Englefield House, Berkshire

 Processes, practices and the making of a Company house

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When W. Fletcher and Edmund J. Niemann toured Reading in the 1830s they noticed a ‘splendid mansion’, ‘seated on the declivity of a hill’, which remained sheltered from the north-east winds ‘by the verdant summit’. Englefield House was the ‘splendid mansion’ in question. Fletcher and Niemann depicted Englefield as a solid, constant entity ‘bounded by swelling hills, adorned with elegant seats, woods, and cultivated grounds’. In referring to Englefield’s surrounding land, Fletcher and Niemann stressed the importance of Englefield as a landed estate and thus a receptacle and symbol of power and wealth. In case readers were in any doubt of the historical longevity of the house, Fletcher and Niemann set out further to reassure them. The house, they claimed, corresponded ‘in its style with those erected about the time of Elizabeth, with handsome bay windows, battlements, and towers’. Englefield’s appearance was ‘noble’, possessing as it did ‘all that uniformity of design characteristic of fine architecture’. A present day image of Englefield (see Figure 9.1) confirms and reiterates Fletcher and Niemann’s earlier depiction. Although perhaps ‘superficially mid-Victorian’, its Elizabethan architecture continues to remain imposingly solid today.

Surviving as it has for so many centuries, the architecture of the house represents continuity and longevity. As a result, in looking to the house’s material form, certain elements of its history are obscured. On first sight, for example, its eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history and its connections with the East India Company (EIC) in this period, are largely
hidden. Unlike country houses such as Sezincote in Gloucestershire, there is no sign at Englefield of the East India Company and its Indian ventures marked on the exterior of the building. Nevertheless objects, people and money all linked Englefield House to the EIC in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and these links shaped Englefield in its turn. In that certain elements of its history do not appear to be represented by its material form and aesthetic motifs, Englefield might be likened to houses such as Bolsover Castle, Brodsworth Hall, Marble Hill, Northington Grange, Kenwood House and Osborne House, which can be linked to the slave trade but upon which few material reminders can be found. To contribute to the broader project of uncovering the often hidden histories of empire in Britain’s country houses, this chapter moves past Englefield’s architecture to instead focus on the flows of people and possessions into and out of the house. In doing so it reveals Englefield’s imperial history and demonstrates how constant change rather than continuity shaped the house in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Rather than treating Englefield as an inert object then, this chapter understands this country house by examining its dynamic use. Marriage, inheritance, purchase and renting ensured that successive waves of inhabitants entered and occupied Englefield in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The EIC encouraged individuals connected with
the Company to form and constantly renew their social networks. Often established on the subcontinent in unfamiliar circumstances in the eighteenth century, connections flourished as officials helped each other to transport personal goods and family members to and from India, pass on news of kin, facilitate the movement of wealth or private trade and circulate letters and gifts. EIC officials also relied on their networks to provide opportunities for advancement. Once home, individuals continued to cultivate their connections in order to hear news of the Company and fellow officials, as well as connected families. It was these links that often provided opportunities after return to Britain and, if necessary, allowed family members to return to empire. While patronage, wealth, gifts and letters could pass through EIC networks, this chapter argues that, so too could houses. In Berkshire particularly, the proximity of certain estates and homes to each other meant that once an EIC family possessed a country house in a specific location, that area often became attractive to other EIC men and women. Richard Benyon, Lady Margaret Clive and Elizabeth Sykes were all connected to the East India Company and came to reside at Englefield House at different points and for different reasons during the eighteenth century. Richard Benyon (1698–1774) worked for the Company, ending his service as Governor of Fort St George, Madras between 1735 and 1744; Lady Margaret Clive (1735–1817) was effectively married to the Company, once she had become betrothed to Robert Clive (1725–74) in 1753, and continued to be involved in Company politics after his death; and Elizabeth Sykes (d.1814) was daughter to Company official, Sir Francis Sykes (1732–1804) of Basildon Park. By focusing on the house, rather than a particular family, by including Company women, as well as Company men and by privileging moments of change, loss and discontinuity a fuller picture of country house living and the East India Company emerges – one that is significantly closer to a narrative of change and disruption than continuity and consistency. In sum, this chapter explores how, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the movement of people into and out of Englefield ensured that this ‘English’ house became a node within the Company’s Asian empire. In this period, Berkshire became known as the ‘English Hindoostan’, and Englefield was at its centre.

