

# LORD AND LADY OF THE MANOR: THE DISRAELIS AT HUGHENDEN

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*This article focuses on the domestic life of the Victorian statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, and his wife, Mary Anne, rather than on political affairs. They moved into Hughenden Manor in December 1848 and the article covers the period to 1872, the year of Mary Anne's death. It discusses the changes they made to the property itself, and improvements to the surrounding park and gardens. Also examined are the Disraelis' sometimes turbulent relations with their servants, including both indoor and outdoor workers, as well as their contacts with High Wycombe tradesmen, and their philanthropic activities within the Hughenden community. These ranged from helping to finance the building of a new school, to the regular distribution of gifts to the needy at Christmas. Mary Anne's household books show that she was responsible for much of this, and for aiding the sick and poor on an individual basis, as the need arose. In the 1850s and 60s, Mrs Disraeli's warm relations with Emily Clubbe, the vicar's wife, were important because Emily was able to keep her informed of developments in the parish while she was away in London during sessions of Parliament. There have been many studies of Benjamin Disraeli's political career, but less attention has been given to his life at Hughenden, away from the cares of Westminster.*

When Benjamin Disraeli purchased the Hughenden estate in 1848 it was partly to consolidate his hold on the Conservative Party and thereby to enable him to play 'the high game in public life'<sup>1</sup>. But it also satisfied his desire to assume the role of a country gentleman in a Party dominated by the landed interest, and to enjoy the tranquility of rural life. 'I have a passion for books & trees', he wrote in his *Reminiscences*. 'When I come down to Hughenden I pass the first week in sauntering about my park & examining all the trees, & then I saunter in the library & survey the books.'<sup>2</sup> He particularly enjoyed his encounters with the woodmen and gardeners who worked on the estate. 'Their conversation is racy, & the repose of their natural manners agreeable'. Of the woodmen, he wrote: 'I don't know any men, who are so completely masters of their business, & of the secluded, but delicious world in which they live.'<sup>3</sup> Clad in leather leggings, velveteen coat and soft felt hat, he assumed the persona of a country squire.<sup>4</sup>

Hughenden Manor came on the market after the death of the previous owner, John Norris, in 1845 but the asking price of £35,000 was well beyond Disraeli's means, given his chronic indebtedness at

that time. After lengthy negotiations it was eventually purchased with a loan of £25,000 from the Bentinck brothers, sons of the immensely wealthy 4th Duke of Portland, and with the help of a bank overdraft of £14,000, plus £5,000 obtained from his solicitors.<sup>5</sup> Lord George Bentinck, a close friend and admirer of Disraeli, saw the acquisition of an estate as essential if the latter were to realize his full political potential. In fact as early as 2 March 1847, Benjamin had signed an agreement to purchase the property, even though he had, as yet, no means of paying for it. He managed to postpone a settlement, however, on the grounds that a careful valuation must be made of the woodlands before the deal could be completed. But on the strength of these negotiations he was able to present himself as a candidate for the Buckinghamshire parliamentary constituency, and to use the Hughenden address to this end. He was duly elected in August of that year.<sup>6</sup> In the event it was not until 6 September 1848 that he was able to write to his wife, Mary Anne: 'It is all done, and you are the Lady of Hughenden'<sup>7</sup>. Two days later Mrs. Disraeli's household book recorded the purchase of a 'Rustic hat' for her husband for 5s, presumably in celebration.<sup>8</sup>

The estate had the merit in Disraeli's eyes of being close to Bradenham Manor, which had been occupied since 1829 by his parents and siblings, and where he himself had spent some of his early manhood. At the time of purchase, Hughenden comprised 750 acres, but over the years it was added to, so that eventually it extended to around 1,400 acres.<sup>9</sup> When first bought the Manor was a plain stuccoed Georgian house, but under the influence of the Disraelis, and particularly of Mary Anne and her architect, E. B. Lamb, it was radically altered in the 1860s to give it a fashionable brick neo-Gothic appearance. Not all critics have favoured the changes. The architectural historian, Nikolaus Pevsner, for one, savagely condemned 'Lamb's details' as 'excruciating, everything sharp, angular, aggressive ... the window-heads indescribable.'<sup>10</sup> But Disraeli himself was delighted with the renovation, airily claiming to a friend that the house was 'restored ... to what it was before the Civil Wars and we have made a garden of terraces, in which cavaliers might roam ... with their ladye loves'.<sup>11</sup> Peacocks strutted on the terraces and on the lawns, and Mrs Disraeli hired a small boy to look after them and to make sure they did not stray. On occasion she made him come to her to be given a piece of cake.<sup>12</sup>

