some time in London, "told me that he was a very unhappy man. That before he left Ireland he used always to have the conversation of men of genius and letters; but that here, he was always in the best Company, where he heard nothing & Could say nothing. My Lord, said I, will you come and eat a beef-steak with me, and I'll show you some good company. He accordingly came, & I had some Men of Genius[,] taste & learning for him; and he was quite transported and declared he had not past a happy day, before, since he came to London" (64). This frank self-disclosure suggests the underlying stresses involved in adjusting identity in London, even for a peer. Denying Irishness, grafting on and

retrieving Englishness came at a high personal price. To a greater or lesser extent, a degree of hybridization was unavoidable, however much all the external registers of wealth, rank, and connection were in place.

Part of Shelburne may have missed Ireland but the pangs were insufficient to prompt him to return to Ireland with any regularity, despite being named as an Irish Privy Councillor in 1754 and serving as Governor of county Kerry from that year down to his death. But he was, essentially, an absentee in the 1750s, one who relied on regular communication from his agents in Dublin, Meath, and Limerick. It was the Dublin lawyer and agent, Henry Spring, to whom he looked for the protection of his interests in the same way as John Paterson did in London. Spring kept him up to speed with Kerry politics, rumours emanating from Dublin Castle, and assorted matters of business such as applications for livings. Very occasionally, the new Lord Shelburne appeared in person and took care in Ireland not to fall out with the Lord-Lieutenant (1750-5), the first Duke of Dorset, and his son, the powerful Chief Secretary, Lord George Sackville. He was happy to lend himself to Dublin Castle's efforts to justify itself over the rejected money bill and to take part in spectacles designed to emulate those of the Patriots after the bill had been rejected. Thus Shelburne prominently accompanied Lord George Sackville into Dublin in early 1754 when bonfires and processions were lit in their honour (65).

Once elected as M. P. for Chipping Wycombe, Shelburne took much more whittling out despite Spring's nudging of his master to come back to Ireland more frequently and his tweaking of Shelburne's Irish sense of self – and self-importance. 'Persuaded that you are desirous of knowing how matters go in a country that must be dearer to you than any other', he wrote inveiglingly during the political crisis of 1755, "I take leave to break in upon your Retirement at Beauwood...I wish your Lordship were not about honour at this critical time, a time where the circumstances of family fortune reputation & good understanding must make you of more consequence than any other man in this Kingdom – Pardon me for taking the liberty to say you have more business here at this time than in G. Britain" (66). Spring's pleading and his enlisting of Lady Arbella Denny could not do the trick and Shelburne sat out the storm preferring to prioritise his parliamentary duties at Westminster. His debt of honour was far stronger to Henry Fox than it was to the new Lord-Lieutenant, the Marquess of Hartington, as it was left to Fox himself to point out obliquely to the latter:

“... Lord Shelburne was going to Ireland, where business of various sorts called him. I wrote to him very pressingly, and have prevailed on him to stay and attend the H. of commons here till Xmas. I ventured to assure his lordship that his affairs in anything your lordship could help should not suffer by his absence, and he is particularly concerned that you should know that his complaisance to me, or as he obligingly expresses it, to appear in the number of my friends, is the true and only cause of his not paying his duty to your excellency earlier. ...” (67).

In the years that followed Spring continued to urge his master to leave London and come back to Ireland sending him reports from the legislature, often with deliciously pointed comments such as:

“The affairs of our Parliament may be considered as not worthy of yr Lordship’s attention; but it may be some amusement to be informed what is doing in Japan, & it would ill become a Person of yr Rank Family & Property in this Kingdom & a native also to know nothing of what is doing here” (68).

His employer was not disposed to listen. Conscious of his good-standing and influence with the king’s representative in Ireland after 1757, the 4th duke of Bedford (69), Shelburne had other calls on his time that made it inexpedient to quite London easily (70). He certainly visited Dublin and some of his outlying Irish possessions when there was nothing to detain him at Westminster, made new land purchases there and, with his wife, invested in manufacturing processes on his estates. Shelburne never lost sight of the need to conciliate friends and connections in Ireland, particularly in Kerry (71). Furthermore, where there were opportunities of participating in Irish Privy Council meetings, he took them (72).

