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Lady Betty Hastings (1682-1739): Godly Patron¹

Anne Laurence

‘Her life had chiefly for its direction two great objects, how she might exalt the glory of God and how demonstrate her own good will towards men’.² This characterisation of Lady Elizabeth (Betty) Hastings refers to the qualities for which she was most well known: her godliness and her charity. Richard Steele wrote of her in the *Tatler*, ‘To love her is a liberal education’, and the entry in the old *Dictionary of National Biography* describes her as ‘philanthropist’, but these epithets do little justice to her life.³ Not only did she give large sums of money to charitable uses, she took a close interest in the administration of charities, in clerical appointments, and in the movement for the reformation of manners. She did so in the spirit not merely of fulfilling her duty as a Christian, but also from a strong sense of family, not just of her ancestors, but of her household of unmarried half-sisters.

Discussions of philanthropy usually dwell on the donors’ debit side of the balance sheet, the gifts, endowments and legacies made by wealthy individuals, rather than on the credit side, the means by which such individuals were able to accumulate and disburse funds and release lands to such purposes. Unusually, we have, through correspondence and through bank records, a reasonable idea not only of how Lady Betty acquired her fortune and property, but also of how she looked after it. While she maintained an aristocratic view of noblesse oblige, she adapted her financial affairs to the age of the financial revolution, using the newly developing banking system and taking a position in the emerging stock market.

Queen’s College

The presence of Betty Hastings's portrait in Queen's College, Oxford is testimony to her benefaction to the college, an endowment for exhibitions to the college for five boys from twelve parishes in Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmoreland. The terms of the benefaction were extremely detailed: identifying the parishes from which the boys were to come and laying down exercises to be performed by the candidates. The ten best exercises were to be forwarded to the Provost and Fellows of the college who were then to elect the eight best candidates, from whom five finalists were to be chosen by lot, 'as leaving something to Providence'.⁴ The exhibitions provided training for men intending to go into the church, and were for five years 'to take away the necessity of entering precipitately into holy orders'. The period after completing a bachelor of arts degree was to be used for theological studies (and what this involved was also specified). Exhibitioners had a considerable advantage from their awards for they became favoured candidates for the benefices which were in the gift of Lady Betty's heirs, one of which was worth £80 a year, the others of which were worth £100 or more.⁵

The process of setting up the exhibitions was protracted and depended upon the close personal relationship between the Provost of the college, Joseph Smith (1670-1756), and Lady Betty. He operated a kind of consultancy on moral and ethical subjects for godly and concerned members of the public, who wrote to him for opinions on disputed matters. Smith was also celebrated for having converted to Anglicanism two Roman Catholics: James Earl of Waldegrave (1685-1741) and Charlotte Windsor, daughter of Viscount Windsor.⁶ In 1715 Lady Betty wrote to him for advice on whether the oath of abjuration (declaring James Stuart, the 'Old Pretender' not to be the son of King James II) might lawfully be taken. Smith replied to her in three letters setting out the reasons for obedience to the new Hanoverian monarch.⁷ He also advised her on her charitable benefactions and on what to think about the Methodists.⁸

There survives a small amount of correspondence between the two from the early 1730s, as well as several drafts of the proposed codicil to Lady Betty's will setting out the terms of the

benefaction. The exhibitions did not actually take effect until some years after her death in 1739; the lands at Wheldale in Yorkshire which were to fund them were charged with annuities to various of Lady Betty's friends and former staff and the college did not take possession of the property until the last of the annuitants had died.⁹ As late as 1756 the college was receiving reports from Lady Betty's executors (her half-sisters Ann Hastings and Margaret Ingham) on the survival of three remaining annuitants; the land finally came into the college's possession in 1764, having increased greatly in value after coal was found there.¹⁰

It was Smith who persuaded Lady Betty to make this gift. Originally she had intended it for St Edmund's Hall (at that time a dependency of Queen's), but when Smith was elected Provost of Queen's in 1730 she transferred it to the college.¹¹ Smith was an effective fund-raiser and secured a number of large benefactions for the college, including one of £1,000 from Queen Caroline, negotiated through the offices of his friend and Lady Betty's kinsman, Arthur Onslow M.P.¹² However, Smith had to work hard for the Hastings benefaction to satisfy Lady Betty's attention to detail, although she was devoted enough to him to send him a shagreen pocket book in 1729.¹³ She was extremely concerned that exhibitioners should be well behaved and raised the possibility of a set of rules specifically to govern their behaviour. Smith, a realist, responded by revising the regulations concerning such matters as attendance at chapel and meals for all students of the college.