Benjamin and Mary Anne had been married in August 1839, after the death of her first husband, Wyndham Lewis, about seventeen months earlier. Lewis was a wealthy South Wales businessman, a partner in the famous Dowlais ironworks, as well as a Conservative MP for Maidstone. Disraeli joined Lewis as an MP in that two-member constituency at the general election of 1837.<sup>13</sup> It was Mary Anne's income of around £4,000 to £5,000, inherited from Lewis, which financed the day-to-day running of the Disraeli household as well as enabling her to pay off at least £13,000 of the debts incurred by her new husband, for example in political campaigning.<sup>14</sup> However, it is unlikely that Mary Anne ever knew the full extent of Benjamin's financial obligations, since he was careful to conceal them from her. It was a policy that in the earlier years of their marriage sometimes caused friction. In July 1849, to his consternation Mary Anne even forced all his private locks, although on this occasion she may have been seeking love letters from possible lady friends rather than the 'lawyers' bills & pecuniary documents' she actually found.<sup>15</sup> In London they occu-

ried the town house which Lewis had purchased in Grosvenor Gate, opposite Hyde Park, and which he bequeathed to his wife for her lifetime. In it the Disraelis were able to entertain many of the political grandees of the day.

After 1848, under Mary Anne's direction not only was the interior of Hughenden Manor much altered, but the garden was extensively remodelled and the parkland planted with trees to create a variety of wooded areas and pathways. To these romantic names were attached, such as the *German Forest* and *My Lady's Walk*. In the early days head gardeners came and went before John Gibbons was appointed in March 1854. He remained on the estate to the end of Mary Anne's life in December 1872. He was appointed at a wage of 15s a week, plus a house and garden, and he came with a young wife, Eliza. Two children were born to them in 1855 and 1857 respectively, but then in November 1858 Eliza died at the early age of twenty-five.<sup>16</sup> After this John Gibbons seems to have moved out of his cottage, and at the time of the 1861 population census was living at Hughenden Manor itself, together with the widowed housemaid-cum-care-taker, Mary Saunders, who looked after the property when the Disraelis were away, and her eighteen-year-old daughter, Maria, who was a lace-maker. William Anderson, the under gardener, was also a long-serving member of the labour force and lived in one of the lodges. He, too, remained at least to the early 1870s.<sup>17</sup>

Mary Anne herself sometimes worked in the garden and in the 1860s, when she was already over seventy, she supervised in person many of the changes. More than twenty workmen were employed in constructing the terracing on the south side of the mansion. Clad in a short skirt and gaiters, she confided to the young Lord Dalmeny (later the Earl of Rosebery) that when 'Dizzy' came back and saw what she had done he would sometimes say "this is quite delightful, better than anything you have done yet". 'And then I feel quite intoxicated for the moment, and quite rewarded.'<sup>18</sup> Her household accounts record the purchase of trees, plants and grass seed, and of some of the garden statuary. On 10 August 1864, for example, a total of £93 was spent on a 'marble statue' of a dancing faun, as well as on an inlaid table of pearl and tortoiseshell, the latter being presumably for the interior of the house. About three weeks later she paid for a Portland stone pedestal to be fixed

for the faun, and for the permanent placing of four other figures.<sup>19</sup>

It was Mrs Disraeli who arranged and financed the initial move into Hughenden during December 1848 while her husband was in London. The death of her father-in-law earlier in the year meant that some furniture was brought from Bradenham Manor to their new home. The household books show a payment of £20 to Mr Pawley, a furniture dealer from High Wycombe, to cover the carriage of furniture and books from Bradenham. The move involved the use of four horses and two vans but, with her usual close attention to financial detail, Mary Anne deducted 18s 0½d from Mr Pawley's original bill, 'being an overcharge', and also noted that £10 10s had been credited 'for things sold to Mr Pawley' from Bradenham.<sup>20</sup> George Vernon, a High Wycombe estate agent, was appointed steward of the estate, to supervise its running when the Disraelis were away. He and his son held that position throughout the Disraelis' lifetime.

