Thomas Stringer, Locke, Shaftesbury, and Edward Clarke: New Archival Discoveries

BRIDGET CLARKE (ST. JOHN’S WOOD, LONDON)

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Two things changed Thomas Stringer’s career as an unremarkable lawyer and steward to a country gentleman; first, the ambition of his master, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, who became Earl of Shaftesbury in 1672 and was one of the great statesmen of the age,¹ and secondly that he became a close friend and correspondent of John Locke. As a result Stringer was at the centre of significant events, involved in Colonial Trade and Prince Rupert’s Great Gunnes, quarrelling with Locke over his portrait and having a lifelong family friendship with Edward Clarke MP, whose children were the subject of Locke’s book Some Thoughts Concerning Education. This article, based on the Shaftesbury papers in the Hampshire Record Office² and Clarke’s papers in the Somerset Record Office,³ will shed light on Stringer’s life and his acquisition of some political importance in the Exclusion crisis, as it is claimed that he drafted the Exclusion Bill; and also on some of Locke’s activities.

1. Steward and Merchant Adventurer
Born in 1639/40, Thomas Stringer was by 1669 employed by Shaftesbury, who asked him to ‘come to Towne and bring wth you

¹ M. Goldie, Select Correspondence (Oxford, 2002), 37. Ashley Cooper was MP in 1655 and created Lord Ashley at the Restoration.

² Hampshire Record Office: Shaftesbury family papers 9M73, and letters to Mrs Stringer 9M73/672/1–44; and PRO 30/24 Shaftesbury papers.

³ Somerset Record Office: DD/SF Clarke correspondence.
Lawrences last Acct whc I gave you at St Giles\(^4\) and ye accompt of ye arreare wch you tooke theare’.\(^5\) According to de Beer,\(^6\) nothing is known of his origin, but in 1675 Shaftesbury wrote ‘You have shewed that care of my concerns of all sorts wch I might have expected from a grandchild of yr grandfather’.\(^7\) This family connection is confirmed by a letter to Shaftesbury’s grandson from Samuel Stringer, Thomas’s brother, referring to ‘my father and brother having had ye honour to be faithfull steward to yr grandfather’.\(^8\) Years later Stringer’s widow wrote: Shaftesbury ‘always writ to him as if he had been his equal, calling him his very good friend in every letter’.\(^9\)

A steward’s function was to help increase the value of his master’s estates, organize his domestic life, distribute charity and patronage, and help with legal and family problems.\(^10\) Shaftesbury’s letters show the variety of tasks Stringer performed:

I have written to Sr Harry Vernon for his consent to sue Nutley both for the money and deeds and to discharge him our imployment. Pray advise what course we must proceed in against him, and write to Mr Beck in my name that he pay not the least money more to him at his orders. Your sack from Bristoll is not yett come, and I find by the note tis all sherry, whereas my directions were for one hogshead of sherry the other of canary, and I know not what to doe with more; therefore if possible lett me have but 50 or 60 gallons of

\(^4\) Shaftesbury’s Dorset home, Wimborne St Giles.

\(^5\) HRO 9M73 G237/1 Shaftesbury to Stringer, 9 November 1669.


\(^7\) HRO 9M73/G237/8 Shaftesbury to Stringer, 19 July 1675.

\(^8\) HRO 9M73 G249 Samuel Stringer to 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.

\(^9\) Letter from Mrs Jane Hill, formerly Stringer, to Lady Elizabeth Harris, Shaftesbury’s granddaughter, in 1734, quoted in W. D. Christie, 1\(^{st}\) Earl of Shaftesbury (1871), and annotated ‘Mrs Hill is still living and enjoys her senses. She was born in 1651’.

sherry and the rest in canary; for more sherry is money cast away. If my money in the African company will yeald 150£ each 100£ I would have you sell both mine and my sones which is 2000£ for I like 3000£ better than our stocks. Pray gett my picture sent downe and my other in crayons and gett my plate from the gravers and cause some forty impressions to be made and send them down but keep the plate in London.\footnote{11}{HRO 9M73/G237/2 Shaftesbury to Stringer, 7 November 1674.}

In 1678 Shaftesbury asked him to negotiate with ‘yr worthy neighbour my Ld Fitzwalter’\footnote{12}{Benjamin Mildmay, 17th Lord Fitzwalter.} about horses: ‘I finde I am soe well stockt with that sorte of cattel that I can suply him with six young mares—they are large and strong, and of my owne breed, very sound every way’\footnote{13}{HRO 9M73/G237/6 Shaftesbury to Stringer, St Giles, 8 September 1678.}, and to buy garden plants:

My note of fruite trees are of such apples and peares plumbs cherries and grapes as I would have you gett mee from London and send downe as soone as you can. I desire you would speake with Mr Rose the Kings Gardiner at St James about it.\footnote{14}{HRO 9M73/5/1 Shaftesbury to Stringer, 7 November 1676.}

Stringer spoke his mind to Shaftesbury on occasion, a foretaste of his later letters to Locke:

I did little think after those kind professions yr Lordshipp on all occations hath made me that I should ever have had soe much reason to complaine of ill favours from any in yr family but indeed Mrs Eglins behavior is not to be borne, I have formerly observed a great deale of dissimulation and falseness in her, but of late ( tho I don’t know that I have deserved it eyther from Yr Lordshipp or her) she doth vent her crooked humor with soe much malice that many persons for lesse mischiefe than she hath attempted have had their throats cutt, an I doe assure yr Lordshipp I shall want neyther courage nor resolution one way or other to put a stop to it. Her practise hath been to raise
the most impudent lyes she can invent and then send them abroad as true reports of the country. My Lord Honr is to be preferred before a mans life and who soever shall endeavor to robb me of my good name, shall be sure to finde I will not easily permit it.\textsuperscript{15}

Stringer proved his worth by discovering fraud when Shaftesbury was about to pay Lord Richardson £15,000 for an estate Richardson had no title to, and ‘though all possible means were used to deceive terrify and impose upon Mr Stringer and also to corrupt him, they could not prevail’.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1672, when Shaftesbury was Lord Chancellor, living in great state, a list was drawn up of ‘his family’; Stringer was Steward of the House, and had the ‘preparing of all warrants for allowances out of the hamper’.\textsuperscript{17} The steward’s table was the most important after the Lord Chancellor’s, and the Sergeant at Arms, the Chaplain, the Seal Bearer, the Secretary for the Debt, the Clerk for the Justices, the eldest Gentleman Usher, and the Gentleman of the Horse all sat there, as well as someone then merely Secretary for the Clergy, but destined to become more famous than any of them, John Locke.\textsuperscript{18}

Together Locke and Stringer became involved in Shaftesbury’s overseas trade ventures. Shaftesbury was one of the eight Proprietors of Carolina, with Locke acting as Secretary, and in 1670 one-eighth of the province of Carolina was released to Stringer in trust for Shaftesbury’s son. On 6 May 1674 Locke and Stringer were present when Shaftesbury signed articles between the Lords Proprietors for the yearly supply of at least £700 for the benefit of that plantation.\textsuperscript{19} They were also two of the original eleven Bahamas

\textsuperscript{15} HRO 9M73/G237/11 Stringer to Shaftesbury, unknown date.