How Lady Betty got to know Joseph Smith is not known. Possibly it was through a Yorkshire connection for Smith grew up in Guisborough and Lady Betty's estates were near Pontefract. It is more likely that they became acquainted in the early years of the eighteenth century when he was lecturer to the fashionable London congregation at Trinity Chapel, Hanover Square, where he preached before Queen Anne. In a letter to Smith, Lady Betty wrote of the pleasure she felt at being a benefactress 'to a college as distinguished as yours is for the strictness of its discipline both with regard to learning and morals'.¹⁴

Philanthropy and religion

Lady Betty's friendship with Provost Smith was one of many, both personal and epistolary, that she enjoyed with godly laypeople and members of the clergy. As a young woman she had lived in London where she associated with a number of people noted for their piety and good works, including John Sharp (1645-1714) Archbishop of York¹⁵, Sir John Phillips (c.1666-1737)¹⁶, Thomas Wilson (1663-1755)¹⁷ and Robert Nelson (1656-1715)¹⁸. They, in turn, introduced her later to such men as Anthony William Boehm (1673-1722)¹⁹ William Lupton (1676-1726)²⁰, Richard Lucas (1648-1715)²¹, and Martin Benson (1689-1752)²².

This group was connected by a common interest in the proper observance of the sacraments and festivals of the church, in alleviating the poverty of the clergy, in converting the heathen, in the legitimacy of the rule of William and Mary and, later, the Hanoverians (particularly as heads of the Church of England), in providing a Christian education, and in promoting moral reform. These concerns found their expression in two important developments: the societies for the reformation of manners and Methodism.

Although Archbishop Sharp was opposed to the societies for the reformation of manners, he took a close interest in the fate of foreign Protestants. Most of Lady Betty's other friends were, in one way or another, associated with Thomas Bray's Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), founded 1698; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.), founded 1701; and the 'Associates of Dr. Bray,' a society whose aim was to provide parochial libraries. Lady Betty's concerns were consonant with those of the S.P.C.K. (for the suppression of vice) and the S.P.G. (for foreign missions). Although her name does not appear in the early records of the S.P.C.K., the society received £1012: 10s after she died. She subscribed ten guineas to the S.P.G. in 1730 and asked Provost Smith whether it would be possible for ministers of the Church of England to be sent as missionaries to the East Indies, believing that hitherto there had not been any there.²³ In 1737 she contributed £50 for the use of the Protestant mission in the East Indies to be paid 'as from a person who desires to be

unknown'. She also subscribed £40 in 1728 to George Berkeley's abortive project to set up a college in Bermuda to educate planters' children, to provide a constant supply of Anglican clergymen and of zealous missionaries to propagate Christianity among the 'savages', and to instruct the children of 'savage Americans' in religion and learning.²⁴ She took an interest, too, in the welfare of the colonists of Georgia.²⁵

Lady Betty's interest in charity schools was long-lasting and widespread. She supported Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man in his attempt to improve the schools on the Isle of Man; when he became embroiled in a long-running dispute between the temporal and spiritual courts on the Isle of Man, she contributed 30 guineas to his support.²⁶ She undertook to subscribe £200 to the fund set up by Mary Astell to establish a school for the children of the soldiers living in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, having already provided funds for Astell's school for poor girls.²⁷ When Mary Astell died in 1731 the scheme was kept going for some time, but ultimately came to nothing.²⁸ Lady Betty was also interested in less grand projects, augmenting the incomes of or founding charity schools in the Yorkshire parishes of Thorp Arch, Wyke, Collingham, Aberford and Ledsham. And she was not beyond smaller acts of individual charity for in 1712 she paid £6 for Theo Powell to be taken as an apprentice by Richard Stewkley.²⁹

An important figure in both the S.P.C.K. and in Lady Betty's life was Robert Nelson, who shared her interest in charity schools and with whom she corresponded. One of her letters of 1714, plainly part of a longer correspondence which no longer survives, concerned the death of Queen Anne: 'The death of our excellent queen cannot but affect every one who are not strangers to humanity as well as religion'.³⁰ Their letters also discussed spiritual matters, she writing to him 'the useful reflections you made on the vanity of immoderate fears were very acceptable and very edifying'.³¹

Nelson and Lady Betty were part of a network of devout people which included Anthony Horneck, Henry William Ludolf and Anthony William Boehm. These men and women were not only concerned with the suppression of vice through the societies for the reformation of manners, but were influenced by the pietistic movement based in Halle in Germany which promoted societies similar to the S.P.C.K.³² Its leader was Auguste H. Francke to whom Lady Betty sent a contribution 'as a testimony of the high opinion I have of your charitable foundation', as well as paying for a relative, Henry Hastings (whose father was Catholic) to study there.³³ Boehm was responsible for translating and publishing in English works by Halle theologians.

