

AT HOME WITH THE LONDON MIDDLEING SORT – THE INVENTORY EVIDENCE FOR FURNISHINGS AND ROOM USE, 1570–1720

Eleanor John

During the recent project to redisplay the Geffrye Museum's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century galleries, inventories of the possessions of middling Londoners formed one of the major bodies of evidence for the displays. The galleries focus on the homes of the London 'middling sort', and show their main living spaces through a series of period rooms (Figures 1 and 2). The project team worked with a sample of inventories to help establish periodisation, the types of rooms to be shown and how they should be furnished.¹ The contents of rooms as listed in the inventories and their relationship to each other were studied to create an understanding of how the spaces would have been used. This article considers this inventory evidence for London's middling sort, bringing to light a significant, and previously little discussed, shift in domestic arrangements: most strikingly the decline of the hall and the rise of the dining room, but also a number of other changes. The London situation is then briefly compared to that in a small number of other towns and cities.

The 'middling sort' or 'sorts', along with other terms such as 'middle station' and 'middle orders' or 'ranks' were contemporary terms, used to describe those people below the gentry and aristocracy and above the 'labouring people'.² The gentry and aristocracy were people of independent means, usually, but not necessarily, landowners. The middling sort were people who worked for their livings, but not in the same way as 'the labouring people'. In the main they made their money in trade, turning over capital, producing, importing, wholesaling and retailing goods, making investments and providing services. The edges where the middling sort met the gentry on the one hand and labourers on the other were blurred. A second son from the ranks of the gentry, with the estate reserved for the firstborn son, might go into trade, and gentry daughters frequently married into merchant families.³ At the other end of the range, small-scale shopkeepers and artisans, for example, might move beyond earning enough to clothe and feed their families and start to employ others and accumulate wealth. In his study of the middling sort between 1660 and 1730, Peter Earle has put some figures to the wealth of the middling sort in London.⁴ He suggests a personal estate of a few hundred pounds and an annual income of £50 demarcates the bottom of the group, with the average of the middling sort in London having a personal fortune of between £1,000 and £2,000. While some accumulated a wealth of tens of thousands and even a few of over £100,000, the majority of the middling sort, according to Earle, fell within the range of a personal wealth of £500 to £5,000.

With regard to the household size and structure represented in the inventories, Peter Earle's work is again useful. Using tax records from 1695, which list the occupants of

houses, and linking these to his sample of inventories where possible, he considers that the average middling household consisted of 7 to 8 people: the head of the household, their spouse if they were married and their children if they had any, and a group classified in the tax records as 'servants'. These were usually between 2 and 4 people, both men and women, comprising female domestic servants and male apprentices or other employees such as journeymen and book clerks. Just under a quarter had lodgers and, surprisingly, resident relatives beyond the immediate family were uncommon.⁵

Earle's sample, like the majority of the Geffrye's sample, was based primarily on London Orphans' Court inventories. These were inventories drawn up for the City of London's Orphans' Court which managed the estates of men and women 'free' of the City of London who died leaving children under the age of 21.⁶ Other inventories were gathered from the probate records in the Guildhall Library, London and the Treasury records housed in the National Archives at Kew. In all, 85 London inventories were transcribed and analysed as part of the research for the galleries for the period 1570–1720. The inventories are subject to caveats in terms of reliability; these have been discussed many times and will only be touched on here.⁷

The inventories list the goods of the deceased and were usually made fairly shortly after their death, providing a valuation of their personal wealth, excluding real estate, to assist in the distribution of their estate.⁸ They list the deceased's possessions, often room by room, but exclude other people's goods, such as those belonging to lodgers and servants. Women's property became their husband's on marriage, but some items were in practice retained by wives and would not have appeared in their husband's inventories. The contents of a room may therefore be incomplete or a room missing entirely from the inventory if it contained none of the deceased's belongings or only things of low value.

Inventories may be incomplete or otherwise inaccurate records for other reasons. The room names applied by the appraisers, who took the inventories, may not necessarily be those used by the people who lived in the house. However, appraisers seem to have applied the names fairly consistently, showing that there was a shared understanding of different types of room. Objects may have been moved between rooms, or stored away from where they were used or grouped together for ease of taking the inventory. This happens, for example, with silver items, which tend to be grouped together in a section of the inventory headed 'Plate' with often just their combined weight given to produce the valuation, obscuring what the pieces were, and where they were used. It also happens with linen and clothing. In the London inventories, brass, pewter and tin items are generally recorded in the kitchen, again often grouped together and, particularly in the case of pewter items, valued by the total weight. While some of these items were used in the kitchen, others may have been stored there or just recorded there to facilitate the process of taking the inventory. Brass candlesticks, for example, are listed in the kitchen with other brass items and do not usually appear in the listings of other rooms where they would have been used. This may indicate that they were usually kept in the kitchen during daylight (perhaps for ease of cleaning) and brought out when needed in the evening, or that they were simply recorded in the kitchen for the sake of the inventory.

Other items may have been removed before the inventory was taken. Although an inventory was meant to be a complete listing of a person's possessions, including

bequeathed items, comparisons of wills and inventories show that in practice bequests were not always included in the inventory. Finally, there are certain types of item that appraisers seem routinely to have ignored. Children's toys and pets generally are not included, although occasionally bird cages crop up, and also low value items, the small things of everyday life, are largely omitted. These things, which would clearly have contributed much to a room and what went on there, remind us that the inventories only tell a partial story. The general effect is that the inventories under-represent the occurrence of rooms and the things in them.

In order to focus on the middling sort, gentry and aristocratic inventories, where this was evident, were excluded from the sample and just about all the inventories in the sample give an indication that the deceased had been active in business. Although the inventories are conspicuously rich in representing trades people, those representing people from the legal professions or the church are lacking. Another under-represented group is women, with only 2 of the 85 inventories being of women's estates. The total sums for over two thirds of the inventories fall between £500 to £5,000, corresponding nicely to Peter Earle's figures for a larger sample. However, the small number of inventories involved in this sample, and the extended length of time covered, mean that the findings can only be a suggestion of what seems to be happening and that statistical analysis would not be meaningful. It should also be noted that inventories represent rooms that may have been furnished some years before, building a time-lag into the dating. The introduction of cane chairs provides some evidence for this time-lag; while the Joiners' Company claimed that cane chairs were introduced around 1664, they do not appear in London inventories for the first time until 1673.⁹

The first part of this analysis looks at what was going on from 1570 to 1665, using 31 inventories for this period, and the second at what happens between 1666 and 1720, using 54 inventories. The 30 years of the sixteenth century are covered by only 4 inventories, but they are remarkably consistent and suggest that the main patterns of furnishing of the first half of the seventeenth century were already established.