\textsuperscript{16} Mrs Hill, formerly Stringer, to Lady Elizabeth Harries, quoted in Christie, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{17} PRO 30/24/4/236.

\textsuperscript{18} In 1667, Shaftesbury, grateful to Locke for a cure for a cyst on his liver, had given him a room fitted with bookshelves and cabinets in his home, Exeter House, in the Strand.

\textsuperscript{19} PRO 30/20/48/93.
Adventurers, Shaftesbury thanking Stringer for his ‘care of my business of the Bahamas and signing the commission for me’.\footnote{20} Stringer helped Locke deal with his own money too: ‘I have received your money for Kingston from my Lord and have lodged it with Mr Perceval’.\footnote{21}

2. The Great Gunnes and the Exclusion Bill

Stringer was on the periphery of major national affairs in the 1670s. When Shaftesbury opposed the Stop of the Exchequer in 1672 Stringer transcribed Shaftesbury’s reasons and accompanied him to Whitehall to see the King, but Shaftesbury could not prevail against Clifford’s\footnote{22} influence. The same year Shaftesbury was summoned to the King, who revealed his predilection for Roman Catholicism; on his return, Shaftesbury expressed to Stringer ‘his trouble at the black cloud which he said was gathering over England’.\footnote{23} When in 1678 the Marquis de Ruvigny was selected by Louis XIV to carry out secret negotiations for a compact with Charles II, Stringer escorted Monsieur Ruvigny\footnote{24} to his coach, discovering afterwards that the Frenchman had offered Shaftesbury 10,000 guineas and any government post if he would support an alliance with France. Shaftesbury had refused, determined to defend Protestantism. Ceasing to be Lord Chancellor in March 1673, Shaftesbury had become the hero of opposition to the Court, and his ‘trusty steward’

\footnote{20} HRO 9M73/G237/6 8 September 1678.
\footnote{21} Peter Perceval, goldsmith and banker, married to Thomas Stringer’s sister Mary.
\footnote{22} Clifford—a member of Charles II’s Cabal.
\footnote{24} Henri de Massue, Marquis de Ruvigny, diplomat and Huguenot soldier in 1690, joined William III’s army, forfeiting his French estates. In 1692 he was created Viscount Galway and Baron Portarlington, and from 1697 to 1701 was practically in control of Irish affairs as Lord Justice of Ireland. In 1704 he commanded the allied forces in Portugal and in 1715 he was sent as one of the Lords Justices to Ireland during the Jacobite insurrection.
Stringer was a member of the radical Green Ribbon club that met in Chancery Lane. Shaftesbury was supported by the City of London and by the Country party, comprising anti-French and anti-Roman Catholic elements, later known as Whigs. One of these was Edward Clarke, who became acquainted with Stringer after he arrived in London in 1669/70 to become a barrister. A lasting friendship was forged as Clarke and Stringer dealt with Shaftesbury’s legal affairs, and, as Clarke’s wife-to-be, Mary Jepp, was the niece of Locke’s friend John Strachey, Clarke, Stringer, and Locke became entwined in politics and friendship.

One affair concerned the Great Gunnes. Prince Rupert of the Rhine, the King’s cousin and dashing Civil War cavalry leader, discovered, after his return to London at the Restoration, a ‘way of casting iron cannon of the calibre of 50 pounds and upwards, giving them the colour of brass so that his new pieces will not only be as handsome and convenient as brass ones, while lighter and more serviceable but the cost will be very much lower that that of cast cannon’. Because most industrial enterprises at this time worked by trial and error, and there was excessive secrecy to foil competition, it is difficult to discover the actual process, which involved annealing the Great Gunnes in a ‘glasshouse’ and ‘turning them by waterpower’. This meant softening cast iron to work it easily; the annealed gun was therefore free from honeycombs and the metal was equally distributed on all sides, which could not be promised in a rough gun. The disadvantages were that firing and cooling took two months, the waste of metal was considerable, and the furnaces were ruined by great heat. The guns, however, were more durable, endured any weather, and were light in weight, size for size.

27 A third more than in cast iron.
28 HRO 9M73/G244/2.
On 20 December 1671 Captain Hartgill Barron, Prince Rupert’s private secretary, Edmund Hampden of St Clement Danes, and Thomas Stringer were given the right to exploit the patent taken out in 1672 by Prince Rupert (who owned half the rights), Ashley Cooper, then Chancellor of Exchequer, and Sir Thomas Chichely, Master of the Ordnance (who had one quarter each), for the patentees’ benefit. They could negotiate with the Ordnance and particularly with John Browne, whose ancestors had been His Majesty’s Founder of Brass and Iron Ordnance since 1590. Browne was given £11,451 to carry out the work.

550 guns were made between 1674 and 1676, of varying sizes and costing about £60 per ton, of which £40 was for the founder. The guns were engraved with Prince Rupert’s name and the year and were assigned to new ships; they looked set to be the standard gun but owing to a lack of money, politics, and competition, something went wrong. In 1677 John Browne died and by 1679 his widow owed Prince Rupert £5,725, which she could not pay. The guns were taken by Stringer and partners in trust to cover the debt and 300 guns were stored at Temple Mills and 62 at Woolwich. By 1677 Shaftesbury was annoyed by Chichely, ‘who hath been very solicitous in all things for Mrs Browne and hath been very careless of his common interest with us. It is a little too much that Sr Thomas Chichele should have but a fourth part of the concern and yet have all things and persons at his disposal’.