The Halle Pietists and the Moravians were two important influences on devout Anglicans who found the Church of England too rationalist, too mundane, and too little concerned with spiritual uplifting through the sacraments. They inspired in Lady Betty, her friends and correspondents a sense of the importance of observing religious festivals and of the sacraments. She provided for twelve monthly sermons in Leeds to promote the better observation of holidays and the more general resort to the Lord's supper.³⁴

This movement had influenced the Wesleys and their associates at Oxford, especially Benjamin Ingham. Lady Betty's memorialist, Thomas Barnard, was at pains to distance her from any charge of being a Methodist but she was clearly linked to the tendencies in the Church of England that, after her death, gave rise to Methodism.³⁵ She seems to have had some contact with the Wesleys over their missionary efforts in Georgia.³⁶ Benjamin Ingham, as associate of the Wesleys, visited Ledstone for several days in October 1739. her library contained a copy of Charles and John Wesley's recently published *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, published only a few weeks before her death in December 1739. It is impossible to say in what direction Lady Betty's religious beliefs might have turned had she survived longer. She expressed her disapproval of field preaching, although it is clear that Ingham's career as a field preacher, which was just beginning, had made a deep impression on her half-sister

Margaret.³⁷ Others amongst her circles made similar contacts; Sir John Philipps corresponded with the Halle Pietists and supported George Whitefield.

Lady Betty's library reflects the very moment of the emergence of Methodism.³⁸ There were high church, Tory works including John Walker's *Account*; nonjurors' works such as John Kettlewell's *Measure of Christian Obedience* (1684) and *Companion for the Penitent* (1726); Robert Nelson's edition of Bishop Bull's sermons (1713) and his book on the festivals (1708); and Bishop Ken's *Divine Poetry*.³⁹ There were mystical works such as Robert Nelson's *Christian's Exercise* (1715) (an edition of Thomas á Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*), George Stanhope's edition of Lancelot Andrewes's devotions (1730), and works by supporters of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Several of the devotional works used by the Oxford Methodists in the early 1730s which were concerned with meditation were to be found in the library: Anthony Horneck's *Best Exercise* (1724), Simon Patrick's *Christian Sacrifice* (1708), and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* (1727).⁴⁰ One of the biographies that inspired the Oxford Methodists was that of James Bonnell, late husband of Lady Betty's friend, Mrs Jane Bonnell, who had commissioned it, though Lady Betty did not herself own a copy.⁴¹

Several of the authors of works in Lady Betty's library were proponents of schemes for relieving distressed clergy or setting up communities of one kind or another. She was particularly concerned about the poverty of the clergy and, according to Mr Cookson, vicar of Leeds, 'she looked upon them with real and yet with a religious pleasure because God had given her a heart and abilities to relive and comfort them'.⁴² In 1704 Queen Anne made over the income she received from the First Fruits and Tenth, taxes levied on the Anglican clergy, to a corporation to be used to raise the incomes of poor clerical livings. Queen Anne's Bounty amounted to about £17,000 per annum and was administered by a board of governors who also encouraged private benefactions to enlarge the fund.⁴³ Lady Betty bought property under the scheme to augment eight benefices.⁴⁴

Early eighteenth-century charity was not politically neutral, though it could be bipartisan, and Lady Betty's politics inclined her to some charities more than others. Unsurprisingly, given her church politics, she was a Tory. She had Tory and nonjuring associates in Robert Nelson, Mary Astell and Lady Betty's bankers, the Hoare brothers.⁴⁵ She supported such Tory schemes as the Bath General Hospital.⁴⁶ It may be, too, that her greater enthusiasm for the S.P.G. over the S.P.C.K. lay in the latter's movement towards the Whigs from its original character embracing Whigs and Tories, high and low church Anglicans and the more respectable kind of nonconformist, while the S.P.G. remained more firmly grounded in Anglicanism.⁴⁷

Books in Lady Betty's library suggest that she was interested in female communities: she had copies of Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal* (1694) and John Duncon's *Life of Lady Falkland* (1653) (about the Great Tew circle). She also owned two works by William Law, who attempted to establish a community in Northamptonshire and received an anonymous donation of £1,000 with which he founded a girls' school at Kings Cliffe in 1727.⁴⁸

Lady Betty's interest in this kind of scheme arose partly from the circumstances of her life, as chatelaine of a household of prosperous unmarried women, she having given a home to her four half-sisters, three of whom lived with her until her death. In a letter to the eldest of them, Ann, she wrote,

as long as I have a house and you are unsettled, I must repeat my desire that you will reckon my house your home but not your prison... You know that having a religious, regular, well ordered family has been one of the things my heart has most desired.⁴⁹

Lady Betty's interest in female communities found other forms of expression. It was reported that it was she who had volunteered £10,000 to give effect to the college for single women proposed in Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal* (1694). She was supposedly dissuaded by Bishop Burnet on the grounds that the college would look like a nunnery and as if the way were being prepared for the return of popish religious orders.⁵⁰ It is certainly clear that Lady Betty was

interested in the fate of the single woman, and perhaps saw her own household as a model for a godly community of unmarried women. The nature of her household was well known, not least because she was hospitable and received visits from many clergymen and godly lay people. William Wogan, for example, who was married to Lady Betty's friend Catherine Stanhope, and who wrote religious works, stayed at Ledstone with his family from September 1723 to January 1723/4.⁵¹ During her final illness in the autumn of 1739 she was attended by a host of clerical visitors including the bishop of Gloucester and her nephew's tutor Thomas Barnard who, one evening, moved the assembled company with an account of his first spiritual awakening.⁵²