The East India Company arrives

Englefield’s imposing structure stands within rolling grounds near the village of Englefield in Berkshire, on the site of an earlier house, which
belonged to the Englefield family. The Englefields surrendered most of the estate in 1585 and the house then remained in varying degrees of splendour until Anne Wrighte (née Paulet) inherited it from her brother Lord Francis Paulet in 1712. At the time, Anne was married to Reverend Nathaniel Wrighte. During their marriage the Wrightes had three sons, the eldest of whom (Powlett Wrighte) inherited Englefield in 1729. Powlett Wrighte (d.1741) augmented his inheritance by marrying well. He tied his own estate to that of the Beauvoirs by marrying the heiress to the Beauvoirs’ fortune – Mary Tyssen (d.1776), daughter of Francis Tyssen (d.1712) and Rachel Beauvoir from Hackney in Surrey. Powlett Wrighte and Mary Tyssen had one son, Powlett Wrighte the Younger. Following Wrighte’s death in 1741, Mary remained at Englefield with their son. John Wilder and Daniel May held the estates and lands in trust for Mary and her son Powlett, until he came of age in his twenty-first year. In 1745 Mary remarried, to Richard Benyon and it is at this point that Englefield’s history became intertwined with that of the EIC.

Richard Benyon was born in 1698, and in 1712 he began his career with the East India Company. Little is known of Benyon’s early life or family connections. In Swallowfield and its Owners (1925), Lady Constance Russell suggests that the Mr Benyon who witnessed Thomas Pitt’s (1653–1726) acquisition of his famous diamond in 1702 was Daniel Benyon (1664–c.1709), who she asserted to be Richard Benyon’s father (a claim supported by Bernard Burke’s A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland). In contrast, in The Nabobs of Berkshire, Clive Williams argues that the Benyon who witnessed Pitt’s purchase might have been Bernard Benyon (d.1715) who was then a member of the Madras council. Henry Dawson Love, writing his Vestiges of Old Madras (1913), noted that Bernard Benyon might be Richard Benyon’s brother. Bernard Benyon of the Madras council had a daughter (Grace) with his wife Grace in 1713, but then died and was buried in Madras on 7 February 1715. It is likely therefore that he would have been established in Madras in 1712 when Richard Benyon arrived there, suggesting that he was older than Richard and was possibly his uncle. Whether brother or uncle to Richard, Bernard Benyon was certainly well connected elsewhere: when Thomas Pitt (of diamond fame, Governor of Madras from 1698 to 1709 and later the first ‘Indian’ owner of Swallowfield Park) found out that Benyon was dead he described how he had experienced ‘a great loss, which delays my leaving town till Monday’. With such connections, Bernard and
Daniel Benyon were well placed to ensure their family’s rise through the Company and indeed Richard Benyon rose swiftly within its service. In 1718, just six years after his appointment to the civil service, he had become a member of the Madras Council, and he later went on to become the Governor of Madras in 1735.

On 17 October 1724, at the age of 26, Richard Benyon married Mary Fleetwood. Mary was the granddaughter of Robert Fleetwood, who had arrived in Madras in 1662 and became the Chief at the Company’s Factory at Madpollam in Golcanda (Hyderabad). Robert Fleetwood survived for 14 years in India before dying in 1676 in Madras. Mary Fleetwood was possibly the daughter of the supercargo Edward Fleetwood. Clive Williams infers that Mary Fleetwood was related to Elizabeth Fleetwood (b.1700) who married Richard Shelley in 1726. This couple later became grandparents to Anne Barbara Whitworth (d.1814), who married Henry Russell Sr (1751–1836) in 1782, who purchased Swallowfield Park in 1820. These relationships remind us that the Company’s increasing grip on the Indian subcontinent was sustained by a cohesive elite, which maintained its identity (notwithstanding the many challenges of trans-imperial domestic life) through intermarriage and domestic life in a nexus of connected domestic sites. An eighteenth-century conversation piece further confirms the link between the Benyons and the Shelleys. The information listed for the painting in the catalogue to the 1906 Whitechapel Gallery exhibition ‘The Georgians’, attributed the piece to William Hogarth and noted that it featured Lady Shelley, Mr and Mrs Richard Shelley, Misses Fanny and Martha Rose Shelley, Capt The Hon. W. Fitzwilliam, Mr. Benyon, and Miss Beard. As the provenance of the painting is uncertain, it is difficult to tell to which Benyon the painting refers. Nevertheless, it shows that Richard Benyon may well have had multiple links to Berkshire and to Swallowfield Park from an early stage: first through Thomas Pitt’s connection to Bernard and Daniel Benyon and second through his first wife Mary, who was possibly great-aunt to Anne Barbara Whitworth. Like many other East India Company officials Richard Benyon soon became connected to multiple Company persons and sites.

