

**An Introduction to the  
Lascelles & Maxwell  
Letter Books  
(1739-1769)**

by

Simon D. Smith

with contents  
of the microfilms

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Simon D. Smith  
University of York

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The Publishers acknowledge use of the image that fronts this Guide which is a portrait of Edward Lascelles (1702-1747) reproduced by kind permission of the Earl and Countess of Harewood and the Trustees of Harewood House Trust.

## REEL CONTENTS

### Reel 1

**LASCELLES AND MAXWELL LETTER BOOK** (Sept 1743 - to Feb 1746)

### Reel 2

**PARES TRANSCRIPTS** (1739 - 1769)  
(Typescript produced by Dr Clare Taylor)

W&G I	March 1739/40 - Feb 1741/2	Henry Lascelles Letter book.
W&G II	Sept 1743 - Jan 1745/6	Lascelles & Maxwell
W&G III	Feb 1745/6 - Aug 1748	""
W&G IV	Aug 1750 - Aug 1752	""
W&G V	Aug 1752 - April 1754	""
W&G VI	May 1754 - July 1756	""
W&G VII	Aug 1756 - Nov 1759	""
W&G VIII	Nov 1759 - July 1763	""
W&G IX	Feb 1765 - Aug 1768	Lascelles and Daling
W&G X	Sept 1768 - Aug 1769	""

## **An Introduction to the Records of Lascelles and Maxwell**

### **I. One Family, Two Archives**

### **II. The Lost Archive of Wilkinson and Gaviller**

### **III. Henry Lascelles and George Maxwell**

### **IV. From the Ashes of History**

#### **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, this edition of the records of Lascelles and Maxwell must acknowledge a debt of thanks to Susan Pares, Henry Robinson, Clare Taylor, and the Library of Rhodes House Oxford, for granting permission to reproduce documentary materials in their possession. The research on which this Introduction is based was funded by the Harewood House Trust, the Leverhulme Trust (award F/00224A), and the University of York. Grants from these three sources has supported the research project, ‘Trade, Slavery, and British Wealth: the Lascelles of Harewood House’, of which the author is co-director. Thanks are due to fellow project members, Douglas Hamilton and James Walvin, for their constructive criticism of earlier drafts of the material presented here. The author also wishes to thank Karen Lynch, John J. McCusker, Terry Suthers, and Nuala Zahedieh for their help, and also Paul Knights of Microform for his encouragement of the project. The late Richard B. Sheridan was an invaluable source of advice during the course of research; he is greatly missed by historians of the West Indies. It is hoped that all readers of this edition will also appreciate the debt that continues to be owed by scholars to Richard Pares, whose immense legacy to History lives on.

## I. One Family, Two Archives

The West India archive of the Lascelles family once ranked among the greatest of all sources for the study of Caribbean history during the period of slavery. What remains is still of outstanding significance and interest to historians, but it is only a small portion of a much larger body of material. The pity is that as recently as 1940, far more of the Lascelles' papers survived than is the case today. Unfortunately, during the first half of the twentieth century both the economic history of the first British empire and the study of the Caribbean were comparatively unfashionable areas of scholarship in Britain and the United States. Moreover, in 1940, the University of the West Indies had yet to be founded and the formation of a school of native West Indian historians was still at an early stage of development. As a result of an unpromising research environment, a superb collection of documents in near pristine condition lay neglected by the scholarly community. Sadly, just a few years after historians had begun to realise the significance of the Lascelles collection, a large part of it was destroyed in a German bombing raid on London during the Blitz.

This introduction has so far referred to the Lascelles archive in the singular, but it is more accurate to describe it as two separate but related collections. The first half consists of the business records of Wilkinson and Gaviller: a West India merchant house originally founded by Henry Lascelles in 1734, and which, between 1743 and 1763, traded under the name of Lascelles and Maxwell. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the firm's name evolved as successive partners came and went, before stabilising as Wilkinson and Gaviller. Despite the many changes in nomenclature recorded in Table 1, however, the core business of the firm remained the same until the twentieth century. Lascelles and Maxwell, and its subsequent incarnations, functioned as

a London commission house, receiving and selling cargoes of sugar and other West India produce despatched to it from the Caribbean by the owners or managers of plantations.<sup>1</sup> The firm of Wilkinson and Gaviller is still in existence, though it now trades from a location outside of London and is principally concerned with exporting agricultural vehicles and machinery to the West Indies rather than marketing the produce of the Caribbean.

The second half of the Lascelles collection forms part of the estate records of Harewood House: the Yorkshire home of the Lascelles family since its foundation stone was laid by Edwin Lascelles in 1759. To understand the Harewood West India papers, it is necessary to appreciate that their key organising principal is financial in nature. Very little of the Harewood archive refers to the sugar trade for the simple reason that this aspect of the family's West India affairs was dealt with by the family's London agents. Until 1954, Wilkinson and Gaviller conducted this business for the Lascelles.

After the death of Henry Lascelles in 1753, the residue of his estate was divided between Henry's eldest son and heir Edwin and his second son Daniel.<sup>2</sup> Edwin Lascelles was established as the landed proprietor of Harewood and received approximately two-thirds of his father's residual estate. Daniel Lascelles inherited the remaining third and assumed his father's role as the senior partner of Lascelles and Maxwell. While Edwin occasionally dabbled with West India loans, his main financial concerns lay in English land and London securities. In contrast, though Daniel was wealthy enough to acquire a Yorkshire estate close to Harewood at Plompton and Goldsborough, his main business interests lay in the Caribbean. The death of Daniel Lascelles in 1784,

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<sup>1</sup> K.G. Davies, 'The Origins of the Commission System in the West India Trade', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 2 (1952), 89-107.

<sup>2</sup> Readers are advised to consult the simplified pedigree presented in Table 2 which illustrates the

however, reunited the two branches of a family fortune since Daniel died a childless divorcee and his estate passed to his brother. Thereafter, the owners of Harewood, when they inherited the family's Yorkshire estates, also inherited the outstanding debts owed by planters who had been lent money by Henry and Daniel Lascelles and their partners. From the third quarter of the eighteenth century onwards, a number of planters proved unable to meet the interest payments on the perpetual mortgages they had taken out on their estates. The Lords of Harewood, therefore, foreclosed on several of these loans. Debt-ridden plantations, that could not be sold in a depressed market at prices sufficient to cover the loans charged on them, were taken over, with the result that the Lascelles family's ownership of West India property and slaves was greatly augmented.<sup>3</sup>

As late as 1918, the Earls of Harewood still owned four sugar plantations on Barbados.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to Wilkinson and Gaviller, however, which has preserved a direct association with the West Indies to the present day, the Lascelles' Caribbean connection steadily declined during the twentieth century. In 1918, the effects of the disruption of Atlantic trade during the First World War prompted the Fifth Earl Harewood to dispose of Thicket and Fortescue plantations after 131 years of ownership and to devise the remaining two properties, Belle and Mount, to his younger son Major Edward Lascelles for life.<sup>5</sup> Following the death of Major Lascelles in 1935, the West India property

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genealogical relationships alluded to in the introduction.

<sup>3</sup> The management of the Lascelles' West India property is the subject of continuing research by the University of York's 'Trade, Slavery, and British Wealth' project.

<sup>4</sup> E.M. Shilstone, 'The Earl of Harewood K.G., and the Relationship of the Lascelles Family with Barbados', *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, vol. ii (1937), 83-4.

<sup>5</sup> Barbados Department of Archives (BDA), Estates Card Index. The original trust appears to have been modified in 1882 by an indenture that granted then then Viscount Lascelles, Henry Ulrich Lascelles, a life interest in Thicket and Forescue, Library of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, E.M. Shilstone Notebook: Records of Jews in Barbados and other Family Records – C – indexed, 270-1.

was held in trust for the Honourable Gerald Lascelles, the younger brother of the present Earl. In due course, Gerald Lascelles inherited a life interest in the plantations, but in 1954 he decided to sever the 200 year connection with the firm of Wilkinson and Gaviller and appointed new managers to oversee operations in Barbados.<sup>6</sup> Ownership of the Belle and Mount plantations continued as before, but, during the 1960s concerns about the economic and political environment in the West Indies, particularly the possibility of independence being followed swiftly by nationalisation of sugar plantations, led Gerald Lascelles to visit Barbados in 1963 with a view to revising the terms of the trust. Three years later the two properties, by now amalgamated into a single sugar factory, were placed in a freshly devised trust that permitted the disposal of the plantations, and, in 1970, four years after Barbados attained independence, Belle and Mount were finally sold, bringing to an end 190 years of continuous ownership of plantations in Barbados by members of the Lascelles family.<sup>7</sup>

The collection of documents in this microfilm edition renders accessible the surviving eighteenth-century materials from the archive of Wilkinson and Gaviller. These consist of a single volume of letters spanning the years 1743 to 1746, and notes taken by Richard Pares from ten additional volumes of correspondence that were destroyed in 1940. The West India manuscripts from the closely related Harewood Archive are being preserved separately as part of the 'New Opportunities Fund' (NOF) initiative 'Moving Here'. The NOF project is a collective initiative conducted jointly by the Harewood House Trust, West Riding Archives, and the PRO. It aims to microfilm all of the Lascelles'

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<sup>6</sup> Records of Wilkinson and Gaviller, letter from Wilkinson and Gaviller to Messrs. Nicholl, Manisty, Few & Co., 7 April 1754.

<sup>7</sup> BDA, Estates Card Index; private communication from Lord Harewood, 24 January 2001.

West Indies papers preserved at Harewood. A selection of documents will also be digitised and these images made available for public consultation on-line at a site administered by the PRO. The Wilkinson and Gaviller microfilm edition has been undertaken with the full co-operation and support of the NOF participants and is intended to complement the NOF project.