The main types of room listed in the inventories from 1570 to 1665 are halls, parlours, chambers, kitchens and garrets, as well as most houses also having a space such as a shop, warehouse or counting house indicating business activities. The shop and kitchen were likely to occupy the ground floor with the hall, parlour and chambers on the floors above terminating with the garrets at the top of the house. However, despite useful room names like 'the chamber over the hall', the inventories cannot be relied upon to give the exact relationship of the rooms and layout of a house. The summary of Table I shows that 74 per cent of the inventories in the sample between 1570 and 1665 list a hall, which seems to have functioned as the hub of the household. Half of these, mostly from the wealthier end of the scale, also had a parlour and all of those with a parlour, except for one, also had a hall. Both spaces were similarly furnished, often with a draw-leaf table, joined stools and court cupboard, indicating that they were used for dining (Figures 1 and 3). This grouping of furniture repeats through the inventories from 1570–1665, becoming recognisable as a key identifying feature of these spaces during the period. Seats (further stools and chairs), often upholstered, and sometimes a 'great chair', are also listed. While the joined stools are usually associated with the draw-leaf table, the

Table 1: The incidence of halls, parlours and dining rooms by date, showing the disappearance of the hall and the rise of the dining room.

Period inventories	No. of inventories	No. having 1 or more halls	No. having 1 or more parlours	No. having dining rooms
1570-1600	4	3	2	0
1601-1610	1	0	0	0
1611-1620	4	3	2	(1 'great dining chamber')
1621-1630	5	5	2	0
1631-1640	4	3	2	0
1641-1650	2	2	0	0
1651-1660	4	3	1	1
1661-1670	9	4	4	4
1671-1680	4	0	2	3
1681-1690	10	0	3	7
1691-1700	11	0	4	7
1701-1710	22	0	10	14
1711-1720	5	0	3	4

Summary of Table 1

Period	No. of inventories	No. having 1 or more halls	No. having 1 or more parlour	No. having dining rooms
1570-1665	31	23 (74%)	12 (39%)	4 (all from 1659-1665)
1666-1720	54	0	23 (42.5%)	36 (66%)

upholstered furniture is generally listed separately, suggesting its use as fireside furniture, although it presumably could have been used at the table if required. The range of seating, from joined stools and forms, through upholstered stools and chairs to the great chair, provide the opportunity for hierarchical seating arrangements. Interestingly, these seats are occasionally described in terms of gender. Thomas Deane, for example, recorded as a 'fletcher', had in his hall in 1571 'Item a Joyned chaire for a man, two womens/ Chaires one Stole [stool] for a woman,'¹⁰ and the furnishings of William Marriott's parlour in 1594 included 'Item a great chaire/ wth greene cloth/ Item Six greene cloth/stooles for women'¹¹ Later the terms 'high' and 'low' are used to describe chairs and stools and it is possible that this was essentially the distinction between the 'men's' and 'women's' seats. The furnishings of Adrian Moore's little parlour, who was recorded as a haberdasher in 1618, included '3 high chaires, 3 low chaires, 3 high stools, 4 low stools, all covered with Russia leather'. One of the problems of furniture history is that there is very little surviving middling furniture dating from the first half of the seventeenth century that can be securely identified as being made, or used, in London. The pieces from this period illustrated in the article are



1. Room at the Geffrye Museum representing the hall in the home of a middling Londoner in 1630, showing some of the furnishings typical for this type of space. The room was created as part of the redisplay of the museum's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century galleries in 2006

The Geffrye Museum, London / photo John Hammond



2. Room at the Geffrye Museum representing the parlour in the home of a middling Londoner in 1695. The room was created as part of the redisplay of the museum's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century galleries in 2006

The Geffrye Museum, London / photo John Hammond



3. Court cupboard, oak, about 1630
The Geffrye Museum, London / photo John Hammond

‘best guesses’ as to what this furniture might have been and are used to show the basic forms under discussion. In selecting these pieces, items with suspected regional inflections which would have suggested an origin from outside London were avoided.

All the inventories of halls and parlours, excluding those where there was only a very perfunctory listing, show that these rooms had the facility to be heated and their fireplaces were typically well-furnished with iron andirons tipped with brass, a pair of tongs and a fire shovel. Only a small residue of cooking equipment is occasionally listed in the halls and cooking seems to have already largely moved to the kitchen, unlike the practice in other regions (see below).¹² Curtains are listed in half the halls and over two thirds of the parlours.¹³ Walls could be hung with ‘painted cloths’ – canvas cloths with painted scenes or patterns.¹⁴ Pictures, sometimes with a map, are frequently mentioned, more frequently in the hall than the parlour although their subject matter is rarely given.¹⁵ Some of the few descriptions include a ‘picture representing the ages of man’ in the parlour of Constance Wallis, widow (1661); ‘30 pictures great and small 3 other boards one of the colleges in Oxford, the other in Cambridge and the third of the genealogie’ valued at £5 in the hall of Richard Tenant, listed as a merchant tailor in 1625; and ‘12 pictures of the Sybbos’ presumably the 12 sibyls, valued in pairs, in the hall of Anthony Abdy, Alderman, in 1640.¹⁶ While a room could contain over 30 paintings, as mentioned here, between four and six pictures or just having one was more common.

The presence of other objects suggests some of the further activities that took place in these spaces. Books are fairly commonly listed in both rooms, the Bible being the most frequently identified title.¹⁷ A keyboard instrument, usually 'a paire of virginals', and a 'pair of playing tables' which would have been a backgammon or chess board, are also sometimes listed. Beds are not listed in any of the halls or parlours in the sample between 1570 and 1665, another key difference between the London homes and those of some other areas (see below).

Table 2: Incidence of selected goods in halls, parlours and dining rooms between 1571-1665 and 1666-1720.

	No. of halls listing selected goods 1571-1665 (out of a total of 20 ⁽⁸⁾)	No. of parlours listing selected goods 1571-1665 (out of a total of 15 ⁽⁹⁾)	No. of dining rooms listing selected goods 1571-1665 (out of a total of 4)	No. of parlours listing selected goods 1666-1720 (out of a total 23)	No. of dining rooms listing selected goods 1666-1720 (out of a total 36)
Large table (usually draw-leaf) and stools (usually joint)	13	9	2	0	0
Painted cloth	3	2	0	0	0
Pictures and maps	10	3	1	10	17
Books	7	5	1	0	3
Playing tables	5	2	0	0	0
Keyboard instrument	5	2	1	0	0
Curtains	10	11	2	4	9
Beds	0	0	0	3	4
Table(s) and suite of chairs	1	0	2	18	28
Mirror	3	1	1	12	21
Clock	1	0	0	6	11
Gilt hangings	1	1	0	7	14

A fairly typical example of the furnishing of the hall is that given in the inventory of Thomas Willis, described as a cloth worker, in 1630. There is no parlour listed in his inventory, so it is likely the hall would have been the main living space:

In the hall

Impris a drawinge table/ 7 joyned stooles & 2 forms	40s/-
Item a Court Cupboard and a/ stoole table	32/s-
Item 4 back Chaires and a greate/Chaire of Russia leather	30s/-
Item 11 old chaires and stooles	15/s-
Item a paire of virginals and a/ frame	
Item a Cypress Chest	£9
Item 13 pictures 7 wth frames/ 6 wthout frames & a jack	15/-
Item an old house clock & a/ slate wth a frame	10/s-
Item 3 Curtens and Curten rodde	2s/6d
Item a paire of iyon Andirons/typt wth brass & a paire of tongs/	
& fireshovel	10s/-
Suma	£18-14s-6d ¹⁰

The contents indicate some of the activities which would have taken place there – dining by the ‘drawinge’ (ie draw-leaf) table, joined stools and court cupboard; music-making by the ‘paire of virginals’ and sitting by the fire and socialising by the mixture of upholstered seats.