Lady Betty was the dedicatee of several religious works. Her interest in the German mystics (as well as her royalism) was recognised in the dedication of the collected works of Henry William Ludolf made by Anthony William Boehm.⁵³ Robert D'Oyly dedicated to her a sermon preached at Bath in 1710.⁵⁴ She had first had dealings with him in 1707 when she was looking for someone to read prayers at her household at Tittenhanger, a responsibility he said he could not then take on.⁵⁵ Her wide taste in reading can be seen in the books to which she subscribed, from Robert Dodsley's *A Muse in Livery: or the Footman's Miscellany* (1732) and Matthew Prior's *Poems* (1732), to theological works such as Peter Poiret's *Divine Economy* (1713)⁵⁶ and Jacques Saurin's *Dissertations...on the Most Memorable Events of the Old and New Testaments* (1723), to historical and topographical works such as Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (1736), Ralph Thoresby's *Ducatus Leodiensis* (1715).

Fortune and funds

None of Lady Betty's philanthropy would have been possible without the large fortune which she inherited and which she actively managed. The only surviving child of Theophilus 7th Earl of Huntingdon (1650-1701) and his first wife, Elizabeth Lewis (1654-1688), she was sole heir to the fortune left by her maternal grandfather, Sir John Lewis (d.1701). His wealth had come

from the East India Company and he had married the daughter and co-heiress of another city merchant and sometime Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Foot(e). Lady Betty's inheritance consisted of Lewis's Yorkshire estate at Ledstone, near Pontefract, which produced an income of about £3,000 a year as well as estates in Norfolk which came to her through her great-grandfather Foot. These were worth £400 a year and were sold by Lady Betty for £5,000. Additionally she had £600 a year from the Huntingdon estates.⁵⁷

Lady Betty came into her fortune on the death in 1704 of her brother George 8th Earl of Huntingdon, who, on the death of their father, the 7th earl, in 1701, had inherited the earldom and both the Huntingdon and Lewis estates. George had died, unmarried, only three years later. Under his will Lady Betty inherited all the property that descended from her maternal relations in return for making no claims on the Huntingdon estates. The next heir to the earldom and the Huntingdon estates was the son of the 7th earl's second marriage, Theophilus, aged 8 at the time of his father's death. Theophilus had four sisters, all children of the 7th earl's second marriage.

Lady Betty Hastings formed an independent household in 1707 when she took possession of her house and estate in Yorkshire. Although she had actually inherited the house from her brother in 1704, her grandmother, Lady Lewis (later Onslow), held the house in jointure and occupied it until her death in 1705. For the first four years Lady Betty spent the summers in Yorkshire and the winters in London. From 1711 she moved to Yorkshire permanently and stayed there until her death in 1739. She was far from reclusive and was noted for her hospitality, as well as for taking in her younger half sisters, Ann, Frances, Catherine and Margaret. After the death of the 7th earl the four sisters had lived with their mother, who was their guardian. The countess remarried in 1705, following which the sisters spent longer and longer periods with Lady Betty who certainly subsidised them. When Catherine married in 1724, Lady Betty provided her with £4,000 as a dowry.

Much of Lady Betty's income came from her landed estates, chiefly in Yorkshire, and she may have added to them by purchase. In 1703, before she had come into her fortune, she opened a bank account with the banker-goldsmith Richard Hoare and continued to do business at Hoare's Bank until she died in 1739. Lady Betty was amongst the earliest private individuals to operate a bank account for the management of her financial affairs; up until the early eighteenth century banks had chiefly been used by merchants for the transfer of funds from one place to another. She presumably chose the bank because her brother George, 8th Earl of Huntingdon had banked there. Fellow customers were Robert Nelson, Sir John Philipps and a good many of the people and causes with whom Lady Betty was subsequently associated, such as Martin Benson, Mary Astell, the S.P.C.K. (which opened an account at Hoare's Bank in 1711) and the S.P.G. (which opened an account there in 1719).⁵⁸ Henry and Benjamin Hoare, who became partners on the death of their father in 1718, were themselves involved in both the S.P.C.K. and the S.P.G. as well as with a good many other causes supporting charity schools and parochial libraries, sharing with their customers a similar Anglican and Tory view of the world.