## **II. The Lost Archive of Wilkinson and Gaviller**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the partners of Wilkinson and Gaviller appreciated that their firm was among the oldest and most respected of West India merchant houses trading in the City of London. At least two of the partners drew on the rich archive of the firm to write brief accounts of its history and three of these mini-histories were published between 1906 and 1931 in the business press. The writing of articles and internal memos helped to reinforce internal and external perceptions of Wilkinson and Gaviller as ‘a distinguished West Indian house’, ‘an old City merchant’s house’, and one of a select number of ‘famous City firms’.<sup>8</sup> Wilkinson and Gaviller’s prominence within the West India business community, and the production of histories of the firm for public consumption, almost certainly explains why at least three historians working on West India trade during the Inter-War period learned of the existence of the house’s extensive archive of letter books and accounts, leading them to visit the London offices of the firm in order to survey the documents. The first historian whose use of the Lascelles and Maxwell papers can be documented was Lilian M. Penson. In her 1924 study of colonial agents, Penson drew on the archive of the house, but only as a supplement to her main body of research which focussed on the records of the West India Committee and other associations of

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<sup>8</sup> ‘A Distinguished West Indian House’, *The West India Committee Circular*, 5 January, 1906, 10-11; Walter Bell, ‘An Old City Merchant’s House’, *The Pall Mall Magazine*, March 1910, 437-43; ‘Famous City Firms - VI: Wilkinson & Gaviller’, *Friday City Press*, 8 September 1931. See also note

West India merchants.<sup>9</sup> A brief description of the archive also appears in Lowell J. Ragatz's pioneering 1932 survey of materials for the study of West Indian history. Ragatz shared Penson's appreciation that the documents had enormous potential, but Ragatz too, in his own work, made only light use of the archive.<sup>10</sup> It was not until 1956, the year that Richard Pares published two articles on Lascelles and Maxwell, that the records of the firm were at last exploited as a major historical source in a scholarly publication.<sup>11</sup>

A long interval of time separated Pares' archival research and the appearance of his findings in print. In one of his twin articles of 1956, Pares explained that he had worked on the records of Wilkinson and Gaviller more than twenty years previously. A number of factors delayed publication, including Pares' own ill-health, but the most dramatic incident had occurred on 29 December 1940 when an incendiary device dropped from a German bomber incinerated the firm's premises at 34 Great Tower Street. Such was the heat of the conflagration, that even the office safe was melted, and all of the records kept on the site were destroyed. Pares recounted that during the single summer of research he had been able to conduct, there had been opportunity to examine only the volumes of correspondence from 1734 until 1769.<sup>12</sup> Pares died just two years after the appearance of his twin articles and the notes and transcripts he

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18 for examples of later histories written by partners of the firm.

<sup>9</sup> Lilian M. Penson, *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies* (London, 1924), 283-4; see also Penson, 'The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, vol. xxxvi (1921), 373-92.

<sup>10</sup> Lowell J. Ragatz, *A Guide for the Study of British Caribbean History, 1763-1834* (Washington D.C., 1932), 35.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Pares, 'The London Sugar Market, 1740-1769', *Economic History Review*, vol. ix (1956), 254-70; Pares, 'A London West-India Merchant House, 1740-1769' in Richard Pares and A.J.P. Taylor eds., *Essays Presented to Sir Lewis Namier* (London, 1956), 75-107. The latter essay was reprinted in Pares' own edition of his collected papers, *An Historian's Business and Other Essays* (London, 1961).

<sup>12</sup> Pares, 'West-India Merchant House', 75. It should be noted that the transcripts, however, include comparatively little material after 1763.

had taken were subsequently deposited by his widow in the Library of Rhodes House in Oxford, where they remain today.

Pares' pencil transcripts were written for working purposes, not for archival preservation. His handwriting is generally difficult to decipher, and, in places, the notepaper has deteriorated to such an extent that the script is fragile and almost illegible. It is also important to appreciate that Pares organised his notes thematically rather than chronologically, using a series of categories that were of primary interest to him: for example, 'sugar markets', 'prize goods', 'plantation management', 'slave trade' and so forth. Moreover, the referencing system employed by the transcripts is based on Wilkinson and Gaviller's original catalogue of the manuscripts.

In recognition of the fact that researchers face great difficulties in using the original notes, a typescript of the transcripts has been made by Clare Taylor. This microfilm edition reproduces Taylor's typescript in its entirety. The Taylor typescript differs from the Pares transcripts by reorganising the notes so that they follow the original chronological sequence of the letter books, dispensing with the subject classifications. It is otherwise a complete reproduction of the material preserved in the transcripts. This editorial decision was taken by Taylor on the grounds that a chronological sequence would both be more easily intelligible to follow and because the classifications used by Rhodes House to catalogue the Pares transcripts were not compiled by Pares himself, though he undoubtedly employed similar organising concepts when writing and using his notes. The Rhodes House catalogue is included in the Taylor typescript, in order to assist any researcher who may wish to refer back to the original notes, while Table 3 of this Introduction reproduces the original catalogue of the

manuscripts compiled by Wilkinson and Gaviller, in order to enable readers to make sense of Pares' reference system.

A comparison between Pares' notes and the sole surviving letter book, W. & G. Vol. II, demonstrates that the transcripts were never intended to be a comprehensive guide to the contents of the volumes of correspondence subsequently destroyed. Yet it is equally clear, on the basis of the surviving letter book, that, in the areas of paramount interest to him, Pares performed an excellent job in transcribing accurately the most significant information contained within W. & G. volumes I to X and W. & G. volume A. To consult and take extensive notes of eleven large manuscript volumes in a single summer of research represents a prodigious amount of work, yet, in view of the disaster that subsequently befell the archive, Pares was to regret that he was not able to examine more than the first thirty years of correspondence, and that he had also left untouched the firm's account books.

After the war, the firm of Wilkinson and Gaviller regrouped and moved back into the City, but illness and teaching commitments prevented Pares from ever returning to their new offices on Clifford Street. In consequence, it is probable that Pares never learned that he had been mistaken in his belief that the whole of the archive had been destroyed on that fateful night of 29 December. As the 1940s drew to a close, however, F.J. Fisher of the London School of Economics advised a young American graduate student, the future Professor Richard B. Sheridan, to go into the City and enquire what manuscript sources had survived the terrible devastation wrought by the Blitz as part of his doctoral research into the British West India sugar trade. In his resulting thesis, Sheridan reported that two manuscript volumes had, miraculously, escaped the flames of war: a letter book, W. & G. Vol. II September 1743 - January 1745[6], and a

volume of accounts begun by Henry Lascelles and continued by his sons and executors Edwin and Daniel Lascelles.<sup>13</sup> The two volumes had been preserved by Stanley Arthur Evans, a senior partner of Wilkinson and Gaviller, who had relocated the business' operational headquarters to his Bedford home during the war. Most unfortunately, Evans was obliged to leave the bulk of the historical archive behind in the firm's London offices. A few days prior to the air raid of 29 December, however, Evans acquired his first motor car and he was also lucky enough to obtain sufficient petrol rations to drive to London and back. Acting on an impulse, Evans decided to return to Bedford with two items from the archive. He chose the letter book spanning the years 1743 to 1746 because its early references to Sir Robert Walpole and Jonathan Swift rendered it a popular item to show visiting clients, particularly those from the West Indies. Evan's motives in selecting the second item, Henry Lascelles' account book of 1753, are unknown; it can only be surmised that either Evans, or a close business associate, held a strong interest in accounting.<sup>14</sup>

Beginning in the 1970s, historical studies of colonial trade began, ghost-like, to cite folio references to a manuscript no longer thought by the great majority of scholars to be in existence. The historians concerned, however, were not referencing the Lascelles and Maxwell letter book but rather one of three alternative sources. The first of these was Sheridan's extensive notes, which he shared with a new generation of scholars, particularly John J. McCusker. In his turn, McCusker assisted other young researchers seeking information about the sugar trade in the 1740s by directing them towards Sheridan's notes.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Richard B. Sheridan, 'The Sugar Trade of the British West Indies from 1660 to 1756 with special reference to the island of Antigua', unpub. thesis, University of London (1951), Appendix, xxxii; private communication from Richard B. Sheridan, 21 March, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Telephone interview with Elizabeth Odell, surviving daughter of Stanley Evans, March 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Private communication from John J. McCusker, 24 March 2001; Thomas M. Truxes, *Irish-American Trade, 1660-1782* (Cambridge, 1988), 90; David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic* (Cambridge, 1995), 127-30; *Letterbook of Greg and*

Secondly, historians working on the other side of the Atlantic had access to Pares' transcripts, though the faint and fragile nature of the pencil and paper Pares had employed deterred all but the most determined scholars from trying to make sense of these notes.<sup>16</sup> Thirdly, historians visiting Barbados after 1963 were able to consult a handwritten transcript of two-thirds of the original manuscript made for Wilkinson and Gaviller.<sup>17</sup>

The Barbados Museum's transcript provides another example of Wilkinson and Gaviller's use of its historical records to cement relations with the firm's West Indies clients and also to consolidate the reputation of the house. In 1960, Stanley Evans died unexpectedly when he had been about to assume management of the firm from his co-partner James Pearl, who was on the verge of retirement. Pearl duly retired in October 1960, and, shortly afterwards, the concern was sold to McNabb Rougier & Co. For the first time in its history, therefore, the firm ceased to be a partnership and became a limited company. The revamped business, however, continued to trade under the old name of Wilkinson and Gaviller and also retained Tom Wilkinson as a partner. It is significant that the new directors decided to make a copy of the letter book, and present it to the Barbados Museum, shortly after their acquisition of the firm and at a time when future relations between Barbados and Britain were being debated (Jamaica had attained independence the previous year). The presentation of the transcript was followed by a talk to Barbados' historical society, delivered by Wilkinson, that noted the long association between Wilkinson and Gaviller and Barbados. This lecture was subsequently published

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*Cunningham, 1756-57* ed. Thomas M. Truxes, *British Academy Records in Social and Economic History*, new series, vol. 28 (Oxford, 2001), 69.

<sup>16</sup> Jacob M. Price, 'Credit in the Slave Trade and Plantation Economies', in Barbara L. Solow ed., *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge, 1991), 312-3.

<sup>17</sup> Library of The Barbados Museum and Historical Society, *Letter Book of Lascelles and Maxwell*, 2 volumes, 1743-5[6].

in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*.<sup>18</sup> As in the case of the accounts of the firm written earlier in the century, this episode illustrates how the partners of Wilkinson and Gaviller were able to draw on historical documents during a period of change and uncertainty in order to emphasise the house's longevity and to maintain, at least in appearance, an impression of continuity in the firm's core West India business.