From the beginning, a housemaid-cum-caretaker was installed, with four or five women holding the post over the years. The first was Elizabeth Syred, a married woman in her early forties who had been working at Bradenham Manor, and whose husband was a gardener. He lived in West Wycombe, but did occasional gardening work at Hughenden.<sup>21</sup> When Mrs Syred left in November 1853, she was replaced by a local widow, Mary Saunders, who stayed until October 1864. As Disraeli himself climbed the 'greasy pole' to political pre-eminence in the Conservative Party, he and Mary Anne regularly entertained leading members of the Party at Hughenden. Although they brought a complement of servants from Grosvenor Gate, Mary Anne clearly felt that Mrs Saunders lacked the expertise to make the appropriate arrangements for these important visitors. On 25 October 1864, she noted in her household book:

'Mrs Saunders left our service this day. N.B. Not equal to the situation, in ability, Manner or appearance &c. &c. as housemaid.<sup>22</sup> In November of the same year she was succeeded by another widow, Mrs Hannah Whitlock, who remained until the autumn of 1871. In November 1868 Disraeli obtained a small pension of £10 per annum for her from the state, and this she optimistically considered would 'with a little economy ... be a living for my life.'<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Coleman of High Wycombe then seems to have come for a couple of months

before Elizabeth Stammer was recruited in December 1871. She remained to the time of Mary Anne's death a year later.<sup>24</sup>

When the Disraelis were in residence at Hughenden, four to seven servants normally came with them from Grosvenor Gate, including in later years a coachman and groom. In the early period when they were at the Manor for Christmas, servant parties were held. On 2 January 1855, Mrs Disraeli's household book revealed that 'a supper & dance kept up until 4 in the morning', had been held for twenty-two servants, seven of them employed at Hughenden and the rest working for neighbouring families. The Disraelis shared the supper on this occasion, and according to Mary Anne they dined on 'Boiled beef & large goose, meat pie, plumb pudding & mince pies', supplemented by punch made using two bottles of brandy.<sup>25</sup> However, the following Christmas, when another ball and supper were held, the Disraelis were not invited. In a letter to a Torquay friend and benefactor, Mrs Brydges Willyams, Benjamin noted 'Our household & their guests were dancing till past five o'clock this morning; you must have heard the fiddle I think, at Torquay ... & all the people have gone to their work, this morning, without ever having returned to rest. What rural rakes!'<sup>26</sup>

There were also occasional 'below stairs' disagreements to contend with. In May 1857 Cuthbert Richardson, the butler, was dismissed 'for fighting the coachman at Hughenden'.<sup>27</sup> Then there was the recently-appointed cook-housekeeper, Mrs Rogers, who ordered so much meat from a High Wycombe supplier that, as Mary Anne caustically commented, 'The Larder looked like a Butcher's shop', even though 'no company was expected'.<sup>28</sup> Mrs Rogers had been appointed at Grosvenor Gate in the summer of 1866, but as a result of her Hughenden extravagance she was discharged on 17 October in the same year.

But perhaps most disturbing was the affair in the spring of 1855 between John Haynes, the Disraelis' then under butler, and the cook and the nursery-maid at the vicarage. Clandestine meetings were arranged and plans made for the two female servants to go away with him, even though Haynes was already married, and had a child. The idea seems to have been that they would move abroad, with the cook masquerading as his daughter. However, when he returned with the Disraelis to London his wife discovered some letters written to

him by Betsy Goodwin, the cook, in which she promised to do her best to please him 'to the last drop of blood.'<sup>29</sup> Both maids left the vicarage before the plan came to light, although the nursery maid subsequently returned to her employers. Betsy did not, and when the affair was revealed not only did it cause scandal in Hughenden itself, but Haynes was dismissed on 20 April, 'for improper conduct about 2 women'.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly though, in July 1856, Disraeli recommended Haynes as an under butler to a fellow Conservative MP, Sir Robert Gore Booth, describing him as 'a capable & very obliging servant'.<sup>31</sup> He was apparently prepared to overlook the under butler's moral lapse, even if his wife were not.