After only one year of marriage the Benyons returned home to England, in 1725. At this juncture, Benyon made full use of his newfound wealth and bought the Manor of Coptfold Hall in Margaretting, Essex, in 1728. Despite the purchase of his new home, he soon returned to India. In 1732 he was reappointed to Fort St George, Madras as Second-in-Council; he arrived in Madras in 1733. On 20 January 1735 the Company appointed Benyon Governor of Madras. While in this role,
Benyon (now a widower) married for the second time, on 14 October 1738 to Frances Davis.\textsuperscript{21} Just over two years later, on 24 January 1741, Frances gave birth to their daughter (also Frances), who died shortly thereafter, leaving the couple to bury her the next day.\textsuperscript{22} A year later, Benyon’s wife Frances died in childbirth, on 21 October 1742.\textsuperscript{23} Shortly after this, in January 1744, Benyon boarded the \textit{Duke} and returned to England for the final time. In 1745 he bought Gidea Hall near Romford (now a boys’ school), which had recently been rebuilt as a mansion. In the same year, Benyon acquired another property through marriage. In 1745 he married the widow Mary Wrighte of Englefield House.

Richard and Mary Benyon lived together in Englefield for 29 years before Richard died in 1774. Despite the affective value that they placed on objects, little is known of the changes the couple made to the interior of Englefield House.\textsuperscript{24} Alongside Englefield and Gidea Hall, the Benyons also owned Great Newbury in Ilford, which they had purchased from Thomas Webster in 1747, after Benyon had moved to Englefield. In 1758 they purchased yet another property, North Ockendon in Essex from Hugh Meynell.\textsuperscript{25} Like other returned Company men, Benyon’s conspicuous consumption of multiple properties contributed to ensuring that the figure of the ‘nabob’ became a powerful image in the second half of the eighteenth century. The proximity of these properties to each other in particular locales consolidated an understanding of such purchases as conspicuous. Gidea Hall, Great Newbury and North Ockenden, for example, all lay along a 15-mile route, which stretched around present day Romford and finished in Ilford. North Ockenden, like Gidea Hall, descended through the Benyon side of the family with Newbury until 1891. The \textit{Victoria County History} records that ‘North Ockenden Hall lay within a moated enclosure immediately south of the churchyard. The redbrick house was of sixteenth-century origin with additions of the early eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. It was damaged by bombing in 1944 and later demolished.’\textsuperscript{26} Unlike North Ockenden, Gidea Hall and Newbury, Englefield descended through the Powlett Wrighte side of the family, and when Mary Benyon died in 1776, Englefield passed to Powlett Wrighte the Younger (d.1779), her son by her first marriage.

The Wrightes return

During the 1770s Powlett Wrighte the Younger made many changes to Englefield. He added a neoclassical frieze featuring a repeating lotus
and anthemion pattern (which originated in Ancient Egypt and profoundly influenced the arts of Eurasia) to the drawing room. At the same time, Wrighte also picked out a matching white marble chimney-piece and Corinthian pilasters for the dining room. Such opulence was matched in other areas of the house. Powlett Wrighte’s executor accounts list payments of over £1,400 to the upholsterers Ince and Mayhew for two sets of chairs and settees. At the same time, it also seems that Powlett Wrighte made substantial changes to the fabric of the house. A few clues remain as to whom he might have employed as an architect. In January 1781, Powlett Wrighte’s executors paid 10 guineas to a certain ‘Mr Woods Surveyor’. Jackson-Stops argues that Mr Woods was ‘most certainly’ the landscape gardener Richard Woods, who came from Essex and who laid out the park at Gidea for Wrighte’s half-brother Richard Benyon the Younger (1746–97). Another surveyor, Clement Read, was paid £60 in November 1781. Yet, in employing surveyors, possibly making changes to the exterior, and definitely altering the interior, Powlett Wrighte accumulated many debts upon the estate. As John Habakkuk has argued, such house building often arose from motives of comfort, aesthetics, prestige or taste and was generally paid for not by capital or an enlarged income but by a landowner’s current income. In paying for house building using this method many families accumulated debt as costs became uncontrollable. The debts incurred on the estate by Powlett Wrighte the Younger ultimately became a problem that the next owner of Englefield would have to solve. Although Powlett Wrighte the Younger married in 1777, he died childless in 1779 and left Englefield to his uncle Nathaniel Wrighte, in accordance with his father’s will.