But the overriding priority that kept him in London was hunting the honour that would set the seal on his transition from Irish younger son to an English aristocrat – a British peerage. Rumours were already flying in 1758 that the award had been made. It turned out to be a false alarm. Shelburne was undeterred. He pressed Fox (by then as Peter Luff writes in the ODNB, a political *condottiere* who was Paymaster of the Forces) in 1759 (73), and Fox in due course pressed the duke of Newcastle to honour a promise of creating a couple of peerages at his request that had been made as far back as 1756. The problem was as much persuading the king to swell the number of British peers. Fox’s awkward importuning of the duke nevertheless made the latter importune the king insistently in the royal closet, for, with a General Election due in 1761 at the latest, Fox had to be kept sweet. The duke mentioned his

recommendations to the king confidentially to Lord Hardwicke on 4 March 1760 and they included a request for a Barony for 'Mr Fox's friend, my Lord Shelburne (worth nothing but money)' (74). That was not quite how Fox viewed the usefulness of the earl to him as he prepared for the new reign that could surely not be far off given George's age and health. He had admired the capacities of Shelburne's eldest son, had helped get him a commission in the 20th regiment of foot, and now wanted to get him into the House of Commons to facilitate his transformation from heroic army officer to courtier and minister with connections to Leicester House and the Prince of Wales's great favourite, the Earl of Bute. One way to do that, given Shelburne's lack of borough influence, was to gratify his passion for a peerage. The king, no doubt prompted by Lady Yarmouth, at length gave way (75) and Shelburne was gazetted as Baron of Wycombe in the Peerage of Great Britain on 20 May 1760, and Lord Fitzmaurice entered the House of Commons on 2 June following in the room of his father as MP for Chipping Wycombe (76).

The pace and extent of Shelburne's remarkable promotion during the 1750s merits comparison with other Irish peers primarily resident in London during that decade and attempting, with varying degrees of success, to fashion themselves as Britons. Henry Temple, first Viscount Palmerston (d. 1757) was wealthy enough but failed to gain a British peerage and the same was the case for three holders of Irish titles who had gained (particularly in the first two cases) prominence in the Westminster House of Commons, the earls of Clanbrassil, Egmont, and Mountrath. John, Lord Shelburne, had much less of their political flair and dedication and yet within six years of taking his seat as a British MP he had left the lower chamber for the House of Peers. Leaving aside the advantage of having the backing of Henry Fox, and the capacity of his immense personal wealth to open innumerable doors for him in London society, Shelburne's skill in achieving this supreme objective is not easily denied. The nearest comparisons are perhaps with the two other Irish earls who received British baronies, Lords Bessborough and Hillsborough, yet even here there are some major differences. Brabazon Ponsonby, first earl of Bessborough, (created Baron Ponsonby of Sysonby on 12 June 1749) owed his titles to the marriage of his two sons into the family of the 3rd duke of Devonshire, and remained primarily resident in Ireland. The Ponsonbys had a similar Cromwellian, old Whig Pedigree as the Pettys and, if they enjoyed nothing like their rental income, had greater political prominence by the late 1730s having risen as allies of Speaker Conolly (77). Wills

Hill, first (Irish) earl of Hillsborough, from county Down, had almost equal interests in both kingdoms, was a British Privy Councillor (1754), had served in the king's household, and been MP for Warwick since 1741. Hillsborough was a serious career politician as well as a major Irish land lord (78), and that capacity for involvement in day-to-day politics at Westminster (one that would not be found in the Shelburne family until the 2nd earl's time) made him an obvious choice for preferment in the form of a British barony (Harwich, 17 November 1756) (79). Tellingly, this was another mark of royal favour successfully supplicated by Henry Fox on the occasion of his resignation on Pitt's coming into power, part of a series of stipulations on behalf of his followers (80) and, no less so, that Lord Shelburne was not so honoured on this occasion. His failure to figure only made him redouble his efforts to remind Fox that his promise of patronage had not been forgotten. And, eventually, he finally succeeded 'in his great affair the Peerage' (81).

As events turned out, John Petty enjoyed the summit of his ambitions for less than a year dying after a short illness on 14 May 1761, five days before the new Parliament met. He lived just long enough to see the beginning of a new reign and to see no diminution of his influence, for his links to Fox and John, 3rd duke of Rutland (the Lord Steward of the Household) gave him some status in the efforts being made to foster parliamentary support for the new king's Scottish favourite, Lord Bute (82). And, determined to neglect no lever that might persuade the young sovereign in a favourable light, Fox continued to extend his good offices to Shelburne in anticipation that the earl would put pressure on Lord Fitzmaurice to speak well of Fox with Bute. Shelburne appears to have been short of ready money in the spring of 1761 to pay for some of his ambitious Irish land purchases and Fox stepped into the breach with a well-timed loan that would "quash the horrid importunity of some of my creditors" (83).