Robert Manne’s inventory of 1622/3 provides an example of a home with a parlour and a hall and shows the similarity in their furnishings:

In the little Parlour

Item a drawinge table, 4/Joyned Stooles, 2 Chaires, a little/	
cupboord a napkin press & 2/wainscot presses	40s/-
Item 4 Cushions 2 windowe/Curtens & a Curten Rodde & 2/	
Creeps wth brass topps an heure/glass a Candlecase an old Iron/	
back & a paire of Snuffers	14s/-
Item the painted Cloth	1s/6d
Item an old bible & Some Small/books	10s/-
Suma	£3-5s-6d

The furniture of the hall meanwhile is listed as follows, both rooms having draw-leaf tables, joined stools and cupboards:

In the hall

Item a drawinge table a/Court Cupboord 7 joyned stooles	53s/4d
Item 2 Chaires and 3 lowe stooles & a paire of virginals	18s
Item 8 old Cushions an old/Stript Carpett 2 old window	
Curtens & Rodde	15s
Item a paire of brass Andirons a/	
paire of Creeps fireshovell & tongs/tipt wth brass	£3-13s-4d
Suma	£7-19s-8d ¹¹

The valuations of the contents of halls in the sample range from £2 to over £39, but with over half falling between £5 to £20. The valuations of the contents of parlours varies more widely, from £2 to over £49 for the period 1570–1665. However it isn't always the case that the parlour has a higher valuation. The contents of Robert Manne's parlour was valued at £3 5s., whereas the hall was over twice that at £7 9s. On the whole though, parlours tend to feel a little smarter than halls – in Robert Manne's hall, for example, a number of the textiles were described as 'old'.

It is generally assumed that the medieval hall was a space for the whole household to use and eat together, with more senior members of the household being able to retire to the parlour or 'with-drawing room'. It is possible that a similar pattern was being played out in the wealthier homes described in these inventories which had both a hall and parlour. Judging from the inventories, both were used for dining, sitting and reading, sometimes music-making and gaming, but it seems likely that the parlour would have been a more exclusive space than the hall, used by the senior members of the household and by others at their invitation or to wait on them in the case of servants. Further evidence, such as diary testimony, would be needed to corroborate this use of space, but for the majority of our middling sort in this sample, retiring to the parlour during this period wasn't an option as two thirds of them don't appear to have had one. Who exactly had access to the hall and whether it was ever such an inclusive space (particularly the place of children and employees such as apprentices and servants in the use of this space) is also not clear and is generally skipped over in the literature.

Apart from the kitchen and garrets, the other main type of room listed in the 1570–1665 period was the chamber. Chambers generally contained beds, often more than one in each room, the main bed and a secondary bed, usually described as a 'truckle' or 'trundle' bed, that slid underneath the larger bed when not in use. The main beds usually had mattresses filled with feather and the secondary beds feather or the less expensive (and presumably less comfortable) flock or straw. From the inventories it is not clear who occupied these secondary beds; whether they were slept in by servants, children and lesser members of the household, or whether they were in regular use at all. The presence of these secondary beds indicates that members of the household, even the master and mistress, seemed to have shared their sleeping space with others, whether regularly or on a more ad hoc basis, and raises questions about notions of privacy at this period. What is meant by 'private', or experienced as such, changes over time.

In this study chambers fall into three main types. The first type contain beds, chests and perhaps one or two chairs, while the second contain beds, chests and a reasonable number of seats (6 or 7 or more), which seems to suggest a social function for these spaces as well as sleep and storage. Thirdly, 'a Great Chamber' is sometimes listed in the richer houses. These are often the most expensively furnished spaces in the house, containing beds, a large table and upholstered seats. In Adrian Moore's rambling house (the inventory of 1618 lists around 27 rooms), the great chamber was furnished with a long table accompanied by upholstered furniture including a high chair in blue damask, a stool upholstered with Irish taffeta and others in red leather. The blue/red scheme continues with the main bed's furnishing – a tester, valance and curtains in blue perpetuana (which was a durable woven woollen textile) with a silk lining and fringe,

red window curtains of say (a fine woven wool cloth, sometimes with a twill), and a carpet of crimson velvet with silk and gold lace (probably to go on top of the table rather than for the floor) and finally a long pillow and two end cushions of crimson embroidered with velvet.²² The contents of the room were valued at over £56 (a whole year's income for a middling family at the lower end of the scale) and it must have been an impressive space.

With a large table and chairs, the great chamber probably provided another dining space, but unlike the parlour or hall contained an imposing bed and generally richer textiles, and may have been reserved for special occasions. However, great chambers are fairly rare when considering the whole sample. Most of the dwellings in the sample contained several chambers, at least one of which was quite smartly furnished and appears to have had a social function, tending to contain a number of seats. Unlike the great chamber, these rooms were probably not, on the whole, used for dining, as a suitable table is only occasionally mentioned and they probably functioned as more exclusive sitting rooms. The various rooms suggest layers of increasingly restricted access within the house, from the hall, through the parlour to the chamber. More specialised rooms such as nurseries, studies and dining rooms are fairly rare during this period.

As mentioned above, pewter and brass items are usually listed in the kitchen in London inventories, although some of these things, such as brass candlesticks and pewter tableware, would have been used in halls and parlours. Pewter is generally listed by its weight, but occasionally it is broken down into items giving an idea of the types of objects that were involved: plates, dishes, porringers, basins, salts and candlesticks are mentioned.²³ The amount of pewter owned varied from around 50 to a few hundred pounds weight, sometimes divided into the classifications 'fine' and 'course' [sic] with the bulk being 'fine'. Fine pewter was valued at 10–12d. per pound before the 1670s but declined to about 6–7d. in that decade. 100 pounds of fine pewter (a fairly typical amount for the middling Londoner to own) was therefore valued at between £4 and £5 before its price fell to just over half that. Some of the pewter and brass ware may also have been displayed, as well as used, in the parlour or hall. Randle Holme indicates the dual function of such goods, for serving food and display about the room, when describing the use of dishes in *The Academy of Armory*:

This is a vessell or instrument, or what else you please to call it, much in use in all houses, and famileys; both for necessary use (as, putting of meate into them) to serue vp to tables; as also to adorne their countrey houses, and court cuberts: for they are not looked vpon to be of any great worth in personalls, that haue not many dishes and much pewter, Brasse, copper and tyn ware; set round about a Hall, Parlar, and Kitchen.²⁴

Although Holme refers to 'countrey houses', the use of pewter and other metal goods to 'adorn' halls and parlours, and particularly court cupboards, is probably true of urban settings too. Pewter (and silver) are occasionally listed in halls in Lincoln inventories, for example, and it seems likely that the practice of displaying such goods would have been true of London, although there is little direct evidence.²⁵

Silver goods were also widely owned by the middling Londoners in the sample and silver was invested in more heavily than pewter. Even only moderately successful traders,

such as David Wiffin, recorded as a skinner in his inventory of 1626, which gave a sum for his possessions of £163, owned 78 ounces of silver and silver-gilt plate, valued at £19 8s.²⁶ Meanwhile the rich merchants, such as John Williams, described as a draper in his inventory of 1637 which had a total sum of over £18,000, owned 1,095 ounces of silver valued at over £263. Most however had between a few tens of ounces of silver and a few hundred ounces (100 ounces of silver, which was valued at 5 shillings per ounce throughout the period, would have been worth £25). The salt illustrated in figure 4 weighs 11 ounces, and would have been valued at £2 15s. One of the few inventories in the sample to list the silver by item is that of the distiller George Ebborn, which in 1706 lists '1 tankard, 2 porringers, 1 salver and 8 spoons weighing 63 ounces'.²⁷ This amount of silver is towards the lower end of the middle of those in the sample, but even so indicates that the use of silver goods would not have necessarily extended to the whole family (apart from spoons perhaps) and offers another potential means of denoting status and hierarchy.