Chichely lost his seat in Parliament and his post in the Ordnance and thereafter was of little use. By July 1681 Shaftesbury’s debts totalled £7,600 and he mortgaged the guns to Percival for £2,489. The interest in these guns was left to Lord Ashley, Shaftesbury’s grandson; years later there was a lawsuit in which Edward Clarke was involved. The Dowager Lady Shaftesbury wrote ‘Mas Clarke give hopes some

29 HRO 9M73/G244/6.
30 PRO 30/24/6A/314.
31 Including £1000 borrowed in May 1680 from London apothecary Samuel Stringer.
good may be donn this terme, about the guns, but I dispond seing most people such wethercocks’, and she was right. Despite Clarke writing ‘Sr Tho: Chichley, Mr Eyres, Mr Marshall and I have had another meeting and have now perfectly settled or Briefes, and Proofes in all particulares for ye Tryall, and what ever there is more to bee done of yrs or my part shall not bee neglected’, Lord Ashley was soon writing to Stringer:

[I thought by delaying] a little to have had a fair account to have given you about our Guns wch I proposed to myself you should have occasion to have rejoiced with me in by ye good success of ye Tryall, as wee all expected; but alas! In this respect my ends are not only destroyed but turned against me for as I have ye misfortune to write you, so I have likewise this trouble in writing in yt I know yt in wt I doe I am to give you trouble also wch I know very well both Mrs Stringer and you will share wth mee in.—My great aggravation of concern is yt wt injury they have done us heare has been struck through ye reputation of my grd father, for ye sly but most partial charge yt ye wise honest verdict that those blades gave in was grounded and merely on yt reasonable belief of ye Princes’ my grandfather’s and Sr T Chichley’s having made a fraudulent deed, a supposition that could scarce have bore even ye worst of ye late times but patience is that honest men must learn if they expect to live tolerably happily in this world of knaves and fools.

When Locke was in France between 1675 and 1679 he and Stringer kept up an extensive correspondence and Stringer held his power of attorney. In 1677 Shaftesbury was confined in the Tower for twelve months, ‘Closer Confined then ever mr Hoskins my selfe and all but two or 3 that are necessary to his Person are Excluded from seeing him, and for what reason we know not’, though

32 HRO 9M73/G239/5 Edward Clarke to Thomas Stringer, 10 May 1677.

33 PRO 30/24/21/f229.

34 In February 1676 Stringer thanked Locke for 645 letters. Power of attorney—GM73/G242.

35 Stringer to John Locke, 13 July 1677, de Beer, i. 499 (no. 344).
Stringer was eventually permitted to visit him before his release on 26 February 1678.

The Country party insisted in 1679 that Roman Catholic James, Duke of York, should be banished, and brought in the first Exclusion Bill, where the Crown would pass to the first Protestant in line. According to Mrs Jane Stringer’s testimony in 1736, it was drawn up by Stringer.

Mr Stringer drew up ye Exclusion bill under ye direction of Ld Shaftesbury; after ’twas finished he comunicated it to three of ye most eminent Lawyers of yt time, Sr Robt Sawyer, Mr Jones, and Mr Pollexfen; they looked over and corrected ye Bill in several places, but chiefly in wt related to ye Form of it; Mr Stringer being desirous to have this business perfected and ye bill brought into ye H of C; attended these lawyers wth great diligence to get em to dispatch their part as soon as possible; as he was returning from one of yir Houses and walking ye streets pretty fast, ye weather being then sultry, he put himself into a great heat; he called in ye way upon one of his acquaintance, and there refreshed himself with a plentiful draught of small beer; and after yt going on, he found himself ill, and of a sudden fell down in ye street, in all appearance dead; he had then in his pocket ye Exclusion bill wch made the Dke of Yorke’s party loudly exclaim, yt twas a sure mark of ye vengeance of heaven over one yt was carrying on so wicked a design.

As some of the Whigs were beginning to consider the claims of the Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate son of Charles I, to the throne, the second Exclusion Bill which came before Parliament was vaguely worded and was rejected. In 1736 Jane Stringer com-

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36 Stringer to John Locke, 16 August 1677, de Beer, i. 511 (no. 353).


38 Henry Pollexfen, lawyer with extensive practice who was engaged in most of the important cases in the latter part of Charles II’s reign; MP for Exeter 1688, one of the counsels for the Seven Bishops in 1688, and Whig Attorney General in William III’s reign.

mented that it was ‘a miracle Shaftesbury opposed King, Lords and Commons by himself for six weeks, often talking until midnight’.40

Charles called the Oxford Parliament in March 1681; Locke accompanied Shaftesbury, wearing a new gown of hair prunella41 which was fashioned by Mrs Stringer and Lady Shaftesbury. On 26 March Shaftesbury wrote to Stringer that there ‘was a general despair that nothing will be done for the Protecant settlement and security’. As Charles by now had three years supply of money from Louis XIV, he dissolved Parliament and destroyed the Country party’s hold on towns by cancelling borough charters and replacing corporations. On 22 July 1681 Shaftesbury was arrested and although acquitted in November, he fled to Holland in November 1682, after Monmouth’s arrest. In 1680 Edward Clarke, Thomas Stringer, John Hoskins,42 and Sir William Cowper had become trustees for those of his estates not already settled, and before Shaftesbury escaped he conveyed to Edward Clarke and others property for his wife during his lifetime and for her sole use after his death, which occurred on 28 January 1682/83. Clarke, Hoskins, and Cowper organized the return of Shaftesbury’s body for burial at Wimborne St Giles on 26 February.

Dear Mr Stringer

Mr Clarke Mr Hoskins and my self being of opinion that the best way of disposing my Lords body will be to convey it to the nearest port to St Giles, I have accordingly writt such instructions to Mr Sheppard, and withall to lett me know as soone as he shall arrive, that horse and coaches may be sent from hence to the port, and what els shall be necessary—ah Mr Stringer I am extreamly sad when I consider or great and irraparable loss but the will of God must be don in this who I doubt not hath at once rewarded his great and

40 HRO 9M73/G243/3 ‘memo 25 September 1736 of wt Mrs Hill told me [Lady Elizabeth Harris] of her former hnd Mr Stringer drawing up ye Exclusion Bill’.

41 Hair prunella—a type of strong cloth of silk or worsted used for graduate gowns. Stringer to Locke, 15 February 1681, de Beer, ii. 375 (no. 624).

42 John Hoskins of Oxted, Surrey, c1640–1717.
eminent virtues, and disappointed the hellish designes of his bloody and malicious enemies, for he’s now beyond ye reach of English cutththroats or Irish witnesses, and the losse is only on or side.43

In 1683 Stringer had a lucky escape from imprisonment when Whigs were suspected of proposing to kidnap the King and the Duke of York on their return from Newmarket races. Essex, Russell, and Algernon Sidney were arrested and Russell, who had taken the Exclusion Bill to the House of Lords, was executed.