A few weeks later, the first Earl of Shelburne was dead. He had expired in advance of the coronation of George III and Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz on 22 September 1761 when the *British* peerage was on maximum public display and the Irish earl and British baron might have taken his place in its procession into Westminster Abbey (84). There is no evidence to suggest that he evinced any sympathy for his fellow Irish peers who for a while looked likely to be denied this opportunity, another instance of the absence of corporate solidarity within its ranks,

particularly from those among it who had made the leap into the Westminster House of Lords (85) and had no admission of diluting their (and its) sense of constitutional pre-eminence in the two kingdoms by admitting the members (or even the representatives) of a constitutionally subordinate body. Yet if the conferring of British barony was, in one sense, an exclusive status symbol yet, in another, historians have rightly been recently reminded that it “was part of a larger process which brought about the gradual merging of the elites of the three kingdoms” (86).

The fact was that if one was a ‘half-Englishman’ such as John, Lord Shelburne, and trying to emerge as a full-blown Englishman, then a highly placed English patron in London ready to lobby indefatigably on one’s behalf was a *sine qua non*. Shelburne was fortunate. He had Henry Fox to speak up for him, and even if the latter’s influence in government was much lessened by the late 1750s, Newcastle would not easily discomfort him. Shelburne also got his timing right. Irish peers who followed in his wake in the 1760s and 1770s with similar aspirations were often disappointed through a combination of lacking a patron as forceful as Henry Fox and finding George III parsimonious over promotions to the British peerage.

Shelburne was interred in a specially built mausoleum in the grounds at Bowood. Not, note, at Lixnaw, not at Wycombe: in death as in life, John Petty had struck out on his own. His son, William, the second earl, may have later claimed that his father “loved a quiet life” and would have stayed in Ireland had it not been for what he called his mother, Mary Shelburne’s, “continual energy” (87). This paper would suggest he got it wrong. If he did, Shelburne would not be the first to have misunderstood the dynamics of his parents’ marriage. On the contrary, John and Mary Petty *both* possessed a drive and forcefulness that had few counterparts in the contemporary peerage – of either England or Ireland. Their success suggests the relative ease with which, all other things being equal, identity could be put off and put on by the Irish elite in London. And John was never in denial about his Irish origins even if he was determined to overlay it with a heavy veneer of Englishness when his uncle’s extensive landed inheritance fell into his hands. Significantly, he apparently opted not to take advantage of such clients Irish London networks that were on offer once he moved to England in the early 1750s. There were two reasons for this neglect. Firstly, he was already known to his uncle’s nexus of kinsfolk and advisers, indeed he was part of it, and there was no need to strike out into new waters; secondly, there was the risk that if he cultivated and employed Irish dependants and servants resident

in London it would be a help rather than a hindrance and could taint his character as an Englishman by adoption. Instead, John moved four-square into the Shelburne space in the metropolis that he inherited from his uncle. And he did so with aplomb, with his wife smoothing over social obstacles that might have tripped up her husband up. In fact, they seem, for all their hungry ambition, hardly to have put a foot wrong. But then, John and Mary, first Earl and Countess of Shelburne, parents of a Prime Minister and a pioneering gentleman businessman, were exceptional people. An Irish couple with English ancestry who became an English couple with Irish ancestry – it hardly seemed to matter.

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1. John Cannon, *Aristocratic century: the peerage of eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1984). See also J.V. Beckett, *The aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986).
2. The 2nd earl was reluctant to acknowledge his father's talents and ambition or what he owed to him. 'Autobiography' in Lord Fitzmaurice, *Life of William Earl of Shelburne afterwards First Marquess of Lansdowne* (2nd ed., 2 vols., London, 1912), i. 6.
3. For the revival of interest in the 2nd earl see, inter alia, Nigel Aston and Clarissa Campbell Orr (eds.), *An Enlightenment Statesman in Whig Britain: Lord Shelburne in Context, 1737-1805* (Woodbridge, 2011); Lawrence E. Klein, 'Sociability, Politeness, and Aristocratic self-formation in the life and career of the second Earl of Shelburne', *Historical Journal* 55 (2012), 653-77.
4. Ian McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland. The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin, 2009), 280.
5. These might often centre on articulating forms of Irish impoliteness, as well-born Britons might deem them. John Gerard McCoy, *Local Political Culture in the Hanoverian Empire: The Case of Ireland, 1714-1760* (unpub. Univ. of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1993), 282. D. W. Hayton makes the point that many Anglo-Irishmen (he instances Robert, 1st Viscount Molesworth) were perfectly able to think of themselves in different contexts as Irish and English. *The Anglo-Irish Experience, 1680-1730. Religion, Identity and Patriotism* (Woodbridge, 2012), 37.
6. The 1st earl of Charlemont noted how 'The Irishman in London, long before he has lost his brogue, loses or casts away all Irish ideas, and, from a natural wish to obtain the goodwill of those with whom he associates, becomes, in effect, a partial Englishman. Perhaps more partial than the English themselves'. Historical Manuscripts Commission [hereafter H.M.C.], *The manuscripts and correspondence of*