Wilkinson and Gaviller did not approach professional historians for assistance either in transcribing the letter book or preparing a talk on the history of the firm.<sup>19</sup> In consequence, few scholars learned of the existence of the records even after a partial copy of the letter book was deposited in an historical archive and notices published in its journal. The copying work was carried out by Joan Patten Mead, who was neither an experienced researcher nor an employee of Wilkinson and Gaviller, but who worked as the PA to the firm's accountant. Despite the daunting nature of her assignment, Mead initially found the task of transcribing a 363 page document fascinating, and she was able to copy the first third of the letter book comparatively quickly and accurately. Thereafter, however, a combination of ill-health and fatigue forced her to cease work after the completion of the second volume, and, in the absence of an alternative scribe, the project was abandoned.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> T.H.H. Wilkinson, 'Wilkinson & Gaviller and Its Association with Barbados', *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, vol. xxx (1963), 58, 110-113. Two other examples of histories of the firm written by partners exist: S.R. Evans, 'Memo - on history of old firm of Wilkinson & Gaviller, 1734-1886', unpublished manuscript, dated 1953, and Harry Duggan, 'Wilkinson & Gaviller', unpublished manuscript dated 1979, both preserved in the archive of Wilkinson and Gaviller. It is interesting to note that Evans' account was written shortly before the severance of the Lascelles connection and during a period of post-war adjustment when West India exporters faced high taxation and imported produce was subject to marketing controls.

<sup>19</sup> The lecture is based almost entirely on Pares, 'A West-India House' and repeats sections of this article *verbatim*.

<sup>20</sup> Private communications from O.E. Ames, 19 June and 1 July 2002..

While historians have continued to draw indirectly on the Lascelles and Maxwell letter book, until recently, with the exception of Sheridan's work, no use was made of the account book of Henry Lascelles by researchers. Indeed, even the partners of Wilkinson and Gaviller paid this document little attention after its rescue by Mr. Evans. Enquiries have established that all of the surviving partners since 1949 (and a number of their children) recall the existence of the letter book, but that nobody associated with the firm yet interviewed has been able to recall the account book, even after prompting. The account book is no longer preserved with the letter book at the offices of Wilkinson and Gaviller; indeed, it is evident that it has not been owned by the firm for more than forty years.<sup>21</sup> It is possible that the account book was lost during the reorganisation that followed the death of Stanley Evans and the retirement of James Pearl, but the survival of the letter book, coupled with the failure of anyone connected with Wilkinson and Gaviller Ltd. to recall the manuscript, both indicate that the account book was probably lost or disposed of before 1960.<sup>22</sup> At the current time, therefore, the only known record of the account book consists of the notes taken by Sheridan as a graduate student and these are preserved in his private papers.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Information about the transcribing of the letter book and the missing account book is derived from private communications between the author and the following individuals: Henry Robinson, current proprietor of Wilkinson and Gaviller; Elizabeth Odell, surviving daughter of Stanley Evans, partner 1938-60; Tom Wilkinson, former partner and shareholder in Wilkinson and Gaviller and grandson of J.H. Wilkinson, partner 1960-70; H.R. Duggan MBE, partner in McNabb Rougier, and R.A.N. Reynolds, Company Secretary of Wilkinson and Gaviller; surviving relatives of James William Pearl, partner in Wilkinson and Gaviller 1919-60; O.E. Ames, financial director of Wilkinson and Gaviller from c.1965. Duggan, Reynolds, and Tom Wilkinson supervised the copying and presentation of the Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society in 1963.

<sup>22</sup> It is particularly significant that Tom Wilkinson has no recollection of the account book since it was he who came over from Barbados to run Wilkinson and Gaviller after the death of Stanley Evans up until the sale of the business to McNabb Rougier. There is no record of the Account Book of Henry Lascelles in either the sales catalogue database maintained by the Historical Manuscripts Commission or the archives of The West India Committee. A call for information posted in *Archives* and Archives-Net has failed to produce any leads. It should be noted that, though the firm's premises was surveyed by the National Monuments Commission before the Second World War, Wilkinson and Gaviller's records were never surveyed by the National Register of Archives.

<sup>23</sup> Richard B. Sheridan's notes of the missing account book are cited in his *Sugar and Slavery*

### III. Henry Lascelles and George Maxwell

The figures of Henry Lascelles and George Maxwell occupy prominent positions in the records of Wilkinson and Gaviller. In the surviving letter book, W. & G. Vol. II, a detailed record of the activities of the partners' London commission house is preserved between 1743 and 1746. Yet commission trading was only one aspect of the involvement of both men in West India trade, and, in consequence, an appreciation of the commercial context in which the letters were written is needed in order to interpret much of the contents of the volume. Brief sketches of Lascelles and Maxwell appear in Pares' article 'A West-India House', but since this piece was published additional information has been discovered about these two individuals that is of relevance in comprehending the source.

#### Henry Lascelles (1690-1753)

*'He has those advantages that he will make mony lett what will happen, itt's plaine what ever step we take, he has an Interest therein.'*<sup>24</sup>

Henry Lascelles arrived on Barbados in 1712, an ambitious young merchant aged twenty-two. Though a younger son of the MP for Northallerton Daniel Lascelles, Henry was not, like other younger sons of gentry families, put out to trade by his father merely because he lacked a landed inheritance. George Lascelles, Henry's eldest brother and heir to the Lascelles' estates at Northallerton and Stank, was already on the island in 1712, and, between 1706

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(London, 1974), 296-8, and the materials are also used in S.D. Smith, 'Merchants and Planters Revisited', *Economic History Review*, vol. lv (2002), 434-65).

<sup>24</sup> PRO C103/130, George Hamilton to Capt. Richard Pinnell, 3 August 1738.

and 1712 he increased the rateable value of his business from 100 lbs of sugar to 400 lbs. Moreover, at some point between 1712 and 1715, Henry's younger half-brother Edward Lascelles also came over to Barbados, while George Lascelles returned to London in order to receive cargoes of merchandise despatched by his brothers.<sup>25</sup> All three Lascelles brothers, therefore, participated in West India trade and their joint involvement in commerce formed a strategy to raise the fortunes of the family as a whole and not just the non-landed junior branch.

Remarkably, Daniel Lascelles' three sons were preceded by a quartet of Lascelles brothers (or close kinsmen) who had broken into colonial trade together approximately thirty years earlier. From the 1680s onwards, Edward, William, Robert, and Philip Lascelles traded with each other and other merchants from bases in London, Barbados, Antigua, and North America.<sup>26</sup> The most important and successful of these individuals was Edward Lascelles and the business he established on Barbados increased in rateable value from 100 lbs of sugar in 1687 to 1,495 lbs in 1702. During his time on Barbados, Edward Lascelles married Mary Hall, the sister of the wealthy Barbados and New

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<sup>25</sup> BDA Levy Books, St. Michael, vols. 1, f.306, 378, 391; vol. 2, f.54 (the tax levy was based on 2 percent of turnover); David L. Kent, *Barbados and America* (Virginia, 1980), 186; West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, NH 2,400, London Port Book for 1719. In 1719, George Lascelles received 1,004 cwt of sugar of which 549 cwt originated from Barbados. In view of the fact that 137 days are missing in the port book, these figures should be regarded as an underestimate of the true total.

<sup>26</sup> BDA RB3/4/33-35, RB3/13/513-4, Levy Books: vol. 1, 1686-1722, f. 7, 20, 42, 55, 69, 84, 99, 115, 126; Corporation of London Record Office, Mayor's Court Depositions, MC D/40, 1686; North Yorkshire Record Office, Account Book and Letter Book of Nathaniel Cholmley, 1682-91, letter book f. 103, 118; *London Inhabitants Within the Walls, 1695* ed. D.V. Glass (London Record Society, vol. 2, 1966), 179-80; *Atlantic Merchant-Apothecary: Letters of Joseph Cruttenden, 1710-1717* ed. I.K. Steele (Toronto and Buffalo, 1977), 59, 60, 61, 71, 88, 91, 107. Earlier Lascelles can also be documented in the Caribbean, but their relationship to the Northallerton and Harewood Lascelles is unknown. These include Edward Lassels, a Barbados merchant, ship owner and planter recorded on the island between 1648 and 1660, and the Jamaican sugar planter James Lascelles, documented on Jamaica between 1675 and 1684, BDA B3/3/453, RB3/3/572, RB3/3/839, RB3/3/937-8, RB3/5/255-6, RB3/5/799; Carl Bridenbaugh and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: the English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York, 1972), 202-3, 293.

England merchant Hugh Hall.<sup>27</sup> In 1702, Lascelles relocated to London and established a commission house which, in 1719, received a minimum of 2,402 cwt of sugar from correspondents in Barbados and Antigua.<sup>28</sup> Edward Lascelles may also have acted as agent of the Royal Africa Company for Antigua; certainly, he wrote letters in support of the Company to the Lords Commissioners of Trade. In addition, Edward is known to have acted as a West India financier and as an administrator and trustee on behalf of deceased planters.<sup>29</sup> As a result of his successful career in colonial trade, Edward Lascelles was able to purchase property at Stoke Newington (a favoured location of successful colonial merchants) and another small estate at Wellingborough. On his death in 1727, he was worth approximately £1,100 a year.<sup>30</sup>

Chronologically, the West India ventures of the quartet of Lascelles brothers preceded those of the later trio. Yet it is not clear whether the earlier Lascelles were a cadet branch of the Northallerton family or if they provided Daniel Lascelles' sons with support in launching their businesses. It is known, however, that the two families were joined by marriage and linked through business. Edward Lascelles' daughter Mary became the second wife of Daniel Lascelles and was, therefore, the mother of Henry Lascelles' half-brother

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<sup>27</sup> Houghton Library, MS AM 1,042, Hugh Hall Letterbook, f. 3, Hugh Hall jr to Edward Lascelles, 6 December 1716; f. 72, Hugh Hall jr to Mary Lascelles, 16 June 1718. Relations between Edward Lascelles and the Halls had deteriorated by 1716 and the Hugh Hall letter book records only limited trade between them. Accusations of arrogance and condescension on the part of Lascelles and his son were made by Hugh Hall jr during his six month visit to London in 1717 (f. 21-3, Hugh Hall jr to Hugh Hall sr, 20 June 1717).