At ye time of Ld Russel’s Tryal, ye Court being in want of evidence, it was suggested by some of ye Privy Councill, yt probably some matter of yt kind might be found amongst Mr Stringer’s papers, a messenger was immediately sent, who seiz’d and brought em. They were lain in a great heap on the board, as ye counciell was sitting, among ye rest yre was ye original draught of ye Exclusion Bill; this Sr Robt Sawyer fixed his eye upon; he knew it very well, and remembered he had interlined with his own hand; he saw ye danger yt would follow from such a discovery, nothing less than an entire breach with ye Duke; so he got up and moved ye councel, yt as ye examining such a multitude of papers would be very tedious he thought it would be much easier if each person was to take and examine a separate parcel. Sr Robt being at yt time become a perfect tool to ye court, his design in making this motion wasnt at all suspected; so it was readily agreed to, and he himself was bid to make ye distribution of ye papers; he took ye Exclusion bill with others to his own share, and by yt means escaped ye danger.44 After a perusal of ye papers, it plainly appeared they would furnish out nothing yt wld serve ye Court in Ld Rus case; however it was moved yt enough might be collected from em as wd be sufficient grounds for imprisoning Mr Stringer; here again Sr Robt interposed, conscious to himself of ye transactions yt had formerly passed between him and yt gentleman; he informed yt counciell, yt unless something material could be produced to charge Mr Stringer wth, he thought twould be of no importance especially at a time wn ye court had their hands so fully employed to confine and prosecute a man, who was already confined, and

43 PRO 30/24/6A/386 William Cooper to Stringer, 30 January 1682.

44 Sawyer had led the prosecution of Shaftesbury in 1681 and naturally always did his best to conceal the fact that he had assisted in drafting the Exclusion Bill. In 1688 he was senior counsel for the Seven Bishops.
under such circumstances, yt he couldn’t well either do his enemys a mischief or his friends any service. Sr Robt carried the point in favour of Mr Stringer who continuing afterwds quiet, met with no farther trouble from ye court. 45

Mrs Stringer was with ‘Lady Russell’ 46 in a room she had taken over against the Old Bayley while her Lord was on his tryall there hopeing he would be acquitted, knowing that by law he cou’d not be condemned, but there came an officer in violent hast on horseback from the Tower to tell them ye Lord Essex had cut his own throat being terrified to hear my Lord Russell was on his Tryall’. 47 Lady Russell came to Stringer for advice ‘when her Lord was hurried in so barbarous a manner to Newgate. He gave her in writing such admirable instructions that Pollexfen and the other ablest lawyers owned better could not be given and if any law cou’d then be had, those instructions would certainly save him’. 48 But his opponents wanted Russell to confess Shaftesbury had drawn him into the plot, and he refused.

3. The Quarrel with Locke
By the autumn of 1683 Locke was in Holland, communicating with friends like Clarke in code; he stopped writing to others in order not to involve them in a dangerous correspondence. In 1688 he wanted to retrieve a portrait of himself by Greenhill 49 that he had left for safekeeping with the Stringers, so that it could be engraved for a frontispiece to his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, and

45 HRO 9M73/243/3 op. cit.
46 She was a cousin of Dowager Lady Shaftesbury.
47 HRO 9M73/924/1.
48 Jane Hill/Stringer to Lady Elizabeth Harris, quoted in Christie, op. cit.
49 John Greenhill (1644–76) was married to Honor, the sister of David Thomas, a doctor friend of Locke’s at Oxford, who later lived at Salisbury and was often visited by the Clarkes and Stringers. A Greenhill portrait of Locke ended up at Chipley and may have been this one or one owned by Dr Thomas.
therefore wrote to Clarke rather than Stringer. The ensuing quarrel ruined Locke’s close friendship with Stringer, but Clarke, though involved in a great deal of patient negotiation, managed to stay friends with both.

Returning from France, Locke collected everything left with the Stringers ‘except my picture which he had removed to his house at Bexwells’. In 1688 Stringer refused to hand it over, saying it was his and ‘I am resolved (tho I have noe leggs) to stand stoutly in defence of it’.\(^{50}\) Using Clarke as a go-between, sharp letters from each escalated the disagreement; Locke was deeply upset by Stringer’s gall and spite, and Stringer was surprised at the ‘Sharpnesse out of Holland’,\(^{51}\) but Clarke, though fairly sure Locke was in the right, had to tell him Stringer would not part with the picture. The Clarkes tried to act as peacemakers; Mary told the Stringers she would like it in town and the Stringers sent it, so that Locke was able to have it engraved. Jane invited Locke to visit them and Locke drafted a letter thanking her for the invitation saying it would ‘make some amends to me after the wasting of soe much of my life at a distance to have the opportunity of recollecting old stories and going over agn with you the pleasantest part of my life with whom it was spent. …I shall be very glad to be assured how my interst recovers itself agn with my old friends who are of much more value to me then pictures can be’. Before this was posted Jane’s letter saying ‘I doubt not but you will pardon all that has unhappily pas’d amongst us, you know where much is forgiven you will have much love besides a great reward above’\(^{52}\) arrived and Locke now added ‘I beleive we are growing towards our old familiarity & friendship agn and you may be sure I shall very much value any kindnesses you doe me for my owne sake’.

Jane appeared delighted and explained

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\(^{50}\) Stringer to Locke, 12 March 1688, de Beer, iii. 411 (no.1028).

\(^{51}\) Stringer to Locke, 30 April 1688, de Beer, iii. 440 (no. 1045).

\(^{52}\) HRO 9M73/672/22 Jane Stringer to Locke, 3 August 1689
as for the occasion of sending your picture … Mrs Clark wrote to me for it and told me I must not ask questions but promised to return it safe again. I acquainted Mr Stringer with it and we both concluded immediately it was for your use and therefore with all cheerfulness and readiness got a frame made and with all possible care I had it well put up and by the next return of the carrier sent it to her … Mr Stringer presents his humble serviss to you and bid me tell you that if you had any occasion to try the hartyness of his affection you would find it is not the want of legs could hinder him from crawling a thousand miles to doe you any reall serviss. 53

Despite all these kind words, the quarrel continued, the Stringers insisting the picture was really theirs.