James, first Earl of Charlemont. Vol. 1, 1745-1783 (London, 1891), 14. For British perceptions of Irishness in the eighteenth-century see inter alai Krishnan Kumar, *The making of English national identity* (Cambridge, 2003), 1405; Murray G.H. Pittock, *Inventing and resisting Britain: cultural identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789* (Basingstoke, 1997), 23-5, 54-6.

7. For Lixnaw Mark Bence-Jones, *A Guide to Irish Country Houses* (London, 1988), 189; Valerie Bary, *Houses of Kerry* (Whitegate, 1994), 174.

8. I am writing about this dynastic feuding elsewhere.

9. Lady Kerry and her family feature regularly in the *Journal to Stella*, ed. Harold Williams (2 vols., Oxford, 1938).

10. In 1685 estates across five counties yielded £6,700 p.a. Toby Barnard, 'Sir William Petty, Irish landowner and improver', in *Improving Ireland? Projectors, prophets and profiteers, 1641-1786* (Dublin, 2008). 40-72, at 44, 52-3; Lord Fitzmaurice, *Sir William Petty, 1623-1687, one of the first fellows of the Royal Society* (London, 1895), 32-3. Petty's widow, born Elizabeth Waller (ca. 1636-1708), received the Irish barony of Shelburne in her own right in 1688 in recognition of her husband's extraordinary services to the Crown. He had earlier declined this honour for himself. Barnard, 'Petty', 66.

11. Quoted in G. E. C[okayne] and V. Gibbs, *The Complete Peerage* (13 vols. in 14, London, 1910-59), 7. 214.

12. G.F. Russell Barker and Alan H. Stenning (eds.), *The Record of Old Westminster* (2 vols., London, 1928), 1. 737. For expectations that education would eliminate solecisms in speech and behaviour see Toby Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure: lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (New Haven, 2004), 328.

13. John Field, *The King's Nurseries. The Story of Westminster School* (London, 1987), 45, 49-51.

14. His great aunt, the widowed Lady Elizabeth Fitzmaurice (born 1650), was living in London at the time. She died in her house on Pall Mall on 13 Sept. 1733, possessed of 'a plentiful fortune'. *Read's Weekly Journal*, 15 Sept. 1733, issue 443. For the favourable impression Fitzmaurice made at school see Rev. Robert Friend to Jonathan Swift, 20 Sept. 1715, ed. F. Elrington Ball, *The correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, (6 vols., London, 1910-14), ii. 299-300.

15. H.A.C. Sturgess, *Register of Admissions to the Middle Temple from the fifteenth century* (London, 1949), 1. 302; Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland. The Irish*

Protestants, 1649-1770 (New Haven, 2003), 113-28; D. Lemmings, *Gentlemen and Barristers: the Inns of Court and the English Bar, 1680-1730* (Oxford, 1990), 18, n. 26; idem., *Professors of the Law. Barristers and English Legal culture in the eighteenth century* (Oxford, 2000), 226-7. John Fitzmaurice also appears to have spent some time in the south of France. Shelburne, 'Autobiography', in Fitzmaurice, *Shelburne*, 1. 5.

16. One of his contemporaries at the Middle Temple (enrolled 1728) was the elder John Fitzgibbon (1708-80), famous in later life as a Protestant convert lawyer and father of Lord Chancellor Clare. McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, 235.