<sup>28</sup> BDA, Levy Books, vol. 1, 1686-1712, f.20, 236; West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, N.H. 2,440 (see note 24 about the under-recording of sugar imports).

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth E. Donnan ed., *Records Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (4 vols., Washington D.C., 1930-5), vol. ii, 295; BDA, RB3/24/378-9; PRO C11/2238/5, C11/2366/1. As a creditor, Edward Lascelles had good reason to sign a petition against the proposal to create a Barbados land bank carried by the island Assembly's Lower House in 1706, PRO CO28/9/67, CO29/10/134-40.

<sup>30</sup> PRO Prob 11/614/sig66, C11/837/11.

Edward.<sup>31</sup> A factor in the attractions of this marriage alliance could have been the experience and contacts in West India trade accumulated by Mary's father. Yet if assistance from this source was important, within a few years, however, the Northallerton Lascelles had gained the commercial ascendancy over their relatives. A loan of £6,000, for example, was granted to the son and heir of Edward Lascelles of Stoke Newington in 1739 by Henry Lascelles and his son Daniel to help stem his mounting financial difficulties.<sup>32</sup>

Whether by accident or design, the Lascelles of Northallerton and Harewood soon forgot about their predecessors in the West Indies. Henry's son and heir Edwin Lascelles was created a Baron in 1790, prompting the College of Arms to research the family's pedigree. Notes survive detailing enquiries made by the Heralds and these reveal that by 1790 the Lascelles of Harewood had lost all contact with their relatives and namesakes and knew nothing of their origins. In 1790, the Lascelles' Barbados agents were requested to approach old inhabitants of the island for information on this subject. In reply, the agents reported that 'There is an old lady, a Miss Thorpe, who says that she had heard that this E<sup>d</sup> Lascelles was some relation of the two half brothers Henry & Edward Lascelles, who came to this island afterwards, but how nearly related she cannot tell'.<sup>33</sup> In addition to this letter there is an intriguing entry in the diary of Joseph Farington, written in 1796, which claims that 'The grandfather of the present L<sup>d</sup> [Edward] Harewood, though a distant relation, was a servant at that time in the Lascelles family'.<sup>34</sup> This could be an erroneous reference to Lord Harewood's great-grandfather Edward Lascelles of Stoke Newington, though

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<sup>31</sup> See the simplified family pedigree in Table 2.

<sup>32</sup> Foster, *Yorkshire Families*; Barbados Museum of History, Eustace Shilstone notebooks and family files, 'Lascelles'; PRO C11/837/11.

<sup>33</sup> West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Harewood Estates: Antiquarian, extract of a letter from John Prettyjohn and Thomas Frame to Mr. Daling, dated Barbados 10 September 1790.

<sup>34</sup> The *Diary of Joseph Farington* ed. Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (16 vols., New Haven and London, 1978-1984), vol. ii, 570.

the latter's wealth and commercial connections indicate that he can hardly have occupied the menial position of a servant. The association of the Lascelles of Stoke Newington with servility could, however, reflect the ignominious fate of Edward Lascelles' son and heir, who in 1740 died an insolvent alcoholic heavily indebted to Henry and Daniel Lascelles.<sup>35</sup>

During their years on Barbados, Henry Lascelles and his half-brother Edward combined the trade of sugar merchants with the post of Collector of the Customs: the most valuable revenue office in the British customs service. In addition, the brothers also married and raised families on the island.<sup>36</sup> Edward appears to have resided on Barbados continuously until his death in 1747, but Henry returned to England at least once, and possibly twice, prior to his permanent removal from Barbados in 1734.<sup>37</sup> Pares' article, 'A London West-India Merchant House', provides useful summary details of the brothers' activities as merchants and customs officials, including the charges of embezzlement faced by the brothers in 1744, which are chronicled in the Lascelles and Maxwell letter book. These accusations led to the temporary

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<sup>35</sup> PRO C11/837/11. Edward Lascelles junior's estate inventory listed among his possessions at Wellingborough 2 punch bowls, 6 lanthorn, 21 bottles of sack, 140 bottles of rum and brandy, 3 casks of ale, and 99 drinking glasses; at Stoke Newington he kept a further 10 hogsheads and 10 bottles of red port. At his death, the estate was unable to meet the interest on debts and other incumbrance charged upon it.

<sup>36</sup> Both brothers married well on the island: in 1712 Henry married Mary Carter, the daughter and heiress of the successful merchant Edwin Carter, while Edward married Frances Ball, the daughter of Guy Ball, a planter and member of the Barbados Council, Joseph Foster, *Pedigrees of the County Families of England: Yorkshire, West Riding* (2 vols; London, 1874), vol. ii [n.p.].

<sup>37</sup> Henry Lascelles appeared before the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations in 1720 to answer questions in connection with a customs dispute with the former Governor Sir Charles Cox, Board of Trade, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations* (14 vols; London, 1920-38), vol. 4, 138, 140, 154-6. It is believed that Lascelles also returned in England in 1729, the year his elder brother George Lascelles died, and possibly remained there until early 1731. The evidence for this consists of an account at Drummond's Bank in Henry Lascelles' name which includes living expenses for a London residence during these years, Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Drummond's Bank, London, Customer Account Ledgers, DR/427/8 f. 290 - DR/747/12 f.187. The only circumstantial evidence suggesting that Edward Lascelles returned to England is an undated portrait at Harewood attributed to 'circle of Enoch Seeman (1694-1744)', but it is not clear whether Edward sat for this painting in London.

suspension of Edward Lascelles as Customs Collector and attempts by the Surveyor General of Customs for America, Robert Dinwiddie, to surcharge Henry Lascelles for £30,072.<sup>38</sup> Participation in the slave trade can also be added to Pares' account of the trading interests of the Lascelles while on the island, since Henry Lascelles and his brother George are known to have organized a minimum of seven slaving ventures between 1713 and 1717.<sup>39</sup>

Henry Lascelles' return to England in 1734 coincided with the death of his father Daniel Lascelles.<sup>40</sup> The immediate heir to the family's ancestral property at Northallerton was Henry's nephew, the minor William Lascelles, but well before his nephew's death in 1750 Henry had succeeded in gaining possession of these lands.<sup>41</sup> Henry's return, however, was not dictated by family considerations alone and within a few years of his arrival he had launched five important and related business initiatives.

The first project was the creation of a commission house whose chief business consisted in the receipt and sale of cargoes of sugar and rum despatched by planters to London, the organisation of freight and insurance for these shipments, and the preparation of return cargoes of stores and goods for use on the plantations. It is not clear precisely when the house was established;

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<sup>38</sup> Pares, 'A West-India Merchant House', 77-8; PRO T1/320/22. The sum in the text is the sterling equivalent of £39,995.14s.4d. Barbados currency. As the Letter Book states, attention was drawn to the activities of the Lascelles brothers in the customs service by the publication of the second part of John Ashley, *Memoirs and Considerations Concerning the Trade and Revenues of the Colonies in America* (London; Part I, 1740; Part II, 1743). See Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, [George Maxwell] to Arthur Upton, 29 September 1743.

<sup>39</sup> PRO C11/2069/31, CO28/18/320-30. Lascelles was probably involved in additional slaving ventures since in 1723 he purchased fifty slaves from the Royal Africa Company, Sheridan, 'Sugar Trade', Appendix, xxv.

<sup>40</sup> The date of Henry's departure from Barbados is confirmed by both the closure of his accounts and the surrender of his bond as Customs Collector, and the granting of powers of attorney to Edward Lascelles and Richard Moorcroft to act for him on the island, Louis K. Koontz, *Robert Dinwiddie: His Career in American Government and Westward Expansion* (California, 1941), 68; BDA, RB7.

<sup>41</sup> Henry's will recites that his nephew's land was acquired by purchase, BDA, RB6/22/370-90.

the first documented letter book (W & G vol. I) was begun in 1739, but headed notepaper printed for Wilkinson and Gaviller claims that the firm was created in 1734. In view of the fact that the date of Henry's departure from Barbados can be dated precisely as taking place in 1734, this in-house tradition must be respected. The day-to-day activities of the commission house are recorded in wonderful detail by the surviving Lascelles and Maxwell letter book (W. & G. Vol. II) and also form the subject of Pares' 1956 article on the London sugar market. It is important to ensure, however, that the chance survival of the letter book does not bias the overall appraisal of Henry Lascelles' business portfolio. In the wider scheme of things, the commission house was arguably the least significant aspect of his business interests after 1734. A second area of activity consisted of an involvement in the victualling trade, particularly during the Wars of Jenkins' Ear and the Austrian Succession (1739-48) when Lascelles held valuable government contracts.

The Pares transcripts record Henry Lascelles commenting in 1741 that victualling was the branch of business 'which through good management (I reckon) I chiefly made my fortune by.'<sup>42</sup> It is not clear to what extent this statement can be taken at face value, but the value of Lascelles' government contracts is suggested by two pieces of evidence. Firstly, the turnover between the commission house and the Philadelphia merchant Samuel McCall (just one of the North American merchants with whom Lascelles and Maxwell transacted victualling related business) amounted to approximately £24,000 during the seven years 1743 to 1749. Secondly, it can be noted that Henry Lascelles' and his brother Edward's partner in Barbados, a merchant on the island named

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<sup>42</sup> Rhodes House Library, Pares Transcripts, Box H356, Henry Lascelles to Edward Lascelles, 20 April 1741, cited in D. Hamilton, 'Private Enterprise and Public Service: Naval Contracting in the Caribbean, c.1720-50', *Journal of Maritime Research* [www.jmr.ac.uk](http://www.jmr.ac.uk) (forthcoming).