Concurrent with the development of personal banking was the development of the stock market. Banks made it possible for individuals outside London to buy and sell securities and to receive dividend and interest payments which otherwise had to be dealt with in person by signing the companies' registers. Through the records of Hoare's Bank we have some knowledge of Lady Betty's investments, more than we have of her landed estates. In 1710, 1711, 1712 and 1719 she bought tickets in the lottery, a government funded investment which attracted a disproportionately high number of women investors. This paid an annuity on every ticket as well as prizes on some, and the initial capital was recoverable because there was a secondary market in lottery blanks (tickets carrying an annuity).⁵⁹ In early 1719 Lady Betty started to spend substantial sums of money on securities. By September 1719 she seems to have had 1,000 shares in the South Sea Company and wrote to her friend Mrs Bonnell 'My best services in Fleet Street [Hoare's Bank] with thanks to our honest worthy for his letter

[Henry or Benjamin Hoare]. Tell him I think to venture my money in the South Sea Company stock'.⁶⁰ In March 1719/20 she bought 1,000 shares in the Bank of England and over the next months bought more South Sea stock. By the end of 1721 she had sold most of her South Sea holdings, retaining as her principal investment stock in the Royal African Company.⁶¹

The evidence that survives in the archives of Hoare's Bank for Lady Betty's activities on the stock market shows clearly that she had an investment strategy.⁶² She already had a substantial income from her estates and from an annuity on the Huntingdon estates, so she had no need of dividend income, but her charitable activities could take a different form if she had access to substantial amounts of liquid cash without risking her lands and the income from them. What is of greatest interest about Betty Hastings's investments is that her strategy was concerned with profit rather than with income. Rarely did she hold any securities long enough to have any dividend income (unlike her sisters, two of whom held portfolios from 1720 until their deaths respectively in 1751 and 1755). Instead, she bought securities and sold them strategically. Between 1719 and 1733 she bought around £6,700 worth of stock, bonds and annuities in the Bank of England, South Sea and Royal African Companies, she received about £270 in dividend income and sold stock for some £10,300. Although her holdings were never as large as those of women such as Lady Betty Germaine and the Duchesses of Marlborough and Kingston, she owned enough shares in the Royal African Company to be qualified to be elected governor, sub-governor or deputy governor.⁶³ As Susan Staves points out, women shareholders in joint stock companies were admitted as voters on equal terms with men, and were involved in appointments and in patronage.⁶⁴

While we can infer a good deal about Lady Betty's religious beliefs from her library, her correspondence, her circle of friends and acquaintances and her benefactions and legacies, we do not know what her beliefs about the propriety of the stock market were. She was a donor to the schemes of George Berkeley, but was she influenced by the views he expressed in 1721, that industry was the only true way to wealth, because 'projects for growing rich by sudden

and extraordinary methods, as they operate violently on the passions of men,...must be ruinous to the public'? The South Sea affair, he argued, 'would certainly prove the greatest of blessings...if it should turn our thoughts from cousenage and stock-jobbing to industry and frugal methods of life'.⁶⁵ Does this account for her divesting herself of her securities in 1722 and 1723? It does not explain her purchase of South Sea annuities (fixed interest stock) in 1730 and 1734.

The fame of Lady Betty's philanthropy may perhaps have been the origin of what must have been a rather alarming letter left on her gate in 1730, threatening 'that if on Sunday next she doth not lay one hundred pounds at the North Gate as sure as ever she was born her house shall be blown up and the village below the hill burnt to ashes'.⁶⁶ However, her legacies were nearly as well known as her lifetime benefactions and had a longer after-life. Hastings exhibitions are still awarded, though the qualifications for candidates have been varied. The heirs to benefices in her possession were charged with favouring as candidates for vacancies former Hastings exhibitioners.⁶⁷ The parishes in Yorkshire in which she took a particular interest not only received property to augment the ministers' stipends, but also other gifts which carry the mark of her personality very clearly. The children of the charity school at Borthwick, Leeds were each, on leaving the school, given a Bible, a Book of Common Prayer and a copy of *The Whole Duty of Man*, Richard Allestree's popular devotional work first published in 1658 and reprinted many times.⁶⁸ The vicar of Borthwick was reported to instruct his congregation from the dialogues in the instructions to Indians written by Lady Betty's old friend Thomas Wilson, bishop of Sodor and Man.⁶⁹ She also provided £2 a year to the parishes of Collingham and Aberford to buy bread and wine so that communion could be celebrated monthly and four further times a year.⁷⁰ At Leeds she provided for a monthly sermon.⁷¹

An unintended legacy of Lady Betty's interests was the introduction, through Lady Betty's half-sister Margaret, of Benjamin Ingham to the Countess of Huntingdon and the subsequent

development of the countess's own version of Methodism. The countess, Lady Betty's sister-in-law, had taken up the Wesleys and was a member of the first Methodist society founded in 1739. Her interest was strengthened when, in 1741, Margaret married Benjamin Ingham and, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu put it, 'disposed herself to a poor wandering Methodist'.⁷² A somewhat less successful family legacy was Lady Betty's attempt to provide for the descendants of her grandfather's sisters. These bequests were not perhaps treated with the gratitude they might have received as two legatees sold their shares and litigation accompanied two other legacies.