17. G. E. C., *The Complete Peerage*, 11. 670.

18. Quoted in full in ed. Andrew Carpenter, *Verses in English from Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Cork, 1998), 241-3. See also Jane Thompson, Bath, to Richard Thompson, at Escrick, Yorks., 2 May 1733, enclosing a copy of verses [attributed to Ambrose Philips] lately penned in Ireland: "The High Sheriff's Feast: viz. – The Honble John Fitzmaurice Esq High Sherff of ye County of Kerry in Ireland". Hull History Centre, Forbes-Adams Papers DFA39/20.

19. Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Kerry* (Dublin, 1756), 101-2, 101n.

20. An attempt by his mother to bring him into the office of deputy clerk of the Irish Privy Council in 1735 came to nothing. See Swift to Lady Elizabeth Germain, 5 May 1735, in *Correspondence*, v. 170-1. John Norris's disparaging notice of John Fitzmaurice as one "...certainly unfitted for a career in the world...an awkward country bumpkin" should be firmly discarded. See his *Shelburne and Reform* (London, 1963), 2.

21. He apparently inherited from his father a legacy of £3,000 p.a. Shelburne, 'Autobiography', in Fitzmaurice, *Shelburne*, 1. 5.

22. E.M. Johnston-Lilk, *History of the Irish Parliament, 1692-1800: Commons, Constituencies, and Statutes* (6 vols., Belfast, 2002), 4. 173-4.

23. As Toby Barnard archly notes, her 'activities sometimes crossed the conventional boundaries of gender'. *Making the Grand Figure*, 165. See also Clarissa Campbell Orr, "Aunts, Wives, Courtiers: The Ladies of Bowood", in Aston and Campbell Orr (eds.), *An Enlightenment Statesman*, 51-78, at 52-9.

24. The family still fits Toby Barnard's definition of the genuinely Anglo-Irish as those who maintained establishments in both England and Ireland. 'Crises of Identity

- among Irish Protestants, 1641-1685', *Past and Present*, 127 (1990), 39-83, 47.
25. The town house in George Street was in his possession in 1748. Bowood House Archives [hereafter B.H.A.], S.84, f.30
26. For Shelburne's wealth, see Marmaduke Coghill to Edward Southwell, jr., 8 Apr. 1735, in ed. D.W. Hayton, *Letters of Marmaduke Coghill, 1722-1738* (Dublin, 2005), 161, 163.
27. Lord Shelburne's will is The National Archive,s PRO Prob/11/787.
28. This point is the constant refrain of the work of Clarissa Campbell Orr. See, in the Shelburne context, her "Aunts, Wives, Courtiers: The Ladies of Bowood", in Aston and Campbell Orr (eds.), *An Enlightenment Statesman*, 51-78.
29. Barnard, *New Anatomy of Ireland*, 162-3; *History of the Irish Parliament, 1692-1800*, 6. 112-14. Marie-Louis Legg, "Money and Reputations: The Effects of the Banking Crises of 1755 and 1760", *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 11 (1996), 75.
30. Shelburne was 'continually expressing his satisfaction at having his affairs in your hands'. John Paterson to John Fitzmaurice, 29 Jan. 1750, B.H.A., S.90, f. 109. Two months later, Paterson thanked Fitzmaurice for "...your readiness to undertake ye care of his [earl Henry's] new acquisition, loaded as you are with ye weight of his Irish concerns & encumbered with law suits of your own..." ,16 Mar. 1750, S.90, f. 101..
31. The ladies "all join in ye warmest zeal for your service and take all opportunities to promote it". 16 Mar. 1750, B.H.A., S.90, f. 101.
32. John Paterson to John Fitzmaurice, 8 Nov. 1750, B.H.A., S.90, f. 113.
33. 24 Geo. II, c.43.
34. John Fitzmaurice to William Monck, Dublin, 27 Apr. 1751, B.H.A., S. 90, ff. 82-3. He found accommodation in George St., London.
35. The likelihood that Petty would be made appeared 'a certainty' to informed opinion in county Kerry who were expecting a by-election to follow. Sir Maurice Crosbie to Jack Hassett [John Blennerhassett jr.], Sept(?) 1751, National Library of Ireland, Talbot-Crosbie Papers, P.C. 188. For the choice of Shelburne as his title and his citing of authority for including the name of Waterford in his patent see John, Viscount Fitzmaurice to Sir Robert Wilmot, 2 June 1753, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland [hereafter PRONI] T3019/6456/300. See also T3019/214041.
36. The archbishop was the friend of Isaac Watts. See his influential *Instructions to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tuam* (1742), Rolf P. Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory*

in eighteenth-century England (1660-1800) (Vienna, 1972), 57.