As Benjamin rose to become leader of his Party and eventually Prime Minister, there were gifts of game and venison from aristocratic friends to supplement the Hughenden and Grosvenor Gate menus. Mrs Brydges Willyams also benefited from the largesse. Another friend, Lady Dorothy Nevill, regularly plied him with home-grown strawberries, while a wide variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers were grown in the Hughenden garden. Hampers of produce were despatched from the estate to grace the Disraelis' London dinner table, as well as being sent as gifts to friends and relatives.<sup>32</sup>

Groceries, milk, meat and other necessities were purchased from suppliers in High Wycombe for Hughenden, or, in the case of milk and cream, from local farmers. However, both in Buckinghamshire and in London Mary Anne carefully checked up on the quantities and quality of the goods supplied and the prices charged. She did not hesitate to query what she considered poor service or overcharging. For example, on 3 October 1855 she noted that the meat bill of £16 14s 5d should have been £15 5s 6d, which was a charge of £1 8s 11d too much. 'Flour 7lbs per week more ... too much.'<sup>33</sup> Again, on 13 December 1864 she noted that Joseph Bowen, a coal and hay merchant from Railway Terrace, High Wycombe, had supplied two tons of coal but it was 'very bad, & a shameful price'.<sup>34</sup> Those tradesmen who charged too much or failed to meet her exacting standards were likely to lose her custom.

Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, when Mary Anne died on 15 December 1872, there were hostile comments about her niggardliness among the High Wycombe shopkeepers. Henry Lucy, a journalist visiting the town at this time, recalled

that in the smokeroom of the Falcon hotel the 'dead lady up at the Manor House was the sole subject of conversation', but none had a good word to say about her:

'How many rolls do you think she ordered for breakfast that time Prince Teck and his wife paid them a visit?' one ... fiercely asked me. 'Six, six; six ...!' he exclaimed when I confessed my total inability to guess. I timidly suggested that if rolls were not the staple dish on the breakfast table, six might have met the necessities of the case. Whereupon I was floored by a fearful story about a quarter of a cheese ordered in ignorance of a sudden movement that called the family away from Hughenden, which ensuing, the cheese was returned to the hapless cheesemonger ... and an intimation that as the family were going up to town she would be glad if he would take it back.'<sup>35</sup>

Surviving account books involving High Wycombe tradespeople do not show such dramatic events as these, although they do suggest that purchases were often very modest in quantity, although frequently made. An account with S W Reading, grocer and provision merchant in the Market Place, shows that on 27 August 1867, purchases comprised 6 lemons, 2lbs of coffee, some blacking, 2lbs of 'Best Rice' and essences of vanilla and of lemon. The cost of the order was 8s 3d. On the previous day there had been purchases of a mop, vinegar, a jar, and a pint of 'Sweet Oil' for a total outlay of 7s 2d. Settlement of the bills seems to have taken about four months.<sup>36</sup>

After Disraeli bought the estate he increased the rents of the tenants, which did not make for popularity, although over the years the properties were improved and new buildings constructed.<sup>37</sup> However, in other respects the couple played the part expected of Victorian landed gentry as regards the wider Hughenden community. Disraeli himself helped to finance the building of a school in the parish, to replace an existing dame establishment. When the school was officially opened in October 1862, he spoke at length, pointing out to his audience that there was 'no longer a choice if you wish to meet fair fortune in this world. There is no longer a choice between ignorance and knowledge. Such is the progress of improvement in all the conduct of men in the present day, that the time is rapidly approaching when what was largely the rudest of labour of this parish will be conducted only by men of intelligence, and this consideration

should influence you all'.<sup>38</sup> He subscribed £50 to the school's initial building costs, which amounted in all to just under £260. That sum included a grant of £72 from the governmental Committee of Council on Education and £220 from the Church of England's Diocesan Board of Education. Disraeli's was the largest single personal donation, however, and in subsequent years he subscribed £10 per annum towards its running costs. When the school was enlarged at the beginning of the 1870s, a further £30 was contributed.<sup>39</sup>

Even before the new school was opened, however, Mary Anne had organized school treats for the village children, as on 31 August 1859, when according to Benjamin about a hundred of them attended, 'and a hundred neighbours to meet them. They feasted and danced in the Park, with my election banners, no longer lawful, to inspire them, and a most capital band'. In her household book Mary Anne recorded the large quantity of sponge cake required for the feast, while the band cost £4. A charwoman was hired for four days beforehand at 1s per day, presumably to help with the cooking and other preparations.<sup>40</sup>

Three years later she went into 'greater detail, noting that for eighty poor children who attended the celebration 140lbs of cake, plus bread and butter and 3lbs of tea were supplied. Fruit was provided from the garden and there was beer for the parents. Balls and nuts were available, while '18 scrambled for toys for the races'.<sup>41</sup> As in 1859, more genteel refreshments were provided for friends and neighbours of the Disraelis who were invited to view the event.