4. Salt, partially gilt silver, with the date letter for 1580, sponsor's mark IN or NI, and assay mark for London. The piece is 9cm. high and weighs 11 ounces and would have been valued at £2 15s during the period under discussion. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of the Geffrye Museum
The Geffrye Museum, London /
photo John Hammond

From the late 1650s the inventories show a significant shift in domestic arrangements. The hall phases out (the last mention of a hall in this sample is in 1665) and, from 1659 in this sample, the dining room begins to appear routinely. From this point more modest houses tend to have either a parlour or more commonly a dining room, with larger households having both.²⁸ Their furnishings were changing too. The draw-leaf table, joined stools and court cupboard, which had been the pattern in middling homes since at least 1570, disappear through the 1660s and while these furnishings are sometimes found in dining rooms during this decade, a new style is also used for these spaces. In fact, the new style is apparent in the first dining room to be listed in the sample, in the 1659 inventory of Richard Langley, a fishmonger:

'In the dyning-roome

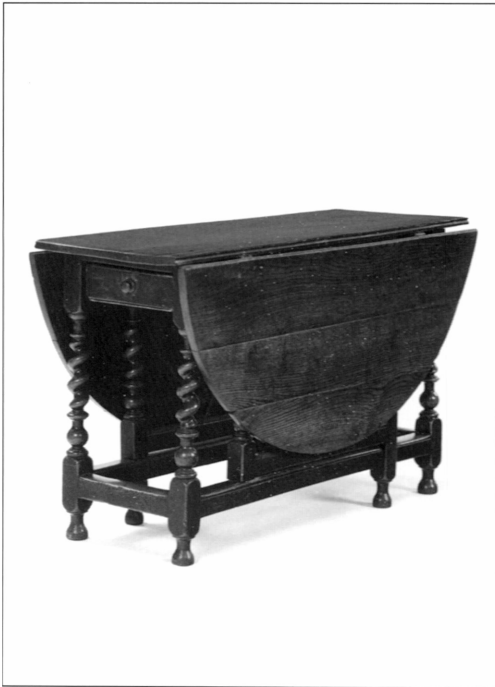
Item One oval table 1 side table
1 elbow chaire 6 other chaires & 1
couch of greene cloth 6 Turkeywork
Chaires with covers 1 long & 1 short
Turkeyworke Carpetts 1 paire of
Brass andirons fireshovell & tongs
1 pr of creeps wth brasses & a pr of
bellows wth a brasse nosle

£10 10s²⁹

An oval table and chairs have replaced the drawing table and joined stools. In the 1661 inventory of Constance Wallis, a mercer's widow, the new style is also used in her dining room:

'In the Dineing roome
Item one oval table 12 Turkey
worke Chaires 1 greene cloth
Carpett 2 rods 4 window curtens
a looking glass a paire of brass
andirons fireshovell & tongs of
brass fireirons with brass knobs
and 2 flower potts £14' 10

By the inventories of the 1670s, the new style appears routinely and is particularly succinctly expressed in the inventory of 1681 of the dining room of Robert Ashton, a merchant tailor, which lists '8 turkey work chairs, 1 turkey carpet, 1 oval table' valued at £3 10s.¹¹ Oval gate-leg tables (figures 5 & 6) could be easily folded away and moved unlike the heavy, rectangular draw-leaf tables. They also lent themselves less to hierarchical seating arrangements for there is no obvious position for the head of the



5. Oval gate-leg table, oak, c.1690 (open)
The Geffrye Museum, London /
photo John Hammond



6. Oval gate-leg table, oak, c.1690 (open)
The Geffrye Museum, London /
photo John Hammond

table. Quite often parlours and dining rooms list more than one oval table, indicating that dining took place at separate tables (presumably when numbers required), and this may have been something that allowed the company to be split in a hierarchical way. However, great chairs and joint stools also disappeared and were replaced by a suite of chairs, again providing a shift to less hierarchical seating arrangements. They were often described as ‘turkey work’ chairs which referred to the top covers of their upholstery being of turkey work (figures 7 and 8). Turkey work was a textile made from wool drawn through canvas and knotted. It had a pile and was so-called because it resembled Turkish carpets. It would have been warm, hard-wearing and more comfortable than the joined stools previously largely used for dining and it was colourful. Figure 9 shows a close-up of an original fringe which survives on a turkey-work chair in the collection at Temple Newsam – the threads in the fringe repeat the range of colours used in the turkey work.

Thinking of the turkey-work chairs as a new thing needs a little qualification. The form of the chair, the so-called back chair (or back stool), was well established and turkey work is also mentioned in the inventories before the 1660s. However, it is the use of a suite of these chairs, largely to the exclusion of other forms of seating, such as joined stools and great chairs, that is new.

The decline of the hall and the rise of the dining room and parlour with their new furnishings may indicate quite a fundamental shift in domestic life, a greater separation



7. Pair of turkey-work chairs, beech frames with original turkey-work upholstery (c.1685), the fringe twentieth-century. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund

The Geffrye Museum, London / photo John Hammond



8. Reverse of the turkey-work cover of one of the chairs shown in figure 7. The underside retains its colour with the black ground, which has been lost almost entirely from the top side of the covers, also still surviving. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund

*The Geffrye Museum, London /
photo John Hammond*



9. Detail of the original fringe on a chair with turkey-work covers in the collection at Temple Newsam House, Leeds (c.1700).

*Leeds City Art Galleries /
photo Annabel Westman*

between the senior members and the rest of the household. The rooms were probably for the use of the senior members of the household and their external networks, and are perhaps evidence of a new sociability amongst the middling sort, with a greater emphasis on dining, played out in a less hierarchical setting than the hall and old-style parlours had provided. The use of the term 'dining room' in itself is an indication of an increase in the significance of eating and its practice, and contemporary testimony such as Pepys' diary shows the importance attached to dining as a way of reinforcing social and professional networks in the 1660s. In his diary entry for 18th December 1662, Pepys describes the impromptu visit of one of his superiors for dinner, after they have spent the morning together in the office. The importance Pepys places on such a visit is clear – it is gratifying to him, but also a source of anxiety, which spills over into anger once the guest has left:

'Up and to the office, Mr Coventry and I alone sat till two o'clock, and then he inviting himself to my house to dinner, of which I was proud; but my dinner being a leg of

mutton and two capons, they were not done enough, which did vex me; but we made shift to please him, I think; but I was, when he was gone, very angry with my wife and people.'