37. B.H.A., S.90, Copy of John, the first Earl's will (5 Apr. 1756). Frances Hort later married John Parker of Saltram, Devon, but died in 1764 only one year afterwards just as they were setting out on a Grand Tour of Europe.

38. Details in Earl of Kerry, "King's Bowood Park", *Wiltshire Magazine*, xli., (1922), 502-21. 506n.

39. The Caldwell family of Castle Caldwell, co. Fermanagh, are critical for understanding the Shelburne's family connections and networks in Ireland. See Mervyn Busted, *Castle Caldwell, County Fermanagh. Life on a west Ulster estate, 1750-1800* [Maynooth Studies in Local History: Number 69] (Dublin, 2006).

40. Miss [Frances] Hort to [Elizabeth] Lady Caldwell, London, 24 Jan. 1757, John Rylands University Library Manchester [hereafter J.R.U.L.], Bagshawe Muniments, B3/30/116. For the rather mysterious de Valangin, see *Professional Anecdotes: or Annals of Medical Literature in three volumes* (London, 1823), 2. 164-5

41. One of the provisions of earl Henry's will was that the income arising from his bequest should be invested in landed estate. Kerry, "King's Bowood Park", 509.

42. "Landlocked Bowood was a passport to English society and politics" as Jane Brown nicely puts it. *Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. The Omnipotent Magician* (London, 2011), 146.

43. Shelburne announced his intention of offering himself as a candidate months before the General Election. Shelburne to Sir Francis Dashwood, 28 Nov. 1753, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Dashwood of West Wycombe MS, D/D/18/3/. He shared the representation with the Waller family of Beaconsfield. John Brooke and Sir Lewis Namier, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790* (3 vols., London, 1964), 3. 270.

44. That said, on his succession to Loakes in 1761, the 2nd earl apparently found the farms "tenanted by beggars and bankrupts, out of repair, the great part uninclosed, and set out to bring order to the estates", David Snoxell, "Wycombe in the Social and Political Life of the Earl of Shelburne, 1761-1798", in *The High Wycombe Society newsletter*, 145 (2007), 5-8, at 5. Against the 2nd earl's typically acidulous comment may be set Adam Smith's recognition that the 1st earl was a conscientious and capable landlord. Smith to Shelburne, 4 Apr. 1759, Ernest Campbell Mossner and Ian Simpson Ross (eds.), *The Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1977), 32.

45. ed. William Page, *Victoria County History. A History of the County of*

- Buckinghamshire*, vol. three (London, 1925), 114, 132; Malcolm Baker, 'Lord Shelburne's "costly fabrick": Scheemakers, Roubiliac and Taylor as rivals', *Burlington Magazine*, 132 (1990), 841-8.
46. Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, 37.
47. William Monck to John Petty, 18 July 1754, B.H.A., S.89, f. 4; ed. Roderick Brown, *The Architectural Outsiders* (London, 1985), 214.
48. See M.H. Port, 'Town House and Country House: Their Interaction', in ed. Dana Arnold, *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (Stroud, 1998), 117-38.
49. B.H.A., S.90, f. 50 Shelburne to Fitzmaurice, 24 Aug. 1757, from Wycombe. Interestingly, Shelburne avoided fashionable card games. See the acclamation of his anti-gameing stance in Thomas McDonnell, *The Eighth Commandment Considered* (Dublin, 1760).
50. Walpole to Henry Seymour Conway, 16 Apr. 1756, in ed. W.S. Lewis, *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (London, 1939), 37. 459-60.
51. For the emergence of Irish-born leaders in the British political world see Francis G. James, *Lords of the Ascendancy: Irish House of Lords and its Members, 1600-1800* (Dublin, 1995), 158.
52. J.C.D. Clark, *The Dynamics of change. The Crisis of the 1750s and English Party Systems* (Cambridge, 1982).
53. Henry, Lord Shelburne left her a legacy of £5,000 in his will. Walpole to Horace Mann, 22 Apr. 1751, *Correspondence*, vol. 20, p. 248. The consanguinity was through her mother on the Cadogan side – Henry's mother, Elizabeth, was the sister of Bridget Waller – they were both daughters of Sir Hardress Waller (d. 1666), the regicide). Bridget married Henry Cadogan (d. 1713/4), father of William, 1st earl Cadogan. They had land at Liscarton, Co. Meath.
54. For an assessment his personal gains while holding that office see Lucy S.Sutherland, and J. Binney 'Henry Fox as Paymaster General of the Forces', *English Historical Review* 70 (1955), 229-56. He favoured several individuals with loans on mortgage or bond including John, Lord Shelburne, *infra*.
55. Shelburne's continuing attachment to Fox after 1756 rescues him somewhat from the charge of acting as a political mercenary by abandoning a patron whose political career was 'effectively destroyed'. Peter A. Luff, *Henry Fox, the Duke of Cumberland, and Pelhamite Politics, 1748-1757*, (unpub. Univ. of Oxford D.Phil.

thesis, 1987), viii.