At one of the treats an observer noted that Mary Anne, then already over sixty, was dressed in a white frock of delicate French muslin powdered with purple pansies, and with a straw hat trimmed with black velvet on her head. As 'she skipped and ran about with the children she did not look a day over forty'. Another time, Lady Battersea attended and described how Mrs Disraeli received her guests with 'much effusion while the Squire, standing on a platform bearing the words "For church and state", started the children on their races by blowing on a penny trumpet, to the delight of the onlookers and amidst the cheers of the assembled villagers'.<sup>42</sup>

The Park was also used to celebrate harvest homes, and Mary Anne provided cash for these as well. For example, on 6 October 1863 she spent 6s

for '3 Men's dinners for Harvest home'. These were for the gardener himself, for William Anderson the under gardener, and Lovett, the head woodman.<sup>43</sup> Again, in the summer of 1864, when a bazaar was organized to collect cash for the church organ fund, Mary Anne contributed to it.<sup>44</sup>

Mrs Disraeli involved herself more directly, too, in charitable activities within the parish, providing clothes, lengths of cloth, and blankets for the poor. In this, for much of the 1850s and 1860s she had the co-operation of Emily Clubbe, the vicar's wife, who kept her informed about current problems in the village when she was away. Thus, in December 1853 Mrs Clubbe wrote to tell Mary Anne she would have 'much pleasure in distributing some warm clothing amongst the poor people for you, it will be most acceptable for the weather is unusually severe, the Blankets have been given out some time & you have paid me for them'.<sup>45</sup> Again, in December 1867 Mrs Clubbe assured Mary Anne that she had 'been giving some of yr things away & shall finish next week; the old women at the Church [Alms] Houses prefer calico this year; you thought they might, so I asked them about it. I shall make a list & let you have it'.<sup>46</sup> Shortly after she told Mary Anne that she had managed to arrange 'for every girl in the Sunday school to have a frock (50 girls) & every boy a shirt (25 boys)'.<sup>47</sup> Lengths of flannel, presumably to make petticoats for the women and girls, were regular winter gifts, with the bills sent to Mrs Disraeli to settle.

There were annual subscriptions to parish clothing and blanket clubs, as well as many individual presents. On 9 October 1850, for example, William Anderson received a vest, trousers and a jacket, and young Joseph Anderson a smock frock, at a total cost of £1 0s 6d.<sup>48</sup> Among a multiplicity of other casual gifts of this kind was a 'jacket &c.' given to 'poor woman', Mrs Lovett, on 9 January 1850 at 5s 6d. On 18 December 1855, 2s 6d was provided for a 'Poor man who broke his leg', while 1s was supplied for a 'poor woman to make her dress'. On 29 December in the same year, £1 6s 4d was spent on 'fruit for the poor'. On 13 October 1863, £1 was given for the 'poor children sent by Mrs Clubbe some weeks past at Naphill' whose mother died, while in April 1865 a pound of tea and a small barrel of beer were given to 'the poor woman with a broken leg'.<sup>49</sup>

Other activities included helping to arrange for extra cash, presumably through poor relief, to be

paid to an aged cottager, and making arrangements for the admission of a man suffering from tuberculosis to a 'Consumptive Hospital'. Mrs Clubbe also asked if 'poor Annie Anderson', one of the under gardener's daughters, then aged about nineteen, could be admitted as 'an *out* patient'. She, too, seems to have been suffering from tuberculosis and lived with her parents in one of the lodges at Hughenden Manor.<sup>50</sup>