At this point, according to Nathaniel Wrighte an ‘Inventory and Appraisements of the Household goods & Furniture of Englefield House’ was carried out by Higgs, while a ‘Catalogue of & Valuation of the Books in the Library’ was completed by Fletcher. As a result of the appraisement the ‘Goods’ were valued at £160 and the books at £144. After having the books ‘clean’d and properly arranged’, Wrighte offered to send them to Richard Benyon the Younger, ‘if you would chuse to have them sent to you, please to let me know where and I will send them immediately’. Just one year later, in 1780, Nathaniel Wrighte wrote to Benyon expressing his concerns about the amount of debt carried by the Englefield estate. By the summer of 1781, Nathaniel Wrighte had begun to take action – he was keen to let Englefield. Although renting-out remains understudied in country house literature, it was an important strategy for retaining country houses within
families. As this chapter shows, however, renting simultaneously stabilized and destabilized the country house. Although in the long term it allowed Englefield to remain within the wider structure of the Wrighte and Benyon families, in the short term, leasing resulted in a change of character for the house as a new occupier inhabited it. Nathaniel Wrighte and Richard Benyon the Younger were alert to the possibility of destabilization, which renting prompted, and worked hard to find a ‘suitable’ tenant.

Initially Wrighte courteously offered Richard Benyon the Younger first refusal on the estate, but Benyon turned this offer down, despite his hopes that the estate would remain in the family. In a letter to Wrighte, Benyon described how he felt ‘much obliged to you for your attention in giving me the first offer, which numberless reasons tender it absolutely impossible for me to accept. I hope however that your resolution is not unalterably fixed & that you will still pass many happy years there’.36 Wrighte was determined, however, and after careful consideration felt that ‘I am to find myself obliged to make a temporary resignation of it, but so it must be, for after having been now all most two years in possession of this Estate, I am fully convinced, that the unavoidable outgoings and deductions are greater than any Income can support’.37 Almost three weeks later, Wrighte wrote to Benyon again. He valued Englefield highly and estimated that the rent should be 400 guineas per annum, ‘for the use of nearly two thousand Pounds worth of furniture & Books, a hundred acres of exceeding rich lands, a Park well stocked with Deer a Pond or rather Lake abounding with the most excellent Fish, the sporting Liberties of three good Manors, cannot be thought one farthing too much’.38 Wrighte hoped that Benyon would be able to recommend some potential tenants, ‘such a one as you yourself may approve of’.39

It is difficult to know whom Richard Benyon would have recommended to Wrighte – perhaps one of his mother’s family or one of his father’s East India Company connections. Wrighte though clearly felt that Benyon was well connected enough (particularly perhaps to EIC connections with ready money) to recommend someone suitable. From Benyon’s correspondence it seems that he was keen for a certain Mr D’Oyly to take Englefield.40 But after making enquiries through Mr Southouse, he found that D’Oyly had already taken Ware Park in Hertfordshire.41 By December 1781, Mr Wrighte had found a tenant and negotiated a rent of 300 rather than 400 guineas.42 The new tenant of Englefield House was the widow of Lord Robert Clive – Lady Margaret Clive (1735–1817).
Lady Margaret Clive at Englefield House

It seems that Richard Benyon did not recommend Lady Clive (see Figure 9.2), but rather that she came under recommendation from others. Nathaniel Wrighte described to Benyon how he had been ‘informed by many who had the honour of being acquainted with Lady Clive, that her Ladyship was possessed of many excellent Qualities, and that there was no room for doubt but that she would take all possible care of the Books, Furniture etc left in the house and of the Premises in general’, therefore he ‘prevailed … to
give her Ladyship the preferences to all others who had before made or were then making applications for that most delightful place. Wrighte chose Lady Clive to be tenant at Englefield in part because he believed that she would give due attention to the material objects and interiors belonging to the house. He clearly valued Englefield’s interiors and objects highly and was prepared to accept a lower rent in order to secure a tenant whom he believed would do the same. At the same time, he must have recognized the importance of a link with a ‘nabobina’ such as Lady Clive who was wealthy and well connected.