Richard Morecroft, died an extremely wealthy man in 1742 when he was reputedly worth £40,000.<sup>43</sup>

The third project of great note was the slave trade, an activity in which Lascelles has participated while on Barbados, but which he developed to a new level from his London base by participating in a consortium of merchants known collectively as the ‘floating factory’ between 1736 and 1744. This syndicate’s chief business plan was to anchor a vessel off the Guinea coast at Annamaboe to act as a holding bay, or ‘factory’, for slaves purchased along the coast by agents and masters of other vessels owned by the consortium. The initial capital financing the floating factory was just £32,000, but by 1739 Henry Lascelles and his two Barbadian associates (his half-brother Edward and Richard Morecroft, who, with Lascelles, each held a one-eighth share each), were reported by Robert Hall to have sunk £40,000 into the scheme.<sup>44</sup> Lascelles and Hall were the driving forces behind the syndicate, but the risks inherent in the slave trade, coupled with internal disputes among investors and with the consortium’s agents, resulted in the winding up of the venture in 1744. George Maxwell wrote that year to a correspondent in Barbados that ‘the last floating Factory, had given him [Lascelles] in the course thereof a great deal of disquietude, and in the end did not turn out to any account, so he is resolved never again to be concern’d in any Trade there.’<sup>45</sup> An indication of the level of ‘disquietude’ is provided by the bitter recriminations of one of the associates:

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<sup>43</sup> Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Account Book of Samuel McCall Sr., 1743-1749; #740 Yeates Papers: John Yeates Correspondence, 1733-1759, John Bayley (Barbados) to John Yeates (Philadelphia), 14 August 1742. Richard Morecroft was deputy agent victualler for Barbados and the Leeward islands from at least 1734, Barbados Public Library, Lucas Manuscripts, Minutes of the Barbados Council, 26 November 1734, f. 451-3.

<sup>44</sup> Conrad Gill, *Merchants and Mariners of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1961), 92-7; PRO C103/130. See also Joseph E. Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development* (Cambridge, 2002), 293-5, 343-4, 419.

<sup>45</sup> Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, Maxwell to Newton, 23 July 1744. Lascelles continued, however, to be involved in at least four slave ships up until his death (see next section) and he also provided finance for slavers through the house of Lascelles and Maxwell which acted as the financial guarantor for slavers who sold slaves on credit to planters, Donnan ed., *Slave Trade*, vol. iv, 345-6;

The treatment you saw I suffered from Mr. Lascelles last Evening, was so insulting, scurrilous, & un Gentlemanlike that I am obliged to ask your Pardon for the manner he obliged me to leave you; I am determined never more to meet him, unless in Westminster Hall.<sup>46</sup>

Henry Lascelles' fourth business interest lay in owning shares of ships, which complemented his involvement in the sugar, slave, and victualling trades. A dozen vessels are known to have been involved in the 'floating factory' venture of 1736-43 and Lascelles' earlier investments in slaving on Barbados led him to be concerned in at least six ships between 1713 and 1717.<sup>47</sup> The account book of 1753 records that at his death Lascelles possessed shares in a total of twenty-one craft. In common with other merchants, Lascelles did not own any of these ships outright but instead opted to spread his risks across a number of vessels. Lascelles owned the equivalent of two whole ships, but he did not hold more than a quarter share in any one craft and his interest in fifteen of these vessels was confined to just a share of one-sixteenth.<sup>48</sup>

By 1753, Lascelles had ceased to hold victualling contracts and he had also scaled back his involvement in slaving. Only four of the ships listed in his account book are known to have engaged in the slave trade.<sup>49</sup> Research is

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Price, 'Credit in the Slave Trade', 312-3.

<sup>46</sup> PRO C103/130, John Duning to [Thomas Hall], 10 July 1747.

<sup>47</sup> Account Book of Henry Lascelles, 1753; PRO C103/130, CO28/28; David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein eds., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Total investment in shipping amounted to £15,750, Account Book of Henry Lascelles, 1753. Henry's brother Edward Lascelles was also involved in shipping; in 1742, for example, he was the co-owner (with Samuel McCall) of the *Queen of Hungary*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 'Ships Registered at the Port of Philadelphia before 1776: A Computerized Listing' (printout deposited by John J. McCusker, 1970).

<sup>49</sup> Based on a search of the database compiled by Eltis, Behrendt, Richardson, and Klein eds., *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*.

continuing into the routes the remaining seventeen ships operated along, but it is probable that most of the vessels were engaged in the sugar trade. A ship called the *Grantham*, however, was employed in the East India trade and was purchased c.1750 by a syndicate that included Lascelles, his youngest son (also named Henry Lascelles, who captained the vessel), and the Liverpool merchant and MP Charles Pole.<sup>50</sup>

The fifth West India business activity pursued by Henry Lascelles after 1734 was money lending, primarily to Barbados planters. A database has been constructed that records 78 loans granted between 1723 and 1753 (the majority after 1734), amounting to a total of £226,772. The principal features of Lascelles' financial relations with planters forms the subject of a separate article that compares his West India lending with loans made to English debtors and also his investments in stock market securities and land.<sup>51</sup> It can be noted here, however, that commission house of Lascelles and Maxwell appears to have been established to support money lending, by providing a means of receiving the remittances of indebted planters, rather than money lending a device used to secure commission business. This contention is supported by the following calculation. At the end of his life, Henry Lascelles had approximately £200,000 out on loan at the West Indies yielding (at seven percent) an annual gross income of £15,400. Standard commission rates in the sugar trade at this time were 2.5 percent on produce, 0.5 percent on insurance, and 0.5 percent on receipts and payments. A good wholesale price for sugar in London was around 33.25s. per cwt. Even assuming, therefore, that Lascelles and Maxwell were able to make 3.5 percent in total on every cwt of sugar handled, the house would have needed to have imported 264,662 cwt of sugar a year to match the interest

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<sup>50</sup> L.S. Sutherland, *A London Merchant, 1695-1774* (Oxford, 1933), 117, 119, 151-2. Henry Lascelles senior owned 5/32 of the *Grantham*, Account Book of Henry Lascelles, 1753.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, 'Merchants and Planters Revisited'.

Lascelles received from his loans. Total imports into the whole of England of Wales averaged only 818,100 cwt per annum between 1740-9 and 991,600 cwt between 1749 and 1753. Since Lascelles and Maxwell were merely one of approximately ninety commission houses trading in London during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, it was impossible for the firm's commission earnings to equal the interest earned on loans. In contrast, the volume of business implied by the interest payments remitted by planters, namely 9,263 cwt 1749-53, is consistent with estimates of total imports and the number of firms active in the London market.<sup>52</sup>

In September 1753, the obituary section of the *London Magazine* included the following entry: 'DEATHS: Henry Lascelles, Esq; a very great Barbadoes merchant, and sometime member of parliament for Northallerton.'<sup>53</sup> The brevity of this entry emphasises Lascelles' key achievements in the eyes of his peers: the extent of his business interests as a merchant, his immense wealth, his political standing as an MP, and his claim to gentility ('Esquire' was still a privileged title). A guide to the extent of Henry Lascelles' fortune is provided by his will and account book, both compiled in the year of his death. The will valued his estate at £284,000 whereas his account book lists assets worth £392,704. The difference between the two figures, of £108,704, probably indicates the gap between Lascelles' gross and net assets.<sup>54</sup> It is certain, however, that the wealth generated by Henry Lascelles greatly exceeded the minimum figure of £284,000 recorded in his will because he made substantial

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<sup>52</sup> John J. McCusker, *The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1650-1775* (2 vols; New York, 1989), vol. ii, 891f, 1144f; E.B. Schumpeter, *English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808* (Oxford, 1960), 61-2; Sheridan, 'Sugar Trade', 190-1; Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery* 299-300. Sheridan suggests that only 25 of these London partnerships were major houses, but even if this reduced number of traders held a dominant share of sugar imports, the conclusion that commission earnings cannot have matched interest payments remains valid.

<sup>53</sup> *London Magazine*, vol. 22 (September, 1753), 485.

<sup>54</sup> Will of Henry Lascelles (1753), BDA RB6/22/370-90; Account Book of Henry Lascelles, 1753; Pares, 'West-India House', 106-7; Sheridan, 'Sugar Trade', 193.

gifts to his sons before his death. His eldest son Edwin Lascelles was by 1748 installed as Lord of the Manor of Gawthorpe and Harewood: estates that Henry Lascelles had purchased in 1739 for £63,827. Daniel Lascelles was likewise established as a partner in Lascelles and Maxwell by 1750 and his name first appears in the house's correspondence in 1740.<sup>55</sup> Lascelles' account book lists only £85,154 of West India loans whereas other sources indicate that at least £194,000 of loans were still outstanding in 1753.<sup>56</sup> Approximately £108,846 of lending was, therefore, assigned by Lascelles to his sons or to Lascelles and Maxwell prior to his death. In consequence, it is conceivable that the fortune accumulated by Henry Lascelles was as large as £456,673, ranking him as one of the richest men in mid-eighteenth-century Britain.

The polite death notice that appeared in the *London Magazine* left much unsaid about Henry Lascelles, including the manner of his death. Within a few weeks, however, the Yorkshire diarist Thomas Gyll reported that 'An account came from London of the death of old Mr. Lascells, who was reported to have cut his throat and arms and across his belly.' The identity of 'old Mr. Lascells' is confirmed in a letter sent by James Abercromby to Robert Dinwiddie (Henry Lascelles' old adversary in the Barbados customs affair), which sent news of 'the Tragicial end of Harry Lasceles'.<sup>57</sup>

The motives for Lascelles' apparent suicide are unknown. Financially, Henry enjoyed immense wealth; politically, he appears to have put the troubles of the 1740s behind him. By 1753, the investigation mounted by Dinwiddie had

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<sup>55</sup> Mary Maucheline, *Harewood House* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Wiltshire, 1994), 15; West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Harewood accession, 2,677, indenture between Henry Maxwell and Edward Lascelles 17 February 1796.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, 'Merchants and Planters Revisited'.

<sup>57</sup> 'The Diary of Thomas Gyll', 12 October, 1753, *Publications of the Surtees Society*, vol. cxviii (1910), 195. *The Letter Book of James Abercromby, Colonial Agent, 1751-1773* ed. John C. Can Horne and George Reese (Richmond, 1991), Abercromby to Dinwiddie, 25 October 1753, 95.

been dealt with; indeed, now it was Lascelles who was posing Dinwiddie problems by allying himself with Peyton Randolph and Landon Carter in their attempts to undermine Dinwiddie's authority as Governor of Virginia.<sup>58</sup> Lascelles' chief political preoccupation immediately prior to his death was with the Pelham administration's Jewish Naturalization Bill. This act was opposed by many London merchants and Lascelles' willingness to join the campaign for repeal suggests that he was no longer dependent on government protection for his personal survival.<sup>59</sup> Of Henry Lascelles physical and mental state, little can be said with certainty, but the surviving letter book provides an indication of the immense strain placed by his complex business interests on his mind and body over many years. In the end, perhaps Lascelles paid the ultimate price for the great fortune he raised through his unrelenting drive and ambition.