Mrs Clubbe herself benefited from Mary Anne's generosity. On more than one occasion she presented the vicar's wife with a fashionable bonnet, while in January 1865 a sash was provided for her sister, Jane, who was to attend a ball.<sup>51</sup> During one cold winter a foot warmer was sent along for Mrs Clubbe's use. She wrote back gratefully: 'I have used the foot warmer all day & found it delightful. I also return the Music with many thanks'.<sup>52</sup> When the Clubbes left Hughenden in 1868 to move to a more lucrative rectory at Sigglesthorne in Yorkshire, Emily Clubbe clearly regretted the change, even though it was of benefit to her husband and the family. She took with her as cook-housekeeper Elizabeth Syred, who had once worked at Hughenden Manor.<sup>53</sup>

Isabella Blagden, wife of the next vicar, carried out similar duties to her predecessor, although her relationship with Mary Anne does not seem to have been quite so close. Nevertheless, she too distributed clothing to the poor on the latter's behalf, and she and her family received gifts of game, fruit and venison from the Disraelis at the appropriate season. On 28 August 1872, for example, Mrs Blagden acknowledged the arrival of grouse that morning 'in perfect order ... I must tell you how much your venison was appreciated, we enjoyed it for weeks'.<sup>54</sup>

Discussion of the Disraelis' lives and activities has naturally concentrated on the major political role played by Benjamin, and Mary Anne's supportive stance in helping along his political career. That included funding the entertainments that were organized, the travels in which they engaged and, on occasion, the purchase of some of her husband's clothes. In these circumstances their philanthropic role in Hughenden itself has been neglected. Significantly it was Mary Anne who was largely responsible for charitable initiatives in the parish, as well as for arranging the alterations and improvements to the property which her husband so much enjoyed. It is rather ironic, therefore, that when the *South Bucks Free Press* of 21 December

1872 reported her death, it should comment that it 'was their mutual happiness that the wife lived only in the husband'. That seriously underestimated her personal contribution in running the household, and in looking after the poor and unfortunate members of the Hughenden community. In 1892 Lady Violet Greville was to describe a typical lady of the manor as:

'...the supreme dispenser of tea, soup, flannel, and advice ... Not a bazaar can be organized without her patronage and aid; not a charitable committee held, not a church restored ... unless it be graced with her presence and glorified by her support ... The ... school-children's tea, the new year's treat, all have to be arranged for and purveyed from her department'.<sup>55</sup>

These comments could surely have been applied a quarter of a century earlier to Mrs Disraeli, or Viscountess Beaconsfield as she became late in 1868, at the request of her husband. It was his way of recognizing the special part she had played in his political success, and it was an honour she received with great pleasure and pride. On 24 November she noted in her household book that the 'Queen's letter arrived to give me the rank of Viscountess Beaconsfield'. Soon after she ordered a fresh supply of notepaper bearing a coronet, to signify her new status to her correspondents. On 28 December she reported her 'first [missive] signed Beaconsfield'.<sup>56</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. Thea Van Dam, *My Dearest Ben* (Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Buckinghamshire Papers **16**, 2008), 52; Christopher Hibbert, *Disraeli. A Personal History* (London: HarperCollins, 2004), 185; Helen M. Swartz and Marvin Swartz (ed.), *Disraeli's Reminiscences* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), xix.
2. Swartz and Swartz (ed.), *Disraeli's Reminiscences*, 130.
3. Swartz and Swartz (ed.), *Disraeli's Reminiscences*, 117–118. He added: 'To see Lovett, my head-woodman fell a tree is a work of art. No bustle, no exertion, apparently not the slightest exercise of strength ... He can climb a tree like a squirrel.'
4. D. H. Elletson, *Maryannery. Mary Anne Lincoln and Mary Anne Disraeli*. (London: John Murray, 1959), 130.