In October Jane wrote she was sorry ‘that you are so coldly disposed to a pure firm and lasting friendship, … I hoped you had so much charity to beleve me sincere and faithfull in my professions’. 54 Mary Clarke was sick of the subject: ‘I hope Mrs Stringer and hee [Locke] will understand one another about the picture which would be a great satisfaction to me’. 55

In 1692 there was further conflict, this time concerning money; the Treasury asked Locke to account for money impressed to him when he was Secretary to the Council of Trade and Plantations; Locke felt he was being charged with £250 more than he had received and found a receipt of December 1676 paid to Stringer as his assignee. He asked Stringer to help clear up this account 56 and Stringer crossly replied he would do his best to remember, but he had given Locke all the papers at the time and did not expect to be asked about them sixteen years later. He remembered having a quarrel with Henry Brouncker about it at Westminster Hall door: ‘I upon great provocation was goeing to strike him, And my Lord Culpeper Chopping in between us, went imediatly up to the Lords

53 Mrs Stringer to Locke, 9 August 1689, de Beer, iii. 675 (no. 1173).
54 Mrs Stringer to Locke, 5 October 1689, de Beer, iii. 705 (no.1192).
55 SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, 21 November 1690.
56 Locke to Stringer, 15 October 1692, de Beer, iv. 530 (no. 1542).
House … to Complaine that I was offering to strike his Lordshipp’ —another example of Stringer’s short temper. Once again Clarke was asked to be peacemaker: ‘if my letter to Mr S have any thing in it you approve not of pray correct it and send it me again to be transcribed’, but Stringer was not to be pacified:

that you may not want plaine English for an Excuse, I shall in other terms, without streynes of Logick lett you know (though I perceive I am soe low in your Esteeme, that it may signifye as little as the other with you) That the some Body you mean never Received the money you pretend to be soe much puzzled about, And that I doe not apprehend such difficulty but that the other Body (if he please to turne his minde that way) may as easily discharge himselfe of it.  

A close friendship was never resumed, but Jane did write to Locke in 1700:

Im very sensible of our unhappyness in being deprived of the great advantage, and satisfaction of corresponding with so great and usefull a person as your self; and I humbly beg your pardon for all Errors etc: on our side; that might occation it; I canot doubt of your favourable construction upon all occations; recounting your many very friendly; and obliging favours to us; and as a mark of your still retaining that most christian temper; of being easy; and redy to forgive; I beceech you Sir do me the Honour to oblige me with a short comprehensive sentence in lattin; to engrave on a ring or lockett of this present lord Shaftsburys Haire. … I assure you Sir we are allways extremly glad to heare of your health which we have offten the satisfaction off from severall hands.

4. Glorious Revolution

57 Stringer to Locke, 19 October 1692, de Beer, iv. 543 (no. 1545).
58 Locke to Edward Clarke, 31 October 1692, iv. 562 (no.1555).
59 Stringer to Locke, 9 November 1692, de Beer, iv. 577 (no.1563).
60 Mrs Stringer to Locke, 18 December 1700, de Beer, vii. 205 (no. 2829).
During the 1680s Clarke’s letters kept Stringer informed about the absent Locke’s financial affairs: ‘yesterday I recd a Letter from or ffreind Mr L wherein hee earnestly desires mee to gett in all ye money that possibly I can for him, and to return it over to him wth all that speed that may bee, in pursuance of wch I must begg you to give mee an Order to Mr Percyvall for the paymt of soe much of his Annuity as is now in arrears from my Ldy to Him’, and about politics:

The terme began with ye turning out of ye Ld Ch Justice Jones, and makeing Bedingfeild Ch Justice of ye Common Please, Charlton allsoe out of ye Common Please and placed again Cheife Justice of Chester, and Sarjeant Mylton and Sarjeant Lutwith Justice of ye Common Pleas Ld Cheife Baron turn’d out of ye Exchquer and Baron Atkins in his place and Sarjeant Heath made a baron, and tis said that Baron Nevill is allsoe out; Sr John Holt, Mr Mylton, Mr Powell, Mr Tate, Sr Amb: Phillipps, Mr Killenworth, Mr Rawlinson, Mr Hugh Hodger and Mr Hutchins are made Sarjeants, but tis thought Sr Jo: Holt is not at present verie likely to bee further advanced by reason of his absolute refusall at this last sessions at ye Old Bayley to pass sentence on a souldier who was tryed and convicted for running away from his Colors, declareing that by ye law of England a soldiers deserting his Colors in ye time of peace was not according to ye best of his understanding a capitall offence, this is look’d upon to bee an ill presedent and may possibly incourage more deserters; Sunday last Mass being openly read at ye New Chapple in Lyme Streete London, the rabble verie much disturbed the congregation and ye preist was soe pelted wth dirt that hee was forced to fly into an house neare adjoyning for safety.61

A year later,

ye Vice chancellor and eight of ye Learn’d doctors of the University of Cambridge were summon’d before ye Lds Commissionrs where after being verie severely reprimanded by ye Lord Chacellor for theare disloyall stubborness in refuseing to obey His Majestys Mandamus especially in soe reasonable thing as that of makeing ffather ffrances a Master of Art in that

61 HRO 9M73/G239/4 Edward Clarke to Stringer, 22 April 1686.
University, the Vice Chancellor was by sentence of that Court deprived of his office of Vice Chancellor, suspended from ye office and profits of his place, as head of ye College, and made incapable of any office or place whatsoever in ye University during ye Kings displeasure, a punishment too small I think for so great an offence, the rest of ye Doctors are to attend againe on Thursday next to receive their sentence, at which time 'tis not doubted but their punishment will be answerable to their deserts, in case they doe not in ye mean time make full and free discovery of all others especially heads of Houses in the University that advised and promoted this disobedience to ye Kings Mandamus, for tis not fitt that any one of them should continue in ye University lest they should infect the young loyal gentry there, and keepe out others more deserving and better fitted for those preferments.  

Events were moving towards the Glorious Revolution which Clarke and Stringer and Locke had worked so hard to achieve. In June 1688:

ye Tryall of ye Bpsps came on yesterday morning before nine of the clocke and lasted untill about seaven at night, wherein the Bpsps counsell who were Pemberton, Sawyer, ffinch, Pollexfen, Treby and Summers behaved themselves with great courage and conduct, and spoke such Bold Truths concerning the Dispenceing Power as have not of latter yeares been mentioned in Westmr Hall, or any where else out of Parliament … ye Jury lay by it all night and agreed not of their verdict untill eight of the clock this morning and all the Bpsps wee Acquitted to ye great satisfaction & ye unexpressable joy of all Good Protestants, signified by their loud acclamations even in ye Hall sitting all the Courts of Justice, wch, by the multitudes of the people there attending was soe greate that they were plainly hear’d through most parts of ye City.  