The manner of Henry's death did not prevent a Christian burial taking place at All Saints, Northallerton. The funeral, moreover, was a public event and not a private affair conducted at midnight out of sight of inquisitive eyes. Lascelles' executors recorded that the lavish sum of £250 was distributed to relatives for mourning, £100 to the town's poor people, and £3.5s. to thirteen of Lascelles' tenants who carried their landlord's coffin from the church gate to his grave.<sup>60</sup> There must, however, have been speculation and gossip as Henry Lascelles' corpse arrived in Northallerton after being driven up from London. Gyll, after all, had received news of the circumstances surrounding his death

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<sup>58</sup> John Richard Alden, *Robert Dinwiddie: Servant of the Crown* (Williamsburg, 1993), 12-13.

<sup>59</sup> *Letter Book James Abercromby*, 93-5, 98. The parliamentary campaign against the Jewish Naturalization Act was led by George Lord Lyttelton, Rose Mary Davis, *The Good Lord Lyttelton: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Culture* (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1939), 207-10. Lyttelton's patronage of the poet James Thomson (to whom the poem 'Rule Britannia' is conventionally attributed) involved him in Barbadian affairs since he secured Thomson a sinecure in the customs service there, but no other link to Lascelles has yet been found, Huntington Library, STG Box 24 (6) Henry Grenville to George Grenville, 7 November 1747.

<sup>60</sup> West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Harewood Accounts: Estate and General, vol. 2, Accounts of T[homas] Crosfield with the executors of Henry Lascelles and Edwin Lascelles, 1753-6.

further north in Durham four days prior to the burial. Ominously, the executors accounts noted that the business of the funeral was not yet complete and hinted that Henry Lascelles' remains might not remain undisturbed for long in consecrated ground. 'These are all the expenses here except the taking up and laying down the stones over the Grave', they wrote, 'which must not be laid yet'. Conspicuous by its absence in the nave of All Saints is any gravestone bearing the name of Henry Lascelles set into the floor beside those of his father, twin sister, and first wife.<sup>61</sup>

If the dark and imposing church at Northallerton received Henry's remains uneasily, at the new family home at Harewood the memory of old Mr. Lascelles was also uncomfortable. It is striking that there is nothing at Harewood House commemorating the founder of the family fortune: not even a portrait to match that of his half-brother Edward, who stands proudly in front of his West Indies ship. If the owners of Harewood, through architecture and patronage of the arts, did seek to distance themselves from the origins of the wealth that had established their position as eminent Yorkshire aristocrats, they were to find this task difficult to accomplish. The family's political opponents capitalised on the Lascelles' recent enrichment through trade and their long association with slavery, most notably in the Yorkshire election campaign of 1807 which was dominated by the abolition of the slave trade.

The details of Henry Lascelles' 'Tragical end' and his controversial career were not forgotten. More than forty years after his death, Joseph Farington (whose diary is a virtual directory of the artistic society cultivated by the Lascelles), recalled how 'Mr. Lascelles, the Father of the late Lord Harewood, of Daniel Lascelles, and of General Lascelles killed himself by opening the

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<sup>61</sup> For Lascelles' burial entry see North Yorkshire Record Office, Draft Transcript Holy Trinity Parish

veins in his wrists’, and how the same Henry Lascelles had been accused of extortion and corruption. Two decades later, Lascelles’ notoriety was similarly recalled when, in 1814, a small vault in the south transept of Northallerton church was opened, exposing his intact leaden coffin. On this occasion, Henry Lascelles was remembered as ‘one of those unprincipled men who were concerned in the shameful South Sea business, whereby he amassed great wealth to the ruin of any.’<sup>62</sup> A corpse cannot defend itself and, it must be emphasised, that at the present time there is no evidence known to substantiate a charge that Lascelles never had to face in his lifetime. The readiness of the annalist to speak ill of such a long-deceased Northallerton MP, however, provides a further indication of Henry’s grim posthumous reputation.

### **George Maxwell (d. 1763)**

Very little is known with certainty about George Maxwell’s family origins. The Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book (W. & G. vol. II) strongly suggests that he was born a Scot, though it also makes clear that Maxwell had relations in Norfolk, including an uncle named George Hepburn who was Sir Robert Walpole’s physician.<sup>63</sup> Two families called Maxwell are known to have been substantial plantation owners in Barbados and Antigua. On Barbados, Thomas Maxwell is recorded in the 1680 census as owning a sugar estate in Christ’s Church parish that became known as ‘Maxwell’s Plantation’: a property which remained in the family until 1762. On Antigua, the Maxwells, who

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Registers, 1753 16/10.

<sup>62</sup> *Diary of Joseph Farington* ed. Garlick and Macintyre, vol. ii, 570.

<sup>63</sup> For evidence of Maxwell’s Scottish connections, see Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, George Maxwell to William Duke, September 1743; Maxwell to Edward Lascelles, 25 September 1745; Maxwell to John Fairchild, 5 October 1745. For the Norfolk connection, see Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, Maxwell to William Duke, September 1743; PRO Prob 11/884, sig 77, will of George Maxwell; J.H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole: Vol. 1, The Making of a Statesman* (London, 1956), 205. See also Cambridge University Library, Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS 2,163, Henry Lascelles to Dr. George Hepburn, 30 April 1734.

originated from Carriden in Linlithgow, were one of a cluster of families to settle on the island during the eighteenth century and established a plantation of 460 acres and 300 slaves.<sup>64</sup> Maxwells originating from Scotland also became land owners in Ireland during this period, and letters from family members based in Dublin, including a George Maxwell, appear in the correspondence of British politicians associated with the Lascelles.<sup>65</sup> Connecting these families with the George Maxwell of the letter book is problematic, but there is abundant evidence that Maxwell was more than the dependent creature of Henry Lascelles that Pares suggested in his appraisal of him.

The letter book reveals that Maxwell was an educated and cultured man. On his return to England in 1743, his standing was sufficient for to be welcomed at Houghton Hall as the guest of Sir Robert Walpole on his sixty-seventh birthday. That Maxwell's reception by Walpole was something more than a consequence of his connection with Henry Lascelles is suggested by the correspondence, which notes that he had previously visited Houghton prior to construction work starting on the great house in 1722. It may be surmised that Maxwell's own family connections, probably through his uncle Hepburn, were sufficient to grant him access to Walpole's household. The letters also make clear that Maxwell had moved in prominent business and social circles in

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<sup>64</sup> BDA, Hughes/Queree abstracts in Queree notebook; Vere Langford Oliver, *The History of Antigua* (3 vols; London, 1896), vol. ii, 260-1; R.B. Sheridan, 'The Rise of a Colonial Gentry: a Case Study of Antigua, 1730-1775', *Economic History Review*, vol. xiii (1961), 355-7.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Cambridge University Library, Chomondeley (Houghton) MSS, Henry Maxwell to Walpole, Dublin 3 April 1716; Huntington Library, HA 9,218, George Maxwell to Robert, Lord Ferras, 8 June 1703. There is also circumstantial evidence linking Arthur Upton (a subordinate of Henry Lascelles and George Maxwell in the Bridgetown customs and a correspondent in the surviving letter book) with Ireland; see Edith Mary Johnson-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament, 1692-1800* (6 vols, Belfast, 2002), vol. 5, 223-24, 227; Francis Elrington Ball, *A History of County Dublin*, (6 vols. Dublin, 1902-20)], chap. 6).

London prior to his departure for Barbados c.1721. ‘I have been to the Lobby of the House of Commons’, he wrote soon after his arrival in the capital, ‘where I have often stood formerly, and could not remember the face of any one of the present Members, nor even tho’ I heard some of them called by their names, and looked at them with great attention because they were my School fellows.’<sup>66</sup>

Maxwell’s decision to settle in Barbados could have been the result of his meeting Henry Lascelles during the latter’s visit to England in 1720.<sup>67</sup> There is, however, no proof of this; nor is there any *conclusive* evidence that he emigrated, as Pares speculated, as the result of financial losses during the South Sea Bubble. In view of the fact that Maxwell, on his return in 1743, held the post of Barbados Customs Searcher, an equally plausible scenario is that he benefited from the patronage of Walpole through his uncle Hepburn, and recommended himself to Henry Lascelles as a business associate as well as a fellow customs officer by virtue of his commercial abilities.<sup>68</sup>

Though Maxwell’s fortune hardly compares with that of Henry Lascelles, his personal estate was more considerable than that estimated by Pares, and it is incorrect to regard him as entirely dependent on Lascelles. It is true that Maxwell, in his will, referred to ‘my late dear friend and benefactor Henry Lascelles’; it is also true that in 1741 he took out a loan from his partner of £1,000 and still owed a debt of £941.17s. 8d. at the time of Lascelles’ death. Such loans, however, were a feature of Henry Lascelles’ business interests and reveal little about the net worth of the recipients.<sup>69</sup> In the letter book, Maxwell

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<sup>66</sup> Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, Maxwell to William Duke, September 1743; Maxwell to Dr. Joseph Gamble, 9 April 1744.

<sup>67</sup> See note 37. Lascelles was accompanied by his wife Mary, who died during the visit and was buried at Northallerton, Foster, *Yorkshire Families*.

<sup>68</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, vol. 33 (1722-3), 243; Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, Lascelles and Maxwell to Sir Thomas Robinson, 29 September 1743.