56. He was one of 22 Irishmen in the Parliament of 1754-61. John Brooke, *The House of Commons 1754-1790*. Introductory Survey (London, 1964), 239.

57. For the scathing comments of Horace Walpole and others see Cannon, *Aristocratic century*, 16. The notion was commonplace in Shelburne's extended family. See the letter of Miss Hort to Lady Caldwell on contempt for Irish peers, J.R.U.L., Bagshawe Muniments, B. 3/30/1-153, quoted in John B. Cunningham, *A History of Castle Caldwell and its Families* (Monaghan, 1980), 80.

58. ed. Arthur MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane. Collector, Scientist, Antiquary, Founding Father of the British Museum* (London, 1993). See esp. idem., 'The Life, Character and Career of Sir Hans Sloane', 11-4; Marjorie Caygill, 'Sloane's Will and the Establishment of the British Museum', 45-69.

59. For the Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice, see Nigel Aston, 'Petty and Fitzmaurice: Lord Shelburne and his Brother', in Aston and Campbell Orr (eds.), *Enlightenment Statesman*, 29-50.

60. *London Magazine*, 27 Dec. 1758, 685. Shelburne was also beginning to display himself in a low key as a Dublin philanthropist in his own right in the 1750s. He was Governor of the Lying-In Hospital from 1756 to his death.

61. For instance, Charles Lucas, *An Essay on Waters* (London, 1756). Lucas thanked Shelburne for patronising his course of chemistry. Shelburne was also a subscriber to Richard Barton's *Lectures in Natural Philosophy* (Dublin, 1751).

62. Shelburne to Smith, Dublin, 26 Apr. 1759, in *Correspondence of Adam Smith*, 37.

63. For Shelburne's financial backing of Sheridan as theatre manager in Dublin in 1754 see Esther K. Sheldon, *Thomas Sheridan of Smock-Alley* (Princeton, 1967), 211.

64. ed. Gordon Turnbull, *James Boswell, London Journal 1762-1763* (London, 2010), 52.

65. British Library [hereafter B.L.] Add. MS. 32734, f.131, Sackville to Robert Maxwell, 11 Feb. 1754, quoted in Eoin Magennis, *The Irish Political System, 1740-1765. The Golden Age of the Undertakers* (Dublin, 2000), 85.

66. Councillor Spring to Shelburne, Dublin, 23 Sept. 1755, B.H.A., S. 133, ff. 5-6.

67. PRONI, T3158/966, 4 Nov. 1755, Fox to Hartington

68. Councillor Spring to Shelburne, 3 Dec. 1757, B.L. Bowood Papers, Vol. 46, f. 191.

69. Thus he successfully secured the promotion of two of his clerical followers in

Ireland, one to a bishopric, the other to a deanery. Henry Fox also threw his weight behind Shelburne's candidates. See Fox to Bedford, 3 Aug 1758, PRONI T2915/5/18; Shelburne to Fox, Dublin, 28 Mar. 1759, B.L. Add MS. 51431, f.37.

70. Shelburne's making London his primary sphere of action was hardly exceptional for men of his background. As Alan Brodrick had observed forty years previously, 'whoever proposes to come to anything considerable hereafter must make England the theatre he resolves to appear on'. To Thomas Brodrick, 27 July 1717, Surrey History Centre, 1248/4/53-4, quoted in Hayton, *The Anglo-Irish Experience*, 96.

71. He advised his son and heir, Do good offices to everybody, "but more especially to those of this kingdom, & more especially again to those of the kingdom of Kerry, not only for their sakes but for your own,...", B.H.A., S.90, f. 62 Dublin Apr 15 1760.

72. Thus his name appears at the Privy Council meeting of 28 Nov. 1758, 'By the Lords Justices and Council of Ireland, a proclamation (For continuing the embargo on provisions etc.).