Lady Clive was a significant and well-known figure within the Company’s networks, and her tenancy of Englefield saw the house’s links with the EIC progressively enlarge. As a figure connected to wider public conceptions of the Company, Lady Clive’s presence consolidated Englefield’s place within the ‘English Hindoostan’. At the same time, she welcomed other Company visitors to the house, marking this home still further with Company connections. In 1787, for instance, Margaret Fowke, niece of the East India Company official John Walsh who lived at nearby Warfield Park, planned to marry John Benn of Ormathwaite, Cumbria (who had been in the Company’s civil service in Calcutta from 1778 to 1786) at Englefield House. Lady Clive was cousin to John Walsh and retained close connections with the family and Margaret in particular. Although Margaret ultimately decided to have the ceremony at her brother Francis’s house in London and the reception at Richmond on Saturday 30 June 1787, she visited Englefield with her new husband in July. Writing to John Walsh in 1787, Margaret explained that ‘I should be happy to follow your advice in having the ceremony performed at Englefield & should receive a most [?] pleasure from the presence of Lady Clive. The only reason why I prefer London & my brother’s house is that it is infinitely more private – a circumstance to my feeling of the utmost moment in a marriage.’

Country houses could be used to host marriage ceremonies, but they also acted as important sites from which East India Company families could launch young daughters onto the marriage market.

Lady Clive moved to Englefield in the 1780s in order to place her youngest daughter in a suitable location for entry into society. Outside of London, but close enough to visit out of season and near to other East India Company connections in the area, Englefield was an ideal location at this moment in Lady Clive’s life cycle. When that moment ended in the late 1780s, she moved to another location. As demonstrated in the chapter on Swallowfield Park in this volume, women connected to
the East India Company often returned from India with young children and led peripatetic lives, moving from country house to country house. Similarly, as the chapter on Warfield Park in this volume demonstrates, as widows Company women were also often required to become mobile in order to fulfill the needs of their families. Lady Clive’s experience further illustrates how peripatetic living continued into later life for widows. Just before her youngest daughter married a certain Mr Walpole, as her maternal duties ended, others in the Englefield household assumed that Lady Clive would leave for a smaller residence. In 1788 as she began to look for another house and considered renting Dunston Park, located around nine miles away from Englefield House in Thatcham, Berkshire, but decided against it. She also looked at some houses in Essex. Her efforts to change residence could not have come too soon. In 1789 Nathaniel Wrighte died and Richard Benyon the Younger inherited Englefield.

The Benyon legacy (1789–1854)

Richard Benyon the Younger’s possession of Englefield was short-lived. He died in 1796, leaving his son Richard Benyon (1770–1854) to inherit. On 27 September 1797, a year after his father’s death and his own inheritance of Englefield, Richard Benyon married Elizabeth Sykes, only daughter of Sir Francis Sykes of Basildon Park. Upon this marriage Englefield’s connection with the East India Company grew stronger still. At the same time, Benyon’s connections to Berkshire and the English establishment likewise increased.

In An Open Elite?, Lawrence and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone argued that between 1540 and 1880 the English elite was not as open as has previously been assumed by historians. They asserted that ‘Only a very small handful of very rich merchants succeeded in buying their way into the elite, and by the second generation they were fully assimilated’. In contrast, this chapter reminds us that ‘rich merchants’ could both buy and marry into the elite. However, it took a third generation for this family to become assimilated, and even then assimilation was not necessarily ‘full’. Richard Benyon joined the elite by focusing on parliament, local civic responsibilities and house building. In 1802, he became MP for Pontefract, remaining in this seat until 1806. In the same year, Benyon sold Gidea Hall to Alexander Black and Englefield became the principal family seat. In the following two parliaments, from 1806 to 1812, Benyon acted as
MP for Wallingford. He continued to focus his attentions on Berkshire by becoming Justice of the Peace, Deputy Lieutenant of Berkshire and High Sheriff of Berkshire. Benyon’s marriage revealed the coexistence of these local connections with wider Company networks: he and his ‘English’ country house simultaneously figured in local, national and global worlds.