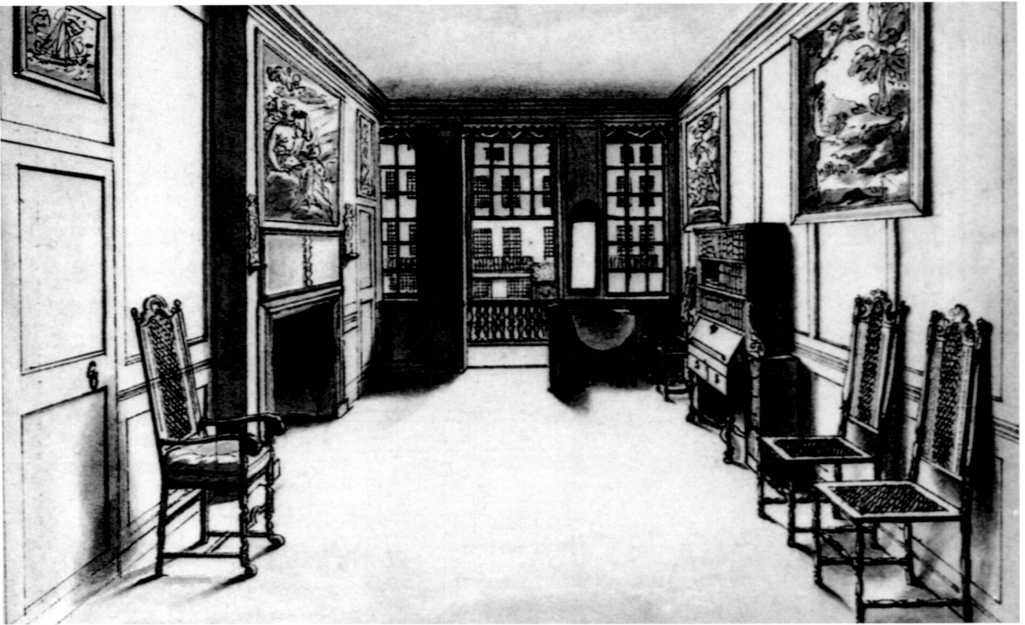
The phrase 'made shift to please him' is interesting and suggests the behaviours of hospitality which would have surrounded the offering of food and which made-up dining practices beyond merely eating. However, much more work on such sources would be required to examine if there was indeed a new or increased significance in the role of dining in the mid-seventeenth century.

Another distinguishing feature of these new dining rooms and parlours was that they were quite frequently furnished with hangings of gilt leather, printed cloth or baize or tapestries. The painted cloths of the pre-1660 period are no longer present. In the inventory of Catherine Davitts' home in 1679 her 'dyneing room' is furnished with 4 pieces of tapestry and the other signs of the new style dining room - 14 turkey work chairs, 4 tables, stands, 2 carpets, a looking glass and the usual fire equipment –all valued at £30 19s.³² At least one of the tables would have been accompanied by the stands, one on either side, probably with the looking glass above the table, forming an arrangement quite different from the previous forms of display in the hall and old-style parlour, such as the court cupboard and its plate. The stands were tall tables with small tops useful for setting candlesticks on and appear in a small number of the new style parlours and dining rooms, the more common arrangement being just a table and mirror. This set-up is shown in the drawings of a late seventeenth-century interior (figures 10 and 11). Though previously recorded as Dutch, it may in fact be a rare depiction for this period of an English home.

Hangings, such as the tapestries mentioned here, and the more common gilt leather, would have had a big impact on the room, helping them feel comfortable and warm, but also giving an atmosphere of richness. This key aesthetic phases out from the parlours in this sample during the first decade of the 1700s, when presumably just panelling, generally painted a stone colour, becomes the more likely finish for this type of room – an indication of a plainer aesthetic coming to the fore.

Sometimes inventories give a little more detail that throws more light on the changes that were taking place. While the furniture for dining had changed other new goods were entering the parlour and dining room too. Lawrence Stevenson's dining room in 1701 was furnished in the well-established 'new' style with the grouping of looking glass, table and stands, followed by an oval table and chairs complete with gilt leather hangings about the room. The inventory then goes on to list smaller items '3 glass beakers, 18 china coffee dishes, 4 earthenware saucers... 9 knives with silver handles and a case, 5 silver spoons and four forks'.³³ The inventory marks some key changes that were taking place, showing the presence of new goods which supported new social behaviours. The arrival of the hot drinks, coffee, tea and chocolate can be traced in the presence here of china coffee dishes. The hot drinks, particularly tea, were adopted in middling homes and taking tea became a social focus, requiring the appropriate goods to make, serve and drink it, and the appropriate manners. Other refinements in dining practice are shown in the presence of the forks, which replaced spoons and knives as the main means of conveying food to the mouth.

Turning to a parlour this time, the haberdasher Thomas Lamb had in his parlour when



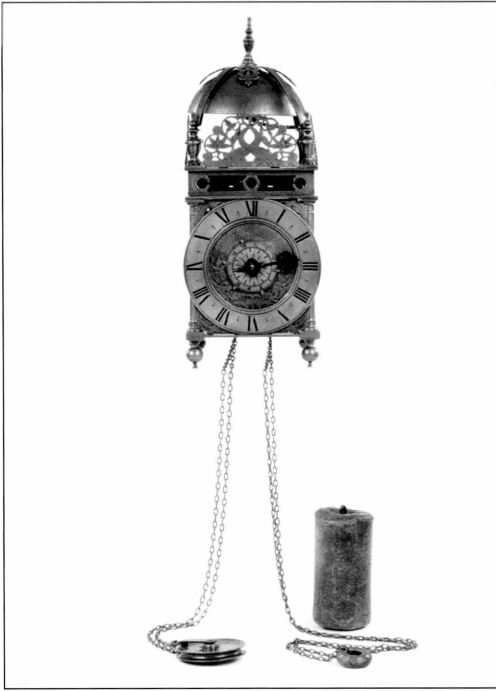
IO & II. Two views of the same room (c.1690), artist unknown.
The arrangement of mirror and oval gate-leg table is shown on one of the piers of the window wall and cane chairs are set to the sides of the room. The table and chairs would have been brought out into the room as required.

Courtesy Sothebys Picture Library

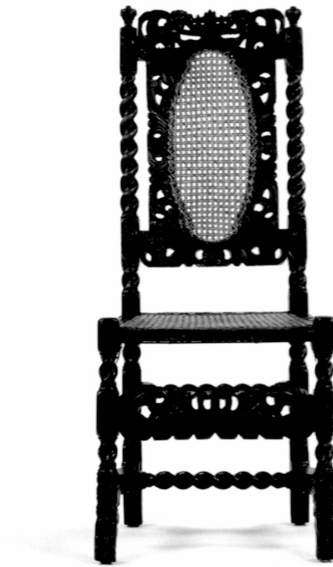
he died in 1683 '2 tables, 10 chaires, one couch, one glass and hooks' (which would have been a looking glass), and 'one clock and case'.³⁴ The list of contents of this room ends with a glass case (for storing drinking glasses) and a work box – evidence of sewing taking place in the parlour, as might be expected, but often falling below the radar of the inventories. Looking glasses and clocks, fairly rare before 1660, became common components of the parlour and the dining room. The phrase 'one clock and case' appears repeatedly, but, from the clocks that survive today, it is difficult to identify exactly what form these clocks would have taken. The few long case clocks that survive from the period are mostly of very high quality and probably not the ubiquitous household items of the middling London inventories. A very small number of less high quality long case clocks survive, sometimes enclosing lantern clocks and it is the lantern clock (figure 12), without a case, that survives in large numbers. It is possible that these clocks were once routinely enclosed in cases or hoods, which are now lost. What is clear is that clocks were much more present than they had been in the first half of the seventeenth century, and presumably this would have impacted on the way people managed their day and the regulation of their time. Looking glasses helped to make the most of precious light, but also perhaps indicate an increasing self-awareness that relates to the refinement of manners that was taking place, also evident in the use of forks and delicate drinking vessels such as glasses and china, and the new style of furnishing in the parlour and dining room generally.