<sup>69</sup> PRO Prob 11/884/sig 77, will of George Maxwell; Pares, ‘West-India House’, 79; Account Book of

writes that while on Barbados he had owned more than 100 slaves, perhaps as a result of marriage in Barbados to Dorothy Brodie in 1729. Since Maxwell both baptised and sold slaves on the island, his claim to have been an owner, rather than just a renter of slaves, must be taken seriously.<sup>70</sup> In addition to a plantation, Maxwell also owned property in Bridgetown. In 1749, six years after quitting the island, he still owned two houses on Cheapside valued at rentals of £80 and £55, and a third house on Reeds Rent worth an additional £15.<sup>71</sup> At his death in 1763, the residual value of George Maxwell's estate was not recorded. One indication of his wealth, however, is provided by the legacies listed in his will which amount to lump sums worth £1,050 and a further £518 in annuities. Among the payments were £50 a year to his personal bookkeeper to provide a continuation of his services to Henry Maxwell, his nephew and heir.<sup>72</sup> Another measure of George Maxwell's wealth is the half-share in the profits of Lascelles and Maxwell bequeathed to his nephew, which in 1796 Henry Maxwell was able to surrender in return for an annuity of £1,200 per annum.<sup>73</sup>

George Maxwell's younger brother James, an army surgeon whose career benefited from the patronage of the Grenvilles,<sup>74</sup> further strengthened the links between the Lascelles and Maxwell families. In 1748, James Lascelles married Susannah Lascelles, the daughter of Henry Lascelles' deceased elder brother

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Henry Lascelles, 1753.

<sup>70</sup> Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, Maxwell to John Braithwaite, November 1745; *Barbados Records: Marriages, 1643-1800* ed. Joanne McCree Sanders (Texas, 1982), vol. i, 149; *Barbados Records: Baptisms, 1637-1800* ed. Sanders (Texas, 1982), 113; BDA, RB3/35/325-6. In the levy book for Bridgetown, 9 June 1729, George Maxwell was assessed as the owner of 30 acres of land in the parish, BDA, Levy Books, Parish of St. Michael, C-shelf 1749069, 1729, f.149. Maxwell's wife Dorothy was the widow of the physician James Brodie and the match appears to be another Scots link, BDA RB6/16/527-8, will of James Brodie, entered 21 November 1729.

<sup>71</sup> BDA, Levy Books, 1749 f. 50.

<sup>72</sup> PRO Prob 11/884, sig 77, will of George Maxwell.

<sup>73</sup> West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Harewood Accession 2,677, indenture between Edward Lascelles and Henry Maxwell, 17 February 1796.

<sup>74</sup> Foster, *Pedigrees*; Huntington Library, STG Box 18(7), James Maxwell, 'A Report of my Visitation of the several Hospitals and Sick Quarters for Sick and Wounded Men', Portsmouth, 15 February

George. In addition to being his uncle George Maxwell's heir, James and Susannah Lascelles' son Henry also benefited from several inheritances from the Lascelles family. In 1753, Henry Lascelles left him a legacy of £1,000 and he also received his mother's one third portion of her father's estate. Late in life, Henry Maxwell benefited further from a life interest in a estate of 530 acres in Wiltshire by virtue of the marriage of Elizabeth Lascelles, another of George Lascelles' daughters, to Edmund Davis of Hilldrop in Ramsey.<sup>75</sup> Henry Maxwell was wealthy enough to establish himself as a member of the landed gentry, and, in 1773, he purchased the manor of Ewshott-Itchell at Crondall in Hampshire for £15,000.<sup>76</sup> At Ewshott-Itchell, Henry Maxwell fitted comfortably into his role as the Squire of Crondall. The grounds at Itchell were laid out by Capability Brown and Maxwell performed several philanthropic acts, including the creation of an educational charity and the restoration of the parish church.<sup>77</sup>

Yet despite strong indications that George Maxwell was a man of resources and of a good family, there is one additional piece of evidence that has a bearing on the question of how Henry Lascelles regarded his business partner. As a result of dynastic misfortune, all three of Henry Lascelles sons died without leaving living heirs. By right of strict blood succession, therefore, the Harewood estate should have passed in 1795 to the grandchildren of his elder brother, including Henry Maxwell.<sup>78</sup>

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1756.

<sup>75</sup> BDA, RB6/16/369-72, will of George Lascelles; RB6/22/370-90, will of Henry Lascelles; Victoria County History, *The History of Wiltshire, Volume 12* (London, 1983), 24; Foster, *Pedigree*.

<sup>76</sup> Hampshire Record Office, Crondall deeds 55M69/19-56, 60; 55/M69/21/2; Victoria County History, *History of Hampshire, Volume 4* (London, 1911), 8; Francis Joseph Baigent, *A Collection of Records and Documents relating to the Hundred and Manor of Crondall in the County of Southampton* (London and Winchester, 1891), 468.

<sup>77</sup> R.P. Butterfield, *Monastery and Manor: The History of Crondall* (Farnham, 1948), 99; Hampshire Record Office, Odiham Grammar School Leases (1812), 21M51/6; Victoria County History, *History of Hampshire*, 14.

<sup>78</sup> A similar dynastic fate was to befall the Maxwells. Henry Maxwell's wife Deborah perished in 1789 after reading a letter too close to the fire; Maxwell himself died in 1818; the couple's only daughter

Yet the terms of Henry Lascelles will of 1753 ensured that Maxwell could never inherit Harewood. As a younger son who had accumulated his own fortune, Henry Lascelles was free to devise his estate in a manner of his own choosing. And in the event of the failure of his own sons to produce male heirs, Lascelles determined that the estate would pass to the children of his deceased younger half-brother Edward rather than those of his deceased elder brother George. In fact, Henry Lascelles' complex testamentary papers permitted his sons and executors, Edwin and Daniel, to nominate a successor from among their three eligible nephews. On the death of his brother Daniel in 1784, therefore, Edwin was left with sole power to exercise discretion and there is evidence that he negotiated with the two surviving candidates, Edward and Francis Lascelles, prior to his own death in 1795.<sup>79</sup> The diarist Joseph Farington wrote that the elder nephew Edward was preferred 'on acct. of General Lascelles having married Miss Catley': a reference to Colonel Francis Lascelles' relationship with the celebrated singer and stage performer Ann Catley, who in her youth was embroiled in a sensational sexual scandal.<sup>80</sup>

When Henry Lascelles pondered the inheritance question in 1753, the possibility that the heir of his business partner might one day be elevated to the position of head of the family must have seemed remote. One motive why Henry

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pre-deceased her father, Hampshire Record Office, burial registers, 9 April 1789, 29 July 1818; Butterfield, *Monastery and Manor*, 100.

<sup>79</sup> West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Harewood Title Deeds, 359. Edward Lascelles was required to assent to a modification of a trust prior to receiving £50,000 in advance of his inheritance.

<sup>80</sup> *Diary of Joseph Farington* ed. Garlick and Macintyre, vol. ii, 570. On Ann Catley and Francis Lascelles see *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* ed. Stanley Sadie (20 vols., London, 1980), vol. iv, 12; Miss Ambross, *The Life and Times of the late Miss Ann Catley, the Celebrated Actress* (London, 1789), 47-56; James Boaden, *The Life of Mrs Jordan* (2 vols., London, 1831), vol. i, 169-70; *Court and Private Life in the Time of Queen Charlotte: being the journals of Mrs. Papendick* (2 vols., London, 1887), vol. ii, 158-9. The sources suggest that Catley and Lascelles' relationship was affectionate and enduring, though it is unclear if they were legally married. Foster's pedigree (*Yorkshire Families*) excludes the eight children of this union who all took the name Lascelles,

Lascelles interrupted the natural order of succession was his distrust of his elder brother's surviving heir George Lascelles, whom the letter book condemns as 'a silly fellow'.<sup>81</sup> If George Lascelles was overlooked on the grounds of deficiency, a desire to exclude the female line may account for Henry's decision not to prefer the children of his sister Susannah. Yet other considerations may also have played their part. Lascelles could simply have felt a closer affinity with the family of his half-brother Edward, with whom he had spent many years on Barbados prior to his return to England, while also (consciously or sub-consciously) regarding the Maxwells as inferior, or at least junior, to the Lascelles.

The letter book reveals that George Maxwell, like his partner Henry Lascelles, exhibited signs of weariness resulting from the constant demands of trade and finance. 'My mind', he wrote, 'is in continual agitation about business.' Once back in England, Maxwell missed his old Barbadian companions and experienced the added loneliness of separation from his wife Dorothy, who remained in Barbados until her death in 1757.<sup>82</sup> Their union was also childless. Some of the commercial correspondence describes how Maxwell relished the rare opportunities of riding out of the City (where few of his former friends remembered him) into the countryside. As a probable Scot, he was also deeply disturbed by the Jacobite rising of 1745 and this event increased his sense of unease. In the middle of such unrest, Maxwell dreamed of an escape to Bermuda in the company of friends, of 'retiring some where out of the busy

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including the author Rowley Lascelles.

<sup>81</sup> Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, George Maxwell to Edward Lascelles, 25 September 1745. At the time of Henry Lascelles' death, his nephew George appears to have been dependent on an annuity of £80 per annum granted by his uncle. In his will, Henry instructed his executors to cease payments if George made any attempt to break into the capital sum, West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Harewood Accounts: Estate and General, vol. 2: Accounts T[homas] Crosfield with executors of Henry Lascelles and Edward Lascelles, 1753-6; BDA, RB6/22/370-90, will of Henry Lascelles, 1753.

<sup>82</sup> BDA RB6/3/363-5, will of Dorothy Maxwell, entered 21 October 1757. An indenture drawn up at the time of her marriage permitted Dorothy to bequeath £1,000 currency, should she pre-decease her husband.

world'. His ideal retreat was a colony lying between the Americas and Britain. On such an island might commerce, corruption, and slavery be forgotten; in such a land might a man who was a mixture of Scots, English, and Bajan find rest from his troubles.<sup>83</sup> Yet Maxwell was never to realise his dreams of escape.

#### **IV. From the Ashes of History**

The remnants of the Lascelles' West India archive provides some tantalising details of what has been lost. Shortly after the death of Edwin Baron Harewood in 1795, a list of papers relating to his West India affairs was drawn up for the benefit of his heir and executor Edward Lascelles (later Edward Lord Harewood). These manuscripts included complete journal and ledger books, maintained for eight Barbados plantations during a period of sixteen years. In 1801, Edward Lord Harewood's London agent, John Wood Nelson, sent instructions to the managers of all of the Lascelles' West India properties requesting that they provide exact details of the enslaved workforce, the crop, the cattle, 'and attendant occurrences' on each estate twice a year.<sup>84</sup> No trace remains of these materials, and, in consequence, information about the individual plantations is scanty in both the Lascelles and Maxwell letter book and the estate records of Harewood House.