In November, 'ye Dutch landed at Tor Bay yesterday, that Sr Wm Waller with some horse under his command took their lodging at Sr Wm Courtnay’s house the last night, and I am credibly inform’d that

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63 HRO 9M73/G239/6 Edward Clarke to Stringer, London 30 June 1688.
ye maine body of theire horse will bee in Exeter this night, theire numbers are not yett known, but ’tis said they are upwards of 20000’.\textsuperscript{64} and finally,

This day the Prince of Orange came to St James’s, with greater demonstrations of publique joy, and a universall satisfaction, than words can expresse, the King haveing about two howeres before prudently withdrawn himselfe againe down the river, in order, as tis thought, of leaveing the Kingdome, in wch designe tis believed there is care taken that hee may not bee againe interrupted.\textsuperscript{65}

On 23 February the Dowager Countess wrote that ‘your old good aquaintance Mr Locke came into Ingland when the princes (the now queen) did’.\textsuperscript{66}

Shaftesbury’s protégés were linked by politics, philosophy, culture, and friendship and these links remained long after his death; when Clarke built his house at Chipley in 1680 he chose as his architect William Taylor, who in 1670–2 had been involved in the building of the south range at Shaftesbury’s St Giles House at Wimborne,\textsuperscript{67} and when he was elected MP for Taunton in 1690 he publicized Locke’s political philosophy in the Commons. Clarke and Stringer were still keen to uphold the reputation of Shaftesbury and other Whigs. Clarke wrote:

at ye Comittee appoynted to examine into ye crimes of Burfold and Graham, Capt Wilkinson and one Booth attested that Graham offered the Capt ten thousand pounds to sweare Treason agst the Ld Shaftesbury, and told him hee should have either the Kings hand for his security or else the Lds Hallifax and

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[64]{HRO 9M73/G239/9 Edward Clarke to Stringer, 6 November 1688.}
\footnotetext[65]{HRO 9M73/G239/8 Edward Clarke to Stringer, London 18 December 1689.}
\footnotetext[66]{HRO 9M73 /672/21.}
\end{footnotes}
Hyde should bee security to him for the money; and this day the House of Lds (to or greate but joyfull admiration) have appoynte a Comittee to inquire who were the advisors and prosecutors of the Murder of the Ld Russell.

5. Domestic Life
Stringer was a witness to the marriage settlement of Edward Clarke and Mary Jepp in April 1675, and two months later, on 19 June 1675, Jane Barbon, of Wimborne St Giles, daughter of James Barbon of St Pauls, Covent Garden, was licensed to marry Thomas Stringer at St Clement Danes. Stringer bought an estate at Bexwells, near Chelmsford in Essex, where Mrs Stringer resided while he lived in London and visited weekly. He wrote an affectionate letter to her while she was pregnant the following year:

My dearest heart

I have with much uneasiness wayted the coming of this day in hopes to heare from thee, & soe have made diligent enquire after a letter but can heare of nothing; wch thee mayst be sure hath not a littl disturbed my thoughts because I left thee not well when I came from thence & I am as sure thee wouldst not have failed to write if thee hadst been able soe that if thee hast any regard to my quiettness and satisfaction lett me begg thee send John that I may know by him how thee art and by him alsoe my things for the next weeke, because my unhappinesse is such that I canno t see thee untill tomorrow fortnight, though untill I heare from thee I shall not be very fitt for any kinde of buisness, I am

Eternally thine, T.S.

Mary Clarke was expecting her first child at the same time; Stringer told Locke: ‘Mrs Clerke … is as bigg as she can Tumble, and a friend of yours in Essex is growing very fast’. Jane Stringer’s confinement had a happy ending when her son was born; Mary Clarke was not so fortunate. In June 1676 Stringer told Locke

68 HRO 9M73/672/37  Stringer  to Mrs Stringer, 21 April 1676.
69 Stringer to Locke, 6 April 1676, de Beer, i. 445 (no. 311).
‘mrs Clerk is delivered of a young Sone, and me thinks looks prettily for a mother’, but on 8 July ‘Mr Clerke and his Lady in Hatten Garden … have lately buryed theire young sone, which hath been a great trouble to them and she was the more unwilling to parte with him because it cost her soe much Payne and difficulty to bring him in to the world.’

After the Exclusion Bill crisis, Stringer collapsed in the street when he ‘entirely lost the use of his feet by a paralytic disorder yt pitch’t in ym upon his taking a violent cold’ or, as Mrs Stringer wrote many years later to Lord Fitzwalter, ‘when he was deprived of the use of his legs being sudenly seized with a dead pallsey’ and he described the medical details to Locke in March 1681.

My legs … continue much at theire old Rate, being not able yett to goe or Stand, sinc my comeing into the Country I have taken some pills againe to carry off that defluxion which fell upon my throat, they wrought very well with me, and of that I am perfectly well and I would faine have hoped my legs might have received some benefitt from it but as yett I cannot finde any such Effect. I have a much more stifnes in my hipps and knees then formerly, when I keepe my legs stretched forth a little time, they will draw up at my first moving of them with great violence, and if I keepe them bent, they will stretch forth as much, soe that any alteration of posture is at first very troublesome.

News of his illness reached Stringer’s brother-in-law, James Barbon, in Montpellier, who heard ‘it was soe bad that you had not been able to goe for two months past’. The following year Jane discussed her husband’s illness with Locke:

70 Mary Clarke lost her first three children but eight more survived; the Stringers appear to have had only one. Stringer to Locke, 8 July 1676, de Beer, i. 453 (no. 315).

71 HRO 9M73/G243/3.

72 HRO 9M73/673/8 Mrs Stringer to Lord Fitzwalter.

73 Stringer to John Locke, 12 March 1681, de Beer, ii. 390 (no. 631).

74 PRO 30/24/6A/378 James Barbon to Stringer, 1681.
this is the 19th: day of Mr Stringers spitting it hath succeeded extream well and kept up to a good height without taking any thing to continue or raise it since the first three dayes the last of which is now 17 days agoe he took the last dose and yet his spitting is now as much as att any time since he began my brother sais it has bin the most kindly and gentle sallivation that ever he knew in his life we hope the effect will be as fortunate to him though truly I cannot yett boast much of any great allteration in his legs they tell me I must not so soon expect that till he has recruted strength again and used an artifitiall bath sumtime: he has spitt three gallons since he enterd into this course which his brother\textsuperscript{75} thinks a sufficient quantity therefore he intends to give him a purge to morrow to carry the humour another way.\textsuperscript{76}

The Stringers decided to move. Bexfields was leased on 6 May 1682, and soon after they went to Ivychurch, near Alderbury, Wiltshire, ‘with a noble prospect to Salisbury and over the country north and west’.\textsuperscript{77} Lady Fitzwalter was surprised ‘that Mr Stringer should have thoughts of leaveing ye town: how a country life under Mr Stringers confinement will agree I canot imagen though he is blest with an extraordinary temper yet love sociaty which he has allwais bin used to is necessary to his mere pleasurre in being in ye world’.\textsuperscript{78}

Salisbury was a stopping point for coach journeys from London so the Stringers were frequently visited by friends, particularly the Clarkes and their children, and in June 1691 the Clarkes and the Stringers went to Escot\textsuperscript{79} to meet Sir Walter Yonge and his new wife, the Stringers staying at Chipley afterwards. Stringer kept busy as a ‘justice of the peace and judge of the sessions at Sarum as long

\textsuperscript{75} Presumably Samuel Stringer.