Dining rooms occasionally contain beds in the second half of the seventeenth century. This may have been the result of pressure on space, but may also have been quite an acceptable practice – the dining rooms where beds are mentioned are all quite expensively furnished and, as far as can be gathered from the inventory, give an air of comfort rather than compromise. With high status rooms such as the great chamber which combined beds and dining spaces largely phasing out, but still within living memory, perhaps the presence of these beds in dining spaces should not be taken as an awkward domestic compromise.

Another major change from the 1650s is that chambers become much less likely to contain a secondary bed. This shift in sleeping arrangements, perhaps providing greater privacy for the senior members of the household, ties in with the greater separation afforded by the decline of the hall and the rise of the dining room and parlour. The chambers offered a further layer of retreat, the better ones in the house still tending to contain a suite of chairs and/or stools and sometimes a couch indicating a social function. Tea things are also occasionally mentioned reinforcing this social use and, as earlier, these chambers probably functioned as an even more exclusive sitting room than the parlour, allowing the occupier to be alone or to entertain privately. The terminology for these rooms changed; although 'chamber' remained used as well, 'room' becomes the more common term. Some chambers/rooms were termed 'best' and these were often the most lavishly furnished spaces in the house, containing a bed and suite of chairs and stools. It is not clear whether these were occupied by the head of the household or kept for 'best' in some way. Practice probably varied, but it is worth noting that substantial sums could be tied up in the furnishings of these rooms, and presumably to justify that they would have had an important role within the house. William Durrant, for example, an embroiderer in Hackney, and his wife each had their own chamber, valued at £10 and £6 respectively,



12. Lantern clock by Robert Robinson,
London (c.1665)
The Geffrye Museum, London /
photo John Hammond



13. Cane chair, one of a set of six, walnut
frame with caned back and seat (c.1690)
Purchased with the assistance of the
MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund
The Geffrye Museum, London /
photo John Hammond

while the best room, which included an Indian damask bed lined with blue silk, was valued at a considerable £84. With both the master and mistress of the house accommodated, it's reasonable to assume that this best chamber was not occupied by a member of the household and was kept for 'best' in some sense, although the practices around this are not clear and deserve further attention.

From the 1680s cane chairs appear in the inventories (figure 13) This was a new type of chair (the subject is covered in detail in this volume by David Dewing), but the thing to note here is the shift in the inventories of the 1690s, from turkey-work to cane chairs as the most frequently identified form of seating in middling homes. Cane chairs were cheaper (around half the price of turkey-work chairs) and more flamboyant in design.. Their design changed fairly rapidly over the period they were fashionable so that by the early 1700s the back had become very tall, almost impractically so. They were less robust than turkey-work chairs but represented something more modish, and show the middling sort shifting from spending on a robust, potentially longer-lasting but more expensive chair, to something cheaper, novel and more fashionable. Cane chairs and oval gate-leg tables were the key component of parlours and dining rooms until about 1730

when they fairly quickly phase out. Their last mention in the sample of inventories the museum used for its eighteenth century rooms is an isolated one in 1746.³⁵

Caleb Booth's inventory in 1713 represents a fairly typical parlour for the early decades of the eighteenth century, listing 'An oval table, 2 tea tables (these were probably what we would call trays) 8 cane chairs, an easy chair (presumably an upholstered armchair, and surprisingly one of the few mentions of them in parlours in the inventories), an eight day clock and case, 2 looking glasses, 4 stands (probably working in combination), 1 picture, three prints, window curtains, a tea kettle, lamp and stand (for heating the water for tea), the usual fire things, then some china, delftware and glasses and finally 2 floor cloths.³⁶ Floor cloths were made of thick canvas, like sailcloth, which was painted with many layers to produce a wipeable, probably patterned oilcloth. They first appear in the inventories in the early eighteenth-century and were the most common floor covering in middling parlours by the middle of the century.³⁷ Though these were so common in the homes of the middling sort, there are no known surviving examples from this period today.

At around the same time that halls disappeared and dining rooms became common, the furnishings of the kitchen altered too. From the late 1650s in the inventories, a table, chairs and stools became much more common in this space and, an unexpected 'find', looking glasses, from the late 1670s. With the table and chairs and stools it seems likely that this is where servants and possibly other lower members of the household were taking their meals.

While this fits with the idea that the changes that were taking place provided for a greater spatial segregation in the household between its senior member and servants and other employees, it is not clear from the inventories who actually used these spaces and, for example, whether the hall really was such an inclusive space in the first place. The inventories alone cannot answer such questions and Tim Meldrum, in his study of domestic service between 1660–1750, has warned that something as complex as domestic relations cannot be read from the architecture, layout and furnishings of a building alone. On the decline of the truckle bed he has pointed out that it may well be a sign of domestic change, and may have impacted on privacy, but it may have, for example, *increased* bed-sharing, as much as increasing single-person occupancy of a chamber. By working with the court depositions of domestic servants for the period he has created a more complex and nuanced picture of domestic relations. He has shown, for example, the variety of co-sleeping practices in middling households, which could still involve servants and mistresses or servants and other members of the family, during this period when a greater separation has been suggested.³⁸ To understand the changes that were taking place in the households of the middling sort we need to look more closely at who had access to these spaces and under what circumstances. Diaries and court testimony, for example, can go some way towards this.

In summary then, before turning to the inventory evidence for other towns and cities, what can the inventories tell us about the homes of the London middling sort? They have unveiled some of the circumstances of the middling sort's lives – that they slept on feather beds, hung with wool, silk or printed cotton cloth. That they ate off pewter and owned silver goods. The inventories track the arrival of new goods, and thus the behaviours that they represent – showing for example the rise of tea drinking and refinements in dining. The shifts in room names and their furnishings suggest a shift in

domestic arrangements, the disappearance of the hall and the rise of the dining room and parlour, with their new furnishings, perhaps marking a change in the way people lived, providing for a greater separation within the household. The shift seems to suggest a greater emphasis on dining for the senior members of the household and socialising with their social peers, rather than with the rest of the household. Dining rooms are common from 1659 in this sample and halls last appear in 1665. Allowing for the time-lag effect of the inventory record, these changes were probably well underway in the 1650s. Derek Hirst has pointed out the way in which the 1650s have been overlooked with many studies either ending at 1640 or starting at 1660. He puts much of this historiographical slighting of the English republic down to 'an evident assumption that a mood of gloom suffused the whole episode' and goes on to show some of the ways in which the 1650s was a vibrant, innovative period, responding to the new circumstances and a period in which some of the foundations for the more dramatic growth of the following decades were laid.³⁹ In brief, he cites the rapid growth of publishing in such areas as literature, music and towards the end of the decade advertising; the prosperity caused by a number of good harvests and post-war re-building; innovations in credit mechanisms which encouraged trade and the diversification of trade, as examples of the ways in which the 1650s were far from a period of stagnation. Indeed, increased economic activity particularly with regard to furniture can be seen in the late 1650s in the upturn in the number of apprentices registered with the Joiners' Company, which regulated the furniture industry, presumably a response to increasing demand and fitting neatly with the shift in furnishings and room use that was taking place amongst the middling sort.⁴⁰ All this modifies the idea, so pervasive in the study of the decorative arts, that the great impetus to change was the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. For the London middling sort at least, changes were afoot before this, as the advent of the dining room shows. Another space that was new in the 1650s, in this case outside the home, was the coffee house and both the dining room and the coffee house can be seen, in their different ways, to be providing new spaces for sociable and business activity, where networks could be forged and reinforced and information exchanged.