From 1806 onwards, Benyon began improving Englefield and employed the celebrated architect Sir John Soane (1753–1837) to complete the designs. As part of his alterations, Benyon added an elevation to the east front. Gervase Jackson-Stops argues that this change suggests that they intended to remove the eighteenth-century Venetian windows on the south side and the cupolas to the towers and insert a new door and windows. He also suggests that the construction of the elevation might have been connected with the removal of ‘Paulet Wrighte’s offices’ on the east front. In 1814 Benyon was in the fortunate position of acquiring an extensive inheritance through his connections to the Powlett Wrighte family and rapidly adopted the Powlett Wrighte name. Eight years later, Richard Benyon Powlett Wrighte’s wife Elizabeth died. In that same year 1822, he gained another fortune, from his de Beauvoir cousin who owned land in Hackney and became Richard Benyon de Beauvoir. With his identity (as signified by his surname) in a state of constant flux, Benyon turned to bricks and mortar to fix his family in Berkshire and the traditions signified by the English country house. He used his newfound wealth to begin another improvement campaign at Englefield.

Initially Benyon de Beauvoir approached architect Thomas Hopper, who had previously worked on Penrhyn Castle and Leigh Court and restyled Purley Hall between 1818 and 1820. In the earliest surviving letter to Hopper, Benyon de Beauvoir included a pencil sketch of the south-east corner of the house, outlining the addition of two bay windows, which would light the room and rooms above it. In response to his client’s desire for more light, Hopper added windows to the dining room side that replicated the proportions and decorations of the central porch bay. He also changed the silhouette of the house by adding a series of tall, square turrets, many of which disguised chimneystacks and made some internal alterations, for instance the ceilings of the library and dining room even though the latter incorporated earlier plasterwork. These alterations continued for a decade, and Benyon de Beauvoir finally made his last payment to Hopper in 1829.
In an 1832 watercolour, John Constable portrayed the changes Benyon de Beauvoir had made to Englefield. Constable described Englefield as a house still marked by its original construction in the Elizabethan period, and it is interesting to conjecture whether Benyon himself sought to use this image to project a suppositious Elizabethan family history with this home. For Constable’s vision for Englefield as an Elizabethan house was reflected not only in the exterior character of the house but also in its interior decoration. Very few of the furnishings bought by Richard Benyon de Beauvoir survive, but when Jackson-Stops researched the house in 1981 he found a battlemented state bed supplied in 1833 by the upholsterers Allaway and Davis. It was originally hung with blue and silver brocade, the tester ‘trimmed with 52 Blue silk Gothic shape ornaments.’ By using the ‘Gothic shape’, Benyon de Beauvoir showed both his engagement with the fashionable Gothic revival movement, which looked to the architecture and arts of the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, but also the house’s original Elizabethan history. In this manner, Benyon de Beauvoir aesthetically closed the space between its original building and the contemporary moment of his residence at Englefield.

Conclusion

In 1849 Richard Benyon de Beauvoir purchased South Ockenden Hall in Essex. The property remained in the family until 1937 when it was sold along with the family’s other Essex properties to pay for death duties. Englefield, however, remained in the Benyon family and does so today. Within the Benyon family, therefore, Englefield continued to be relied upon as a marker of history, lineage and thus power. Nevertheless, as this chapter has shown, rather than an apparently ‘timeless’ continuity of ownership, in the eighteenth century it was colonial sources of wealth that allowed the Benyon family to slowly take possession of Englefield. Moreover, Company money was important in allowing the family to maintain and reconfigure the house in ways that asserted its Elizabethan roots, roots that predated the family’s wealth and association with the house. Rather than ‘timeless’ continuity, processes such as inheritance, marriage and renting constantly brought new occupiers to Englefield’s door in the eighteenth century. Among those new occupiers Richard Benyon, Lady Clive and Elizabeth Sykes brought their East India Company connections and wealth and political power with them. Hence, Englefield took its due part in the ‘English
Hindoostan’ not necessarily because its exterior or interior changed but rather because the people connected to it changed its character. Englefield continued to act as a ‘power house’ from the sixteenth century onwards, but as with many other ‘English’ powerhouses, did so as a result of Indian wealth.