The loss of the plantation ledgers deprives the historian of a resource that would have provided an imperfect but invaluable insight into the working and

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<sup>83</sup> Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, Lascelles and Maxwell to Sir Thomas Robinson, 27 June 1744; Maxwell to John Fairchild, 5 October 1745; Lascelles and Maxwell to Thomas Findlay, 29 October 1745; Maxwell to John Braithwaite, November 1745.

<sup>84</sup> Harewood House, West India Papers, 'A list of papers belonging to Edward Lascelles Esq. as executor of the Rt. Honble. Edwin Lord Harewood deced.' [c.1796], f.35; Correspondence, Bundle 6/16, [John Nelson] to John Blenman and Richard Cobham, 4 December 1801.

living conditions of the enslaved. The fate of these volumes cannot be established with certainty: either they perished in the flames on the night of 29 December or they were destroyed at an earlier stage of Wilkinson and Gaviller's history. As a result of their loss, the enslaved are largely 'invisible' in the Lascelles archives. Slaves are mentioned for the most part in passing, as commodities to be bought and sold, or as the anonymous producers of the cargoes of sugar and rum that Lascelles and Maxwell sold on behalf of their planter correspondents. Yet, on rare occasions, a more human, personal element breaks through the documents that reminds the historian that the world that Lascelles and Maxwell inhabited did not consist solely of ledger entries and business affairs. In 1745, George Maxwell wrote an extraordinary letter to his friend John Braithwaite: a young man who had gone out to Barbados to run a plantation. Braithwaite's high expectations on leaving Britain had received a knock-back. He was in financial difficulties and he also found the task of acting as a slave master unpleasant. Maxwell sympathised with his plight on both counts. 'The treatment of the negroes I might have forseen,' he wrote, 'had I considered, would ill suit the Gentleness of your nature, but that I happened to overlook having lived more years in that Island than you have done in the wourld.' Yet experience, Maxwell assured Braithwaite, would eventually inure him to the harsh realities of life on a sugar plantation:

It was become familiar to me by use. But I must declare that I was once owner of above 100 [slaves], and perhaps was one of the mildest masters. None clothed or fed better, yet they are by nature so stupid that I found none so ill served as I was; and therefore some correction is necessary. I used to pity their abject state at first, but afterwards found they were just as happy as their nature was capable of being.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Lascelles and Maxwell Letter Book, [Maxwell] to John Braithwaite, November 1745.

Maxwell wrote that Braithwaite would also, in a short while, conceptualise African and Creole slaves as ‘brutes’. Yet, Maxwell’s reassurances are far from convincing, and, as a result, the process he describes is not the desensitising one it appears at first sight. In this letter, Maxwell reflected on his own life and circumstances:

Did you truly know my Condition, you would not think it to be envied. My mind is in Continual agitation about business, and bating my being in good health which I own is a great blessing, I have as little enjoyment of Life as anyone. Most people here have real or imaginary Crosses, which are the same in effect.

Readers of this microfilm edition are invited to ponder the ‘real or imaginary Crosses’ that impelled George Maxwell to write these words and his partner Henry Lascelles reputedly to open his own wrists.

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**University of York**

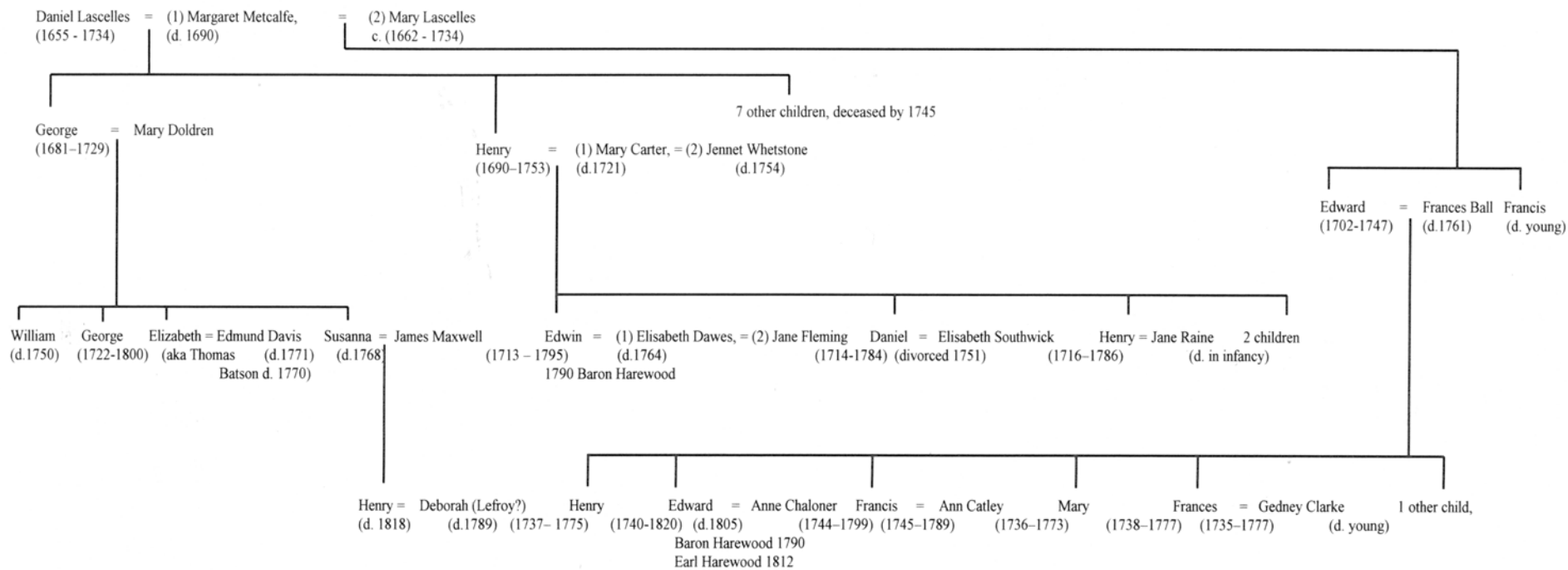
**October, 2003**

**Table 1**  
**The Evolution of ‘Lascelles and Maxwell’, 1734-1886**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Trading Name</b>	<b>Names of Partners</b>	<b>Principal Address</b>
1734-43	Henry Lascelles	Henry Lascelles	Mincing Lane
1743-50	Lascelles & Maxwell	Henry Lascelles & George Maxwell	Mincing Lane
1750-53	Lascelles & Maxwell	Henry Lascelles, George Maxwell, & Daniel Lascelles	Mark Lane
1753-63	Lascelles, Maxwell, & Daling	George Maxwell, Daniel Lascelles, & William Daling	Mark Lane
1763-65	Lascelles, Daling, & Clarke	Daniel Lascelles, William Daling, & Gedney Clarke	Hylords Court, Crutched Friars
1765-84	Lascelles & Daling	Daniel Lascelles & William Daling	Hylords Court, Crutched Friars
1784-90	Daling & Elliot	William Daling & Nathaniel Elliot	Hylords Court, Crutched Friars
1790-98	Elliot, Whalley, & Adam	Nathaniel Elliot, Josiah Whalley, & John William Adam	Hylords Court, Crutched Friars
1798-1805	Adam, Whalley, & Nelson	John William Adam, Josiah Whalley, & John Wood Nelson	Hylords Court, Crutched Friars
1805-27	Nelson & Adam	J.W. Nelson & John Adam	Savage Gardens, Crutched Friars
1827-41	Nelson, Adam, & Nelson	J.W. Nelson, Benjamin Adam, John Henry Nelson.	Savage Gardens, Crutched Friars
1841-51	Nelson & Adam	J.W. Nelson & William	Savage Gardens,

		Adam	Crutched Friars
1851-54	William Adam	William Adam	Great Tower Street
1854-60	William Wilkinson	William Wilkinson	Great Tower Street
1860-86	Wilkinson & Gaviller	W. Wilkinson & A. Gaviller	Great Tower Street

**Sources:** Harewood House, West India Papers, Correspondence; West Riding Archives, Sheepscar Branch, Leeds, Harewood MSS, Letters and Papers on West India Estates, 1795-1873; Nathaniel Elliot Correspondence (private collection owned by Dr. A.J. Almond, copies deposited at Harewood House); Records of Wilkinson and Gaviller, S.R. Evans, 'MEMO - on history of old Firm of WILKINSON & GAVILLER, 1734-1886' (1953) [n.p.]; *A Complete Guide to all Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London* (London, 1740), 134; *A Complete Guide...London* (London, 1758), 135; *A Complete Guide...London* (London, 1763), 150; *The Universal Directory...by Mr. Mortimer* (London, 1763), 43; *Baldwin's New Complete Guide* (London, 1768), 135; *The New Complete Guide* (London, 1772), 237; *The London Directory* (London, 1774), 101; *The New Complete Guide* (London, 1774), 245; *Kent's Directory* (London, 1774), 107.



**Table 2**  
**Simplified Pedigree of the Lascelles Family**

**Table 3**

**Original Catalogue of the Records of Wilkinson and Gaviller**

<b>Volume</b>	<b>Chronology</b>
W. & G. Vol. I	February 1739[40] - March 1741[2]
W. & G. Vol. II	September 1743 - January 1745[6]
W. & G. Vol. III	February 1745[6] - August 1750
W. & G. Vol. IV	August 1748 - August 1750
W. & G. Vol. V	August 1750 - August 1752
W. & G. Vol. VI	August 1752 - August 1754
W. & G. Vol. VII	May 1754 - July 1756
W. & G. Vol. VIII	July 1756 - November 1759
W. & G. Vol. IX	November 1759 - June 1763
W. & G. Vol. X	April 1763 - August 1768
W. & G. Vol. A	Letters of Henry Lascelles, November 1731 - September 1753

**Source:** Clare Taylor, 'The Lascelles Letter Books', unpublished typescript on deposit at the Library of Rhodes House, University of Oxford.