A comparison with a small number of published inventory studies of towns and cities outside London – Bristol, Marlborough, Hereford, Lincoln and Norwich as well as the county of Kent – shows the distinctiveness of what was happening in London and highlights regional differences. One of the problems with these comparisons is that the Geffrye sample, mainly from the Orphans' Court records, are wealthier than those represented in the published studies consulted for this article. However, there is an overlap at the lower end of the Geffrye sample and the published sources. The situation in Bristol for example, shows that the hall was less common in the earlier period than in London, but was still to some extent present into the 1680s when the study ends.⁴¹ The parlour is the more likely room to be mentioned, although many houses, at the lower end of the scale, seem to have neither parlours or halls and dining appears to have taken place in one of the chambers. Dining rooms are rarely mentioned, and the new style furnishings, prevalent in London middling homes post-1665, are largely not taken up, drawing tables and joint stools remaining dominant. Mirrors, an element of the new style in London, do appear more commonly.

Halfway between London and Bristol, in the market town of Marlborough, the pattern

is different.⁴² Halls are common (until 1713) and furnished in a similar way to London, although they are more likely to contain cooking equipment than in London. Those in the published sample that have a wealth comparable to the lower-end of the London sample, show some up-take of elements of the new style from the 1670s in parlours and the occasional dining room but not as routinely as in London.

Closer to London still, in Hertford, the hall is again common and remains so at least into the 1690s.⁴³ The parlour is common too, and dining rooms rarely mentioned, if at all. Surprisingly, despite the proximity to London, the new style does not seem to have been adopted, but the inventories, as in the other studies cited here, are of less wealthy people than those in the London sample, although where there are comparable inventories in terms of wealth, the difference still stands. Cooking was taking place in the hall and the kitchen.

In Lincoln the pattern is different again. The most common room listed is the 'house', followed by the parlour and the hall. The 'house' appears to be similarly furnished to the hall and a combination of both rooms is listed in only 3 out of 402 inventories in this study between 1661-1714.⁴⁴ Halls are associated with the more wealthy inventories and a similar pattern has been found in a study of Sheffield inventories.⁴⁵ Another marked difference from London is that beds are found in 72 per cent of all parlours, and even in 38 per cent of the more expensively furnished ones.⁴⁶ Cooking equipment is also more likely to be found in the halls than in London. In the introduction to the Lincoln study, it is suggested that, where the space was available cooking took place in a separate kitchen.⁴⁷ This may not be the whole story because sometimes cooking equipment is found in both rooms in the same house and removing all cooking from the hall may not have been desired. Certain aspects of cooking may have been considered to contribute rather than detract from a sociable atmosphere, for example, and it seems that cooking survived in the hall beyond the provision of a separate kitchen.

In Norwich, halls are present in just under 50 per cent of the inventories in the study between 1580 and 1604. Their incidence declines, particularly in the 1655-1679 period (when the hall disappears from London), but it doesn't disappear completely, still being present in around 10 per cent of inventories in 1705-1730.⁴⁸ The function of the hall shifts as well during the period. Evidence of cooking disappears after 1654 as do beds, neither being very common before this.⁴⁹ As was the situation in Bristol, the parlour was listed more frequently than in London – in over 70 per cent of the inventories in 1580-1604 and in just over 50 per cent in the final period of the study 1705-1730. They were used for dining and often contained beds – 54 per cent in the early period, declining to 18 per cent in the last period. The study doesn't engage with dining rooms, and it is assumed from this that they weren't mentioned in any numbers.

Finally, Mark Overton's large study of Kent inventories suggests a different trajectory in room names and choices of rooms. The hall is very common, present in 94 per cent of inventories between 1600-29 and declines less sharply than in London, with 83 per cent in 1660-89 and is still present in 42 per cent of inventories in 1720-49.⁵⁰ Cooking is very common in these halls and dining reasonably so (this activity is possibly underestimated in this study as dining was taken to be indicated by the presence of cutlery or tableware, but this may not necessarily have been stored in the hall). The parlour remains pretty constant throughout the period at around 50 per cent; it was used for dining and the presence of beds declines. Surprisingly, however, the great chamber, rises from 3 per cent

in 1600–29 to 51 per cent in 1720–49, which appears to be different from all the other areas represented in the studies. The last mention of a great chamber in the sample of London inventories is in 1661. Like the London great chambers, those in Kent were furnished with a bed and seating and sometimes dining furniture. As 47 per cent of these great chambers in Kent were in inventories that did not list a parlour, Overton concludes that a significant proportion of households in Kent chose to have a great chamber instead of a parlour, seeing this as a choice for a more private, intimate space than the parlour to which the head of the household could withdraw. However, the great chamber with its imposing bed, may have carried connotations of formality rather than intimacy, providing a more impressive, stately dining environment than the parlour. The dimension of public/private does not perhaps capture all the issues at play here.

An admittedly cursory look at the inventories for different towns and cities shows different approaches to arranging and furnishing middling homes, suggesting the influence of regional factors. The most striking difference is that the shift identified in the London inventories from 1659 to 1665 does not occur so dramatically elsewhere. The hall survives into the eighteenth century outside London and the dining room is only taken up sporadically at the upper end of the range of wealth represented in the samples, if at all. Rooms have different functions, most markedly in relationship to sleeping and cooking. Beds are much more present in social spaces in the homes outside London as is, to a lesser degree, cooking, and this doesn't seem to be a simple matter of availability of space; while London households show a greater degree of differentiation of room space in terms of activities, they do not necessarily contain more rooms than the households with more mixed use space outside London.

A more detailed examination of the differences highlighted by inventories is required to give a clearer picture and to examine the interesting question of what was driving these differences, but the evidence, even in this brief survey, does show that middling homes varied between regions. What was happening in London in middling homes was distinctive and saw an earlier and greater emphasis put on dining and its polite practice than elsewhere in the country. Although the rebuilding and refurnishing necessary after the Fire of London in 1666 would have facilitated the uptake of the new rooms and furnishing styles, it does not explain what was behind these changes in the first place. Nor does the evidence suggest that other areas merely copied London at a later stage. The inventories show a variety of patterns of room names and furnishings in different towns and cities, indicating that there may have been regional factors, such as differing local needs and social and cultural practices and attitudes at play, affecting how people arranged their homes.