\textsuperscript{76} Mrs Stringer to Locke, 8 April 1682, de Beer, ii. 501 (no. 697).

\textsuperscript{77} The Earl of Pembroke had converted monastic buildings into a house and Philip Sidney was said to have written Arcadia there; it was pulled down in 1888. J. Nightingale, Priory of Ivychurch, Proc. Soc. Antiqu. 2nd series, 13, 352–5.

\textsuperscript{78} HRO 9M73/672/17 Lady Fitzwalter to Mrs Stringer.

\textsuperscript{79} Escot was also built by Taylor, and Yonge asked Locke to choose the library.
as he lived’, Judge Holt saying ‘he understood the law perfectly well and was the ablest JP in England’.  

For example, he took out a warrant against a churchwarden for contempt in failing to provide relief for the mother after the birth of an illegitimate child.

By 1695 the Stringer’s son, who in 1681 had sent a message to Locke that ‘he is much at your Commands’, was a worry to his parents. Mary wrote to Edward: ‘Young Mr Stringer came here a Saturday and goes hence this day to Taunton, Mr Stringer I heare have not been well and she indisposed. I beleve the feares of theyr son the old troble is the foundation of these disorders I pray God to send them comfort of him at last’. He left ‘several little debts of about 40 or 50 shillings behind him and methinkes he seems to me to be more and more idle’.

In the same year, Betty, the eldest and cleverest Clarke daughter, and Locke’s favourite, was thirteen and went to stay at Ivychurch to acquire some social polish. Mrs Stringer told Mary they looked after Betty ‘as if she were our own child or ye greatest princess in ye world; I doubt not but you beleive it by yr great confidence you have so kindly reposed in us particularly in favouring us with her good company so long’. Mrs Stringer had to organize her clothes, asking Mary to ‘please to give yr consent yt yr daughter may have another paire of stays made at London for these I gott made att Salisbury are not well made, they make her look stooping at ye shoulders. She allso wants another mantua and petty coat. If you please to send up her silver tabby ye gound and petty coat with ye

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80 Mrs Stringer.
81 HRO 670, December 1689.
82 Stringer to Locke, 12 March 1681, de Beer, ii. 390 (no.631).
83 SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, Chipley, 2 September 1695.
84 SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, Chipley, 4 September 1695.
85 SRO Mrs Stringer to Mary Clarke, 31 January 1696.
new breadth I beleeeve it will do with eking ye petty coat behind’. 86 Betty behaved like a model child there, receiving the sacrament on Easter Day, ‘alas yr godson is not so good tho he read good bookes and ye greek in order to fitt himself for it; he told me this morning he found himself so dull and listless yt he durst not doe it; but desired to be excused a little longer as if it were an evill day; I wish my boy were a girle but tis in vain I must be content and make ye best of a bad matter I must take more pains with him.’ Betty stayed until August 1696, Mary having to ask Edward ‘whether you have done any thinge in order to a present for her to give to Mrs Stringer for really methinkes she looks like an inhabetant theare’, 87 which resulted in Edward buying a silver monteith for Betty to give Mr and Mrs Stringer costing £20 16s 5d. 88

Mrs Stringer’s letter to Mary in 1696 inviting her to stay shows that Locke was still corresponding with the Stringers, contrary to de Beer’s note which says they did not communicate after 1692:

I hartily wish you would be prevailed with to come down hither and try ye change of ayre for some time, Im strongly perswaide d it would perfectly recover you in a very little time Mr Stringer has received a letter from our best friend 89 by which I perceive you are advised to drink ye bath waters.

Stringer junior was still idle:

we lett him take a useless idle course hopeing for ye happyness of yr coming this way yt we might have ye advantage of Mr Clarkes advice and directions. He is very regular and easily managed he is not so much inclined to drink but I cannot prevale with him to apply himself to his study he got such a habitt of liberty and being slothful I doubt twill be a very difficult thing for him to

86 SRO Mrs Stringer to Mary Clarke, 12 April (Easter Day)1696.
87 SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, 17 March 1695/6.
88 Its weight was 65 oz and 15 pennyweight at 6s 4d per oz.
89 Locke—thus showing he still corresponded with the Stringers and letter no. 1563 was not the last.
bring himself to it. I often fear nothing but necessity will prevaiile with him. His father and he never communicates but yts noe new thing however I improve it as much as I can and lay before him yt danger of his displeasure.\footnote{SRO Mrs Stringer to Mary Clarke, 26 May 1696.}

It was not only too much drink that was affecting the Stringers’ son. He was in debt and later had an illness about which he found Edward easier to approach than his own father:

I am truly under the deepest … imaginable of your many great favors and true freindship to me upon all occasions, and am allsoe as sensible of my own unworthiness which makes me ashamed to beg the favour of your further assistance, tho I stand in very great need of it both to advise me now and discourse my father when you see him in my behalf to prepare him that he may not be troubled nor displeased with me when he comes to pay those debts I have soe foolishly contracted. As for Doctor Bacon I agreed with him for seven pound ten shillings, three to be paid at first but I could not doe it till I am perfectly well which I am not as yett for there is some running appears yellowish, Sir if it be not too great a liberty I wou'd intreat the favor of your opinion, I would willingly be advised by some abler phisitian if you think it convenient Sir I beg your pardon for this trouble, and give me leave to subscribe myself, yr most obedient servant JS.\footnote{SRO J Stringer to Edward Clarke, 30 May 1696.}