Not all of Lady Betty's dispositions were universally popular. After her death, her sister-in-law, the Countess of Huntingdon, received a letter in which the writer hoped that Betty had 'left her estate where she ought to leave it... If it is not impertinent I should like to know, as it would give me the greatest pleasure to know my Lord has got it'.⁷³ While the architect William Kent wrote to the countess, referring to Lady Betty's 'monstrous disposition of an estate'.⁷⁴ Alice Membury, schoolmistress appointed to Melbourne in Derbyshire by Lady Betty, was subsequently ejected by the Countess of Huntingdon for 'not turning Methodist'. Alice petitioned the Provost of Queen's College, Oxford to be reinstated as the college now possessed the estate at Melbourne.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Lady Betty's patronage was inspired equally by her religious faith and her sense of family and household, and was certainly influenced by her politics. Her grandfather's fortune had been made in the East India Trade and she was eager that some of her Queen's College exhibitioners

could be made instrumental in propagating the Christian gospel in both or either of the Indies. I have a strong bias to the East Indies not only from the notion I have of the natives, but out of gratitude to them, as the estate I enjoy was gained by trading thither.⁷⁶

It is likely that she decided not to marry and, especially after she came into her fortune, was easily able to afford to remain single: Bridget Hill has suggested that Lady Betty saw her fortune as a bar to a happy marriage.⁷⁷ Whatever the reason, she believed that money and property should be used actively: actively spent on good causes, and actively tended for profit. The causes she chose were characteristic of her time and class: like many respectable women she favoured charities that would help 'deserving' women and aid missionary activity rather than those which appeared to reward the feckless and sexually promiscuous.⁷⁸ At the same time, her management of her financial affairs to pay for her charitable activity reveals a woman taking her first steps in the financial revolution. Her retreat from securities back into land must surely have had more to do with her long term strategy of providing income in perpetuity for such purposes as exhibitions, charity schools, vicars' augmentations, and communion bread and wine rather than with an innate distrust of a form of investment which had served her well, but whose long-term future was untried.

References

- ¹ I am grateful to the following bodies for permission to quote from their manuscripts: The Provost, Fellows and Scholars of the Queen's College, Oxford; the partners of C. Hoare and Co.; the Huntington Library, San Marino; and the National Library of Ireland. I acknowledge, with thanks, the award of a Fletcher Jones Fellowship and a Mellon Fellowship (on the British Academy exchange programme) which allowed me to work at the Huntington Library and the award of travel funds from the Arts Faculty Research Committee at the Open University.
- ² Character of Lady Betty Hastings from the General Evening Post London, Huntington Library, San Marino, Hastings MS HM30302, reprinted in Anonymous (1741) *Memorials and Characters Together with the Lives of Divers Eminent and Worthy Persons, Consisting of a Great Variety of the Most Celebrated Examples of Piety and Virtue among the Nobility, Gentry and Clergy* (London) pp.779-80.
- ³ The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography refers to her as 'benefactor'.
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12564?docPos=13> (accessed 1 March 2008).
- ⁴ Candidates had to translate passages from Tully into English, from Demosthenes into Latin, and from the Latin Testament into Greek; and write a Latin composition on the catechism. Anonymous, (1739) *A Codicil to be Added to the Will of Me Elizabeth Hastings* (Oxford) pp.2-3.
- ⁵ Queen's College, Oxford (hereafter QCO.), Smith MS 475, unfoliated, copy of a letter from Elizabeth Hastings to Provost Smith, undated.
- ⁶ QCO, Smith MS 468, 'Memoirs of the Life of Joseph Smith...by his son Joseph', fo.8.
- ⁷ QCO, Smith MS 471, unfoliated.
- ⁸ QCO, Smith MS 465, unfoliated.
- ⁹ QCO, Smith MS 475, unfoliated.
- ¹⁰ QCO, Smith MS 482, fo.115; Smith MS 475, unfoliated; J. R. Magrath (1921) *The Queen's College*, vol. II, 1646-1877 (Oxford: Clarendon Press) p.101.
- ¹¹ QCO, Smith MS 482, fo.114.
- ¹² Her grandmother's sister, Mary Foote, was married to Sir Arthur Onslow (1621-88), grandfather of Arthur Onslow M.P. (1691-1768).
- ¹³ National Library of Ireland (hereafter NLI), MS 41,580/11, Lady Betty Hastings to Jane Bonnell, 19 Nov 1729.
- ¹⁴ QCO, Smith MS 475, unfoliated.
- ¹⁵ Subsequently there was a family connection through Thomas Sharp, son of the archbishop, who married Judith Wheler, sister of Lady Betty's brother-in-law Granville Wheler.
- ¹⁶ Sir John Philipps 4th bart, of Picton Castle, M.P. and campaigner against vice.

¹⁷ Wilson was domestic chaplain to the earl of Derby (the Stanleys were related to the Hastings) and was appointed bishop of Sodor and Man in 1698. His enthusiasm for restoring ecclesiastical discipline led him into legal difficulties on the island.

¹⁸ Nelson was associated with the nonjurors but through his activities working for charity schools, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and other godly causes, he remained on good terms with members of the established church and he rejoined it in 1710.

¹⁹ Graduate of the University of Halle and chaplain to George I.