REFERENCES

1. The inventories were sourced, transcribed and initially analysed by Jane Hamlett, who was one of the excellent researchers on the project. The research was funded by Jonathan Vickers Charitable Settlement.
2. For a discussion of the terminology of social classification in the eighteenth century see P. J. Corfield, 'Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *History*, Vol. 72 (1987), pp. 38–61.
3. A. Everitt, 'Social mobility in early modern England', *Past and Present*, Vol. 33 (1966), p. 68.
4. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle-Class, Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660–1730*, London (1989), pp. 14–15.

5. Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above, pp. 212–218.
6. The Orphans' Court Inventories are held in the London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA).
7. See, for example, Tom Arkell (ed.), *When Death Do Us Part: understanding and interpreting the probate records of early modern England*, Leopard's Head Press, Oxford (2000).
8. While leases were included in the inventories, real estate owned by the deceased was not. About a quarter of the people in Earle's sample owned real estate [Earle, *op. cit.* at note 3 above, pp. 153–4].
9. Adam Bowett, *English Furniture 1660–1714, from Charles 2nd to Queen Anne*, Woodbridge (2002) pp. 84–85. David Dewing discusses the reliability of the Joiners' claim in his article in this volume.
10. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Mayor's Court Proceedings, 24 Jan., Eliz. 14, Inventory of Thomas Deane, fletcher (1571).
11. Guildhall Library (hereafter GL) MS 3754 inventory of William Marriott (1594).
12. Three out of 20 inventories of halls in the sample list some cooking equipment – just one or two items rather than a more fully equipped cooking hearth as can be found elsewhere, e.g. 'a frayme and girdell' (1571), 'a jack' (1630) and a 'pott hanger, pair of pot hooks' (1631), LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Mayor's Court Proceedings, 24th Jan Eliz 14; LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Misc Roll 5 and LMA P92 SAV 0817 respectively.
13. 10 out of 20 listings of the contents of halls include curtains and 11 out of 15 listings of parlours mention curtains between 1570 and 1665.
14. 3 out of 20 listings of the contents of halls and 2 out of 15 listings of the contents of parlours between 1570 and 1665 mention a painted cloth.
15. 10 out of 20 listings of the contents of halls and 3 out of 15 listings of the contents of parlours between 1570–1665 mention pictures.
16. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Misc. Rolls 19 and 20, Inventory of Constance Wallis (1661); NA, E/199/28/44, Inventory of Richard Tenant, Inventory of Anthony Abdy, GL MS 03760.
17. 7 out of 20 listings of the contents of halls and 5 out of 15 listings of the contents of parlours between 1570–1665 mentioned Bibles and/or other books.
18. Three halls that appear in Table 1 are excluded from this figure as they only give a very perfunctory listing of contents.
19. Three of the 12 inventories in Table 1 list two parlours giving the total of 15 parlours here in Table 2.
20. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Misc. Roll 5.
21. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Roll xxxxx, Inventory of Robert Manne, grocer (1622/3)
22. NA, E/154/4/6, Inventory of Adrian Moore, haberdasher (1618).
23. Examples of inventories where some of the types of pewter item are listed are those of: Nicholas Willson, 1603, who had in his kitchen 'Bason platters[?] five small dishes a bason, five chamber potts, five porringers, five [?], two salts foure pewter candlesticks wayinge in the whole 40 pounds' [NA, E/154/3/36], Caleb Booth, a soapmaker, who in 1713 had '13 pewter dishes 33/Plates' [LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Roll 2982] and John Hastings, described as a tallow chandler who had '37 Pewter Dishes and 5 doz/ pewter plates' [LMA, Orphans Court Records, Roll 2441]
24. *Living and Working in Seventeenth Century England, An Encyclopedia of Drawings from Randle Home's original manuscripts for the Academy of Armory* (1688), by N. W. Alcock and Nancy Cox, London (2000).
25. For pewter goods listed in halls in urban settings outside London, see for example J. A. Johnston (ed.), *Probate Inventories of Lincoln Citizens 1661–1715*, Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 80 (1991), pp. 3, 6, 26.
26. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Misc roll 4, Inventory of David Wiffin, skinner (1626).
27. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Roll 2772, Inventory of George Ebborn, distiller (1706).
28. Of the 54 inventories in the sample for the period 1665–1720, 27 listed a dining room (with no parlour), 13 just parlours (no dining rooms) and 10 had dining rooms and parlours.
29. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Misc Roll 14, Inventory of Richard Langley, fishmonger (1659).
30. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Misc Rolls 19 and 20, Inventory of Constance Wallis, widow (1661)
31. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Roll 1783, Inventory of Robert Ashton, merchant tailor (1681).
32. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Roll 1585, Inventory of Catherine Davitts, widow (1679).
33. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Box 36 Roll 2414, Inventory of Lawrence Stevenson, ironmonger (1704).
34. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Box 27 Roll 219 B, Inventory of Thomas Lamb, haberdasher (1683).
35. Their last mentions in the whole group of inventories used for the research for the Geffrye Museum's seventeenth and eighteenth century galleries is in 1740, for parlours (inventory of Joanna Crawford, NA, PROB 3/40/26), and 1746, for dining rooms, inventory of Charles Goddman, NA, C105/11

36. LMA, Orphans' Court Records, Roll 2982, Inventory of Caleb Booth, soapmaker (1713); Sophie Sarin, 'The Floorcloth and Other Floor Coverings in the London Domestic Interior 1700-1800', in *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2005), pp. 133-145.
37. Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service And Gender, 1660-1750*, Harlow, (2000), pp. 77-83.
- 'Derek Hirst, 'Locating the 1650s in England's Seventeenth Century', in *History*, Volume 81, Issue 263 (July 1996), pp359-383.
38. The rise in the number of apprentices registered with the Joiners' Company in the late 1650s has been mapped by Laurie Lindey and was mentioned in her paper 'The London Furniture Trade 1640-1720' which she gave at the Furniture History Society's Annual Lecture in October 2008.
39. Edwin and Stella George (eds.), *Bristol Probate Inventories 1657-1689*, Bristol Record Society, Bristol, 2005, Introduction (unpaginated) and transcribed inventories.
40. Lorelei Williams and Sally Thomson, (eds.) 'Marlborough Probate Inventories, 1591-1775,' Wiltshire Record Society, Vol. 59 (2007).
41. Beverly Adams (ed.), *Lifestyle and Culture in Hertford: Wills and Inventories for the Parishes of All Saints and St Andrew, 1660-1725*, Hertfordshire Record Society, Hertfordshire? (1997).
42. Johnston, *loc. cit.* at note 25 above, p. lxvi.
43. Information kindly supplied by Julie Banham, University of Sheffield, whose forthcoming PhD is entitled 'Rethinking politeness: continuity and change amongst eating and drinking practices in eighteenth-century Sheffield.'
44. Johnston, *loc. cit.* at note 25 above, p. lxvi.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Ursula Priestly and P. J. Corfield, 'Rooms and room use in Norwich housing, 1580-1730', in *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 16, 1982, p.104
47. Beds are present in between 12% and 17% of halls between 1580-1654 and cooking can be inferred from the contents of halls in between 7% and 14% of these rooms during the same period, Priestly and Corfield, *op.cit.* at note 46 above p. 105.
48. Percentages calculated from Table 6.3 in Mark Overton *et al.*, *Production and Consumption in English households, 1600-1750*, London and New York, (2004), p. 125.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 133. It should be noted that 'best' chambers are included in Overton et al's count of 'great chambers', which in the London inventories did not seem to be interchangeable terms.