73. See Shelburne to Fox, 28 Mar. 1759, in Earl of Ilchester, *Henry Fox, First Lord Holland. His Family and Relations* (2 vols., London 1920), 2. 121.

74. B. L. Add Ms 32903, Newcastle Papers, f. 81. The award was also part of Newcastle's planning for the General Election due in 1761 at the latest. Richard Middleton, "The Duke of Newcastle and the conduct of patronage during the Seven Years' War, 1757-1762", *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 12 (1989), 175-86, at 184.

75. Newcastle, in his personal memoranda of business to be conducted with the king, had the Shelburne peerage as an item on 11, 17, 19, 21, and 22 Mar., B. L. Add Ms 32903, Newcastle Papers, ff. 212, 330, 373, 430, 441-2.

76. J.C. Sainty, *Peerage Creations 1649-1800. A Chronological List of Creations in the Peerages of England and Great Britain* (London, 1998), 58.

77. S.J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom. Ireland 1630-1800* (Oxford, 2008), 239-40. By 1741 the future 2nd earl had become chief secretary and the family was becoming 'the main counterpoint to the Boyle interest within parliament'. David Dickson, *New Foundations. Ireland 1660-1800* (2nd ed., Dublin, 2000), 90-1.

78. Hillsborough had no electoral interest in England but controlled 9 seats in the Irish Parliament. Brooke, *The House of Commons 1754-1790*, 240. He was the anonymous author of A Proposal for Uniting the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland (1751) that ignited a minor controversy. Jim Smyth, *The Making of the United Kingdom*

1660-1800 (Harlow), 2001) 208, judges the polemic no more than “an average effort”.

79. Sainty, *Peerage Creations*, 54, 57. Bessborough, Hillsborough, and Shelburne were the only holders of exclusively Irish earldoms to receive British baronies in the reign of George II. William, 3rd Earl Fitzwilliam, received a British earldom in 1746, but he already held a British barony (created 1742), while James, earl of Kildare (Fox’s brother-in-law), uniquely had conferred on him a British viscounty (Leinster) in 1747. George I had been more generous in converting Irish peerages into British ones.

80. Ilchester, *Henry Fox*, 2. 14. Hillsborough had married the earl of Kildare’s sister in 1748 and had therefore joined Henry Fox’s extended family. Brooke, House of Commons, 2. 140. He gained his Irish earldom in 1751, the same year that John Petty received an Irish viscounty.

81. Col Robert Clerk to Lord Fitzmaurice, London, Berkeley Square, B. L., Bowood Papers, 14 May 1760, Vol. 10, f. 65.

82. Norris, *Shelburne and Reform*, 7, 8.

83. Shelburne to Fitzmaurice, 25 Apr. 1761, B.H.A., S.90, f. 78

He subsequently made it clear what he expected his son to do in return. ‘I tell it you that you may seek some opportunity to express to him my gratitude, and that in proportion as you interest yourself in my case, you may profess yourself wishful to contribute, by any service in your power, to requite his goodness’

Shelburne to Fitzmaurice, 25 Apr. 1761, Lansdowne MSS, quoted in Ilchester, *Henry Fox*, 2, 121.

84. The Irish peers who had no British title had to lobby the crown very hard for a right to process. *H.M.C Charlemont*, 1. 15-17

85. John Cannon calculates that the grand total of British peerage creations between 1701 and 1800 was 229. Of these 29 ‘transferred’ from the Irish peerage. *Aristocratic century*, 84. For the gradual increase in peerages awarded to Irish peers who were wholly or partially resident in London from the 1740s see A.P.W. Malcolmson, “The Irish Peerage and the Union, 1700-1971”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 10 (2000), 289-327, at 302. Those who were not so favoured were not slow to complain, for example Henry, Lord Conyngham of Mountcharles who in 1755 told the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Hartington, that other peers were “loaded with favours both in England and Ireland without half my interest in either kingdom or the tenth part of my family pretensions”. To Hartington, 17 Apr. 1755, Chatsworth,

Devonshire Letters, 1752-55, quoted in Barnard, *New Anatomy*, 27. Conyngham, an M.P. in both countries, had only just been awarded a barony (1753), and he was further promoted to a viscountcy in 1756.

86. M.W. McCahill, *The House of Lords in the Age of George III (1760-1811)* (London, 2009), 17.

87. Fitzmaurice, *Shelburne*, i. 5.