²⁰ Lupton was rector of St Dunstan's in the West and a close associate of Mrs Jane Bonnell (widow of James Bonnell, a well-known lay theologian) who was friendly with Lady Betty and her half-sisters in the early 1720s.

²¹ Lucas, author of *Enquiry after Happiness* (1685), used to visit Lady Betty at Ledstone (she owned a copy of his collected sermons). Anonymous (1935) *Hastings Wheler Family Letters 1704-1739: Part 2* (Wakefield: privately printed) p.42.

²² As a young man Benson was tutor to Theophilus 9th Earl of Huntingdon, Lady Betty's younger half-brother. He was a friend of George Berkeley and in 1735 was appointed bishop of Gloucester.

²³ John Denne (1730) *Want of Universality no Just Objection to the Truth of Christian Religion* (London) p.81; Hoare's Bank Customer Ledger I, fo.448v. This is a payment to Dr Humphries, secretary to the S.P.G. 1716-40; QCO, Smith MS 475. In 1709 the S.P.C.K. had partly financed a Danish mission to south India. Craig Rose, *The Origins and Ideals of the S.P.C.K. 1699-1716*, in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (1993) (Eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) p.187.

²⁴ Hoare's Bank Customer Ledger I, fos.203v, 448v; George Berkeley (1725) *A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations* (London) pp.4, 6.

²⁵ Ben Marsh (2007), *Georgia's Frontier Women: Female Fortunes in a Southern Colony* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press), p.17.

²⁶ Hugh Stowell (1819) *Life of Thomas Wilson* (London) p.181. The payment may have been that of 18 December 1719 made to 'the bearer' (Hoare's Bank Customer Ledger F, fo.294v).

²⁷ *Hastings Wheler Letters part 2*, p.87; Ruth Perry (1986) *The Celebrated Mary Astell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) p.238.

²⁸ *Hastings Wheler Letters part 2*, p.106.

²⁹ C. Annesley and P. Hoskin (Eds) *Archbishop Drummond's Vitiations Returns 1764*, vol.1, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 21 (1997) pp.1, 35, 120; vol.2, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 23 (1998), p.111; vol.3, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 26 (2001), p.81; Hoare's Bank Customer Ledger 15, f.166.

³⁰ NLI, MS 41,576/2, letter from Betty Hastings to Robert Nelson 27 August 1714.

³¹ NLI, MS 41,576/2, letter from Betty Hastings to Robert Nelson 27 August 1714.

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- ³² Lady Betty's bank accounts record numerous payments to people such as Joseph Smith.
- ³³ Daniel L. Brunner (1998) *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehme and the S.P.C.K.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht) pp.88, 90. The bank ledgers record payments for Henry Hastings 'at Hall' between 1710 and 1714 and £21: 10s 'to Mr Frank at Hall for charity' in 1715. Hoare's Bank Customer Ledger 17, fo.249v.
- ³⁴ The Character of the Right Honourable the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, Huntington Library, Hastings MS 30302.
- ³⁵ Thomas Barnard (1742) *An Historical Character Relating to the Holy and Exemplary Life of the Right Honourable the Lady Elizabeth Hastings* (London) pp.xxiii, xxvi.
- ³⁶ Anita Guerrini (1999) 'The Hungry Soul': George Cheyne and the Construction of Femininity, *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 32(3), p.278.
- ³⁷ Huntington Library, HA 5649 Henry Hastings to Countess of Huntingdon 11 August 1739.
- ³⁸ Huntington Library, Hastings Inventories Box 2 (28), Catalogue of the Books of the Right Honourable Lady Elizabeth Hastings.
- ³⁹ Nelson's book on festivals, like Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* and other contemporary works, was based on the Book of Common Prayer as a manual for private devotion rather than as a service book. John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the 'Long Eighteenth Century' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (Eds), *The Church of England*, p.25.
- ⁴⁰ Richard P. Heitzenrater (1985) (Ed.) *Diary of an Oxford Methodist: Benjamin Ingham 1733-1734* (Durham NC: Duke University Press) pp.14, 18.
- ⁴¹ Heitzenrater, *Diary of an Oxford Methodist*, p.14.
- ⁴² The Character of the Right Honourable the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, Huntington Library, Hastings MS 30302.
- ⁴³ Gordon Rupp (1989) *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) pp.498-9.
- ⁴⁴ The parishes of Saxton, Thorer, Thorp Arch, Winksley, Bardsey, Beeston, Collingham, and Aberford. Annesley and Hoskin (Eds), *Archbishop Drummond's Visitation Returns 1764*, vol.1, pp.34, 121; vol.3, pp.7, 75, 82.
- ⁴⁵ Joan Kinnaird (1979) Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism, *Journal of British Studies*, 19, p.54.
- ⁴⁶ Adrian Wilson (1996) Conflict, Consensus and Charity: Politics and Provincial Charity Hospitals in the Eighteenth Century, *English Historical Review*, 111, p.600; Anita Guerrini (2000) *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press), p. 116.
- ⁴⁷ Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England*, pp.26-7; Rose, The Origins...of the S.P.C.K., in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (Eds), *The Church of England*, pp.173-5.
- ⁴⁸ Guerrini, *Obesity and Depression*, pp.140, 227; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, William Law, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16154?docPos=1> (accessed 1 March 2008)