5. Hibbert, *Disraeli*, 186.
6. M. G. Wiebe, J. B. Conacher, John Matthews and Mary S. Millar (ed.), *Benjamin Disraeli Letters, vol. 4, 1842–1847* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 272, Letter no. 1537: Stanley Weintraub, *Disraeli. A Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993), 273. On 4 August Disraeli was elected unopposed, together with two fellow candidates.
7. M. G. Wiebe, J. B. Conacher, John Matthews and Mary S. Millar (ed.), *Benjamin Disraeli Letters, vol. 5, 1848–51* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 81, Letter no. 1711.
8. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/1, entry for 8 September 1848. The Disraeli MSS are deposited in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, by the National Trust.
9. Hibbert, *Disraeli*, 185 and 194.
10. Nikolaus Pevsner, *Buckinghamshire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), 173. A contemporary, Lord Ronald Gower, described the exterior as ‘a curious bit of nondescript architecture’ and the drawing-room as a ‘terribly gaudy apartment’. Hibbert, *Disraeli*, 201.
11. Quoted in Hibbert, *Disraeli*, 201.
12. Elletson, *Maryannery*, 130 and 146.
13. Hibbert, *Disraeli*, 106.
14. M. G. Wiebe *et al* (ed.), *Benjamin Disraeli Letters, vol. 4*, Letter no. 1257, 54. Disraeli to Isaac Disraeli, 13 August 1842: ‘Since our marriage ... she has defrayed either for those parliamentary contests so indispensable to my career, or for debts incurred before our union, no less a sum than thirteen thousand pounds sterling, & is prepared to grapple with claims & incumbrances to an amount not inferior.’ Elletson, *Maryannery*, 108.
15. Benjamin Disraeli to Sarah Disraeli, 18 July, 1849 in Add. MSS. 59887, ff.36–37 in the British Library. Tensions remained for months after. See also Van Dam, *My Dearest Ben*, 51. For example, in November 1840, Disraeli told William Pyne, who dealt with his finances: ‘My dear Pyne, a writ from Ford, delivered in my absence to my lady, and other circumstances, have at length produced a terrible domestic crisis ... affairs are critical.’
16. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book, MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/3, 8 March 1854 records the appointment of John Gibbons. In Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/4, 31 August 1855, Mrs Disraeli noted ‘Mrs Gibbons baby a present £1’. And on 10 September 1857 came another entry: ‘Mr Gibbons little boy £1.’ Baptismal and Burial Registers for Hughenden at Buckinghamshire Record Office. Mrs Gibbons was buried on 23 November 1858.
17. 1861 population census return for Hughenden RG. 9/857. Anderson was living at Hughenden Lodge at this time. Payments to Anderson are recorded in the Household Books. 1871 population census for Hughenden RG. 10/1307, entry for Hughenden Road Lodge. At this date Anderson was a 64-year-old widower, and his married daughter, Sarah, and son-in-law lived with him.
18. Angela McArdell ed., *Mary Anne’s Receipts and Household Hints* (Hughenden Manor, 1981), 2: Oliver Garnett, *Hughenden Manor* (London: The National Trust, 2007 edn.), 31: Sarah Bradford, *Disraeli* (New York: Stein & Day, 1983), 248.
19. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/7, entries for 10 August and 30 August 1864.
20. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/1, entry for 18 December 1848. The Disraeli moved into Hughenden Manor on 6 December 1848. See entry in the Household Book for that date.
21. See 1851 census of population for West Wycombe HO.107/1720, when Thomas Syred is shown as living at the Kitchen Garden in that parish, together with his daughter. On 12 December 1848, Mrs Disraeli’s Household Book shows a payment of £3 4s to Syred and again on 9 January 1849: ‘Gardener Syred from Decr. 9th to Jan. 6th – £2 16s.’ Mrs Syred was paid £12 per annum, plus board wages to cover her meals of 7s per week, ‘when on board wages’, *i.e.* when the family was not in residence. See entry for 9 January 1849 in the Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/1.
22. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book, MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/7, entry for 25 October 1864. Mrs Stone, the coachman’s wife, came from London as a temporary replacement.