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- ⁴⁹ *Hastings Wheler Letters part 2*, p.1.
- ⁵⁰ Dictionary of National Biography: Mary Astell
- ⁵¹ British Library Add MS 21428, ff.44-5.
- ⁵² Huntington Library HA 5655 Henry Hastings to the Earl of Huntingdon 22 September 1739; HA 5833 Margaret Hastings to the Earl of Huntingdon 1 December 1739.
- ⁵³ Anonymous (1712) *Reliquiae Ludolfianae: the Pious Remains of Mr Hen Will Ludolf consisting of Meditations upon Retirement from the World...*(London).
- ⁵⁴ Robert D'Oyly (1711) *Providence Vindicated, as permitting wickedness and mischief in a sermon preach'd at Bath on September the 17th 1710* (London).
- ⁵⁵ *Hastings Wheler Letters part 2*, pp.29-30.
- ⁵⁶ Hoare's Bank Customer Ledger 16, fo.55v, 19 March 1712/13 payment of £1:12s:6d for the second subscription of the Divine Economy.
- ⁵⁷ Anonymous (1929) *Hastings Wheler Family Letters: Part 1, 1693-1704* (London: Chiswick Press) p.17.
- ⁵⁸ Philipps was unusual in being a Whig customer of the bank.
- ⁵⁹ Anne L. Murphy (2005) Lotteries in the 1690s: Investment or Gamble? *Financial History Review*, 12 (2), pp.231-3, 242.
- ⁶⁰ NLI, MS 41,580/11, Lady Betty Hastings to Mrs Bonnell, no date, dated on internal evidence.
- ⁶¹ Hoare's Bank Customer Ledgers.
- ⁶² This conclusion arises from the few surviving documents for her estate in the Huntington Library; the Ledstone Papers in the West Yorkshire Record Office and her customer records at Hoare's Bank. We do not know if she had accounts at any other banks. On the details of her financial activities at the time of the South Sea Bubble, see Anne Laurence (2006) Women Investors, 'That Nasty South Sea Affair' and the Rage to Speculate in Early Eighteenth-Century England, *Accounting, Business and Financial History*, 16 (2), pp.245-264; Anne Laurence (2006) Lady Betty Hastings, Her Half-Sisters and the South Sea Bubble: Family Fortunes and Strategies, *Women's History Review*, 15, pp.533-540.
- ⁶³ P.G.M. Dickson (1967) *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit* (London: Macmillan) pp.279, 280, 294; QCO, Smith MS 482, unfoliated.
- ⁶⁴ Susan Staves, (1998) Investments, Votes and 'Bribes': Women as Shareholders in the Chartered National Companies', in Hilda L. Smith (Ed.) (1998) *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp.260-1.
- ⁶⁵ George Berkeley (1721) *An Essay Towards Preventing the Ruine of Great Britain* (London) pp.5,6, 25.
- ⁶⁶ Huntington Library, Hastings Papers HA 4986, Lady Frances Hastings to the Countess of Huntingdon, 19 December 1730.

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- ⁶⁷ The National Archives, PROB 11/948, will of Lady Elizabeth Hastings.
- ⁶⁸ Allestree was a royalist divine, Provost of Eton and a celebrated preacher after the Restoration.
- ⁶⁹ Annesley and Hoskin (Eds), *Archbishop Drummond's Visitation Returns 1764*, vol.3, pp. 81-2; Thomas Wilson (1740) *Essay towards an Instruction for the Indians...in...Dialogues* (London).
- ⁷⁰ Annesley and Hoskin (Eds), *Archbishop Drummond's Visitation Returns 1764*, vol.1, pp.121, 1, 2.
- ⁷¹ Annesley and Hoskin (Eds), *Archbishop Drummond's Visitation Returns 1764*, vol.2, pp.114.
- ⁷² Robert Halsband (1996) (Ed.), *Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press) vol. II, p.225.
- ⁷³ Huntington Library, Hastings Papers HA 13036, Catherine Walkinshaw to Countess of Huntingdon, 3 Jan 1739/40.
- ⁷⁴ Huntington Library, Hastings Papers, HA 8047, William Kent to Countess of Huntingdon, 26 Jan 1739/40.
- ⁷⁵ QCO, Smith MS 475, unfoliated
- ⁷⁶ *Hastings Wheler Letters part 1*, Notes by Lady Betty Hastings on the Lewys family, p.15; QCO, Smith MS 475, unfoliated, copy of a letter from Elizabeth Hastings to Provost Smith, undated.
- ⁷⁷ Bridget Hill (2001) *Women Alone: Spinsters in England 1660-1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) p.8.
- ⁷⁸ Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women*, p.15.