23. Dep. Hughenden 194/5, Hannah Whitlock to Mrs Disraeli, 7 November 1868, f.194 and Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/7, entry for 23 November 1864, appointing Hannah Whitlock as housemaid at £14 per annum, plus 7s per week for board wages.
24. Mrs Bainbridge to Viscountess Beaconsfield, 9 December 1871 and Mrs Sarah E. Searight to Viscountess Beaconsfield, 9 December 1871, giving character references for Mrs Elizabeth Stammer in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 194/5, ff.59 and 73. Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/10, December 1871, appointing Mrs Stammer as a replacement for Mrs Whitlock and her fleeting successor.
25. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/3, entries for 2 and 3 January 1855.
26. Correspondence between the Disraelis and Mrs Brydges Willyams of Mount Braddon, Torquay, MSS. Dep. Hughenden 310/2, Benjamin Disraeli to Mrs Brydges Willyams, Christmas Day 1855, ff.145–146. When Mrs. Brydges Willyams died on 11 November 1863, Disraeli inherited around £30,000 of her £40,000 estate.
27. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/4, entry for 19 May 1857, dismissing Richardson.
28. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/8, entries for 22 September and 17 October 1866. On 17 October came the entry: 'Gave warning to Mrs Rogers ... Butcher's bills Enormous & not a good cook'.
29. MSS. Dep. Hughenden 186/3, letter from Benjamin's sister, Sarah, to Mary Anne Disraeli, 23 April [1855], and enclosures, returning notes Mary Anne had sent to her, ff.246–256, detailing the contacts between Haynes and the two vicarage maids.
30. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/4, entry for 20 April, 1855 and Emily Clubbe, wife of the Hughenden vicar, to Mrs Disraeli, 2 May 1855 in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, ff.32–33.
31. M. G. Wiebe, Mary S. Millar, Ann P. Robson (ed.), *Benjamin Disraeli Letters, vol. 6, 1852–1856* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 493 Letter no. 2855, Disraeli to Sir Robert Gore Booth, 5 July 1856.
32. Letters from Lady Dorothy Nevill to Mary Anne Disraeli, MSS. Dep. Hughenden 191/1. For example f.122, endorsed 25 March 1857: 'I have written today to desire all the ripe strawberries to be sent to Mr. D.' There are many similar letters written over the years at this general reference.
33. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/4, entry for 3 October 1855.
34. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/7, entry for 13 December 1864.
35. Henry Lucy, 'Sixty Years in the Wilderness' in *Cornhill Magazine*, New Series vol. 32 (January 1912), 70.
36. The Rt Honble B. Disraeli in Account with S. W. Reading, Grocer and Provision Merchant, Market Place, High Wycombe, MSS. Dep. Hughenden 200/2, item 3.
37. Lucy, 'Sixty Years in the Wilderness', 70: Garnett, *Hughenden Manor*, 30
38. *Bucks Free Press*, 17 October 1862.
39. Records of Hughenden National School at Buckinghamshire Record Office, PR.110/25/19.
40. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/5, entries for 25 and 31 August 1859. Benjamin Disraeli to Mrs Brydges Willyams, 31 August 1859, in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 31012, ff.335–336.
41. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/6, entries for 28 August, 1862, listing details of the children's fête and also those who were entertained at the Manor to luncheon.
42. Elletson, *Maryannery*, 131.
43. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/7, entry for 6 October 1863.
44. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli, 10 March and endorsed August, 1864, in .MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, ff. 62 and 64.
45. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, f.28, dated 21 December 1853.
46. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, ff.77–78, 13 December 1867.



47. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, f.79, 28 January 1868.
48. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/2, entry for 9 October 1850.
49. Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/7, entry for 13 October 1863, and 17 April 1865. On 25 April 1865, there was a further entry: 'Ale for poor woman 4/6d.'
50. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, ff.66–67, 4 May 1865.
51. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, f.46, 13 June 1860, in a typical letter acknowledged the 'very pretty Bonnet you have so kindly sent me'. See Mary Anne Disraeli Household Book 314/7, entry for 6 January, 1865, regarding the provision of a sash for Mrs Clubbe's sister, Jane.
52. Emily Clubbe to Mrs Disraeli in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, f.73, 7 January 1867.
53. The 1871 census of population for Siggleshorpe shows that in addition to Mrs Syred, the rectory family had recruited Levi Saunders from Hughenden as a groom. On 6 January 1869 Mrs Clubbe wrote to Viscountess Beaconsfield to note: 'We are beginning to feel a little at home now ... I find having Mrs Syred a great comfort'. MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/4, ff.90 and 92.
54. Isabella Blagden to Viscountess Beaconsfield, 28 August 1872 in MSS. Dep. Hughenden 188/2, f.88. On 28 August 1871, she acknowledged a gift of grouse and fruit. There are several similar acknowledgements, especially for grouse.
55. Quoted in Pamela Horn, *Life as a Victorian Lady* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 60.
56. Mary Anne Disraeli/Viscountess Beaconsfield Household Book MSS. Dep. Hughenden 314/9, entries for 24 November, 15 December and 28 December 1868. At the time the honour was bestowed on her, Mary Anne was aged 76, twelve years older than her husband. Hibbert, *Disraeli*, 279–280.