On Betty’s return, Mary reported that she was ‘very much improved by being with Mrs Stringer’.\footnote{SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, 9 September 1696.} Next year the Clarkes and Locke were thinking about a possible husband for her; Edward discovered Mrs Stringer’s ‘ proposition for Betty to be Coll Hurst's sonn, who I am satisfied by the inquiry I made will have but a small estate and less sence, and therefore cannot thinke him at all a fitt match for Betty’.\footnote{SRO Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke, London, 5 October 1697.} Worried that Betty had fallen in love with the unsatisfactory Stringer boy, Locke appeared to play the part of spy
when she went to stay at Oates with Lady Masham,\textsuperscript{94} telling Edward ‘Since she has been here she has been very reservd. if it be her usual temper tis well. If it be present thoughtfulnesse tis worth your consideration. How I shall carry my self to her you must instruct me for I love her and you know I am at your disposal to serve you’.\textsuperscript{95}

A week later he wrote, ‘there is yet not the least appearance of a letter going or comeing. … If there were any amour begun. which your letter makes me suspect, yet the breakeing of the correspondence soe early in an age like hers may at this distance probably make it die. This I say is probable, but not to be presumed on. … I should for her sake as well as yours be very much troubled if any such irremediable misfortune should befall her’.\textsuperscript{96} Betty gave no evidence of being attracted, and various suitors appeared in the next few months, but Mrs Stringer must have continued to hope her son would win a well-dowered bride, for on 18 March 1699 Thomas Stringer wrote to Edward Clarke that ‘his wife’s proposal of his son for Clarke’s daughter was without his knowledge and contrary to his opinion until he see him in a post advantageous to him’. Mary worried that if they could not find a suitable match ‘Betty in the long run might fall to young Stringers share’.\textsuperscript{97} In 1700 Mrs Stringer was still hoping when Mary sent Edward:

\begin{quote}
the inclosed I had from Mrs Stringer by the last post and cannot emagen why she makes such a pudder, for I must say to her it is impossoble we should fall out for if she is not angrey I am not, neither do I supose you are or will ever take any notiss of the matter either to her or her sone and I am sure I shall be glad never to hear or say anything more about it.\textsuperscript{98}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{94} Locke lived at the Mashams’ house and entertained his friends there.

\textsuperscript{95} Locke to Edward Clarke, Oates, 7 May 1698, de Beer, vi. 392 (no. 2433).

\textsuperscript{96} Locke to Edward Clarke, Oates 13 May 1698, de Beer, vi. 398 (no. 2438).

\textsuperscript{97} SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, 15 April 1700.

\textsuperscript{98} SRO Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke, 3 July 1700.
Mrs Stringer’s hopes were dashed when Betty married John Jones of Langford Court in 1704.

6. Last Years
Stringer began a memoir of Shaftesbury; Christie wrote that Stringer would have had no personal knowledge of Shaftesbury’s early life, but if Thomas’s father had been his steward this is not true. However, only a fragment of the memoir survived, mainly dealing with the early 1670s. Stringer’s health gradually failed, but he was still involved with public work. He received a letter from the overseer of the poor in June 1701, he wrote to T. Jervoise about support for Colonel Ashley in November 1701, and about Avon Navigation in March 1702.

Realizing ‘the family’s debt to Mr Stringer and Mr Clarke’, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury was another frequent correspondent; he wrote on 16 February 1701 mentioning Stringer’s serious illness, and a year later expressed his dismay at the possibility of the Stringers leaving Ivychurch. In February 1702 he wrote, ‘how useful you have been’ in the election. A month later, writing about the death of King William III, he said he would send down Mr

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99 Probably inspired by Sir William Temple’s memoirs in 1691, which had disparaged Shaftesbury, but written after the death of the Duke of Bolton (formerly Marquess of Winchester) in 1699.

100 HRO 9M73/G239/12.
101 HRO 44M69/G2/221.
102 HRO 44M69/F6/9/137.
103 HRO 9M73/G238/6.
104 HRO 9M73/G238/18.
105 HRO 9M73/G238/17.
106 HRO 9M73/G238/19.
Cooper the surgeon\textsuperscript{107} on 10 March 1702. On 19 March he wrote to Mrs Stringer saying he had heard a good account of her husband,\textsuperscript{108} but Thomas died on 6 May. Jane Stringer seems to have been left poorly off, as her brother-in-law Samuel wrote to the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury on her behalf saying Stringer had ‘sett noe bounds to his call to serve his country and doe good to mankind his head was so filld with ye thoughts of his duty on yt account that he quite forgot his own private affairs for himselfe and family’ and that the Stringers had refused an earlier ‘generous offer of giving two or three hundred ginneys to purchase an imploymt for her son heretofore in his fathers life time’.\textsuperscript{109} Whether Shaftesbury was the reason, young Stringer’s fate seemed to lie in the army. In September 1704 Mrs Stringer heard that Major Generall Earle\textsuperscript{110} ‘speaks very kindly of yr son & will heartily serve him’ and in June 1705 an unknown correspondent sending condolences wrote:

I hope a few months will restore you what will disipate em all and give you time and interest enough to change Capt Stringers post for one of less fatigue and hazards both to his person and yr own mind yt I fear has as little quiet as his person can suffer in the most labourious expedition they can be gone out on yt.\textsuperscript{111}

He must have returned to see his mother, as in April 1706 another writer wanted to know if ‘you have yet part’d with Capt Stringer to make his summer campaign, if you have I most heartily wish he may escape all hazards of war and remote nations and return to you

\textsuperscript{107} HRO 9M73/G238/20.
\textsuperscript{108} HRO 9M73/G238/22.
\textsuperscript{109} HRO 9M732/G249.
\textsuperscript{110} HRO 9M73/672  J. Hooper to Mrs Stringer.
\textsuperscript{111} HRO 9M73/672/4 19 June 1705.
with as much health and safely as you happily had him restored to you this last year’.  

Thomas Stringer had had an eventful life, involved with the most eminent men of his generation. It was marred only by his irascible temper, which spoiled relations with his son and Locke, but which may have been exacerbated by his ill health. Jane remarried, to Jon Hill of Cholderton, Wiltshire, but she was anxious to preserve her first husband’s memory, ‘whose merit was truly greater than any words can express’, and lamented his death, which prevented him from writing Shaftesbury’s biography where ‘I am sure he would make it plainly appear that your grandfather did with all his might oppose the dutch war and shutting up the Exchequer and that it grieved him to the heart when it was done’. Shaftesbury ‘was much pleased with him for his great probity diligence and indefatigable industry’. He was ‘truly publick spirited, quite free from all sordid self interest’. The 3rd Earl later told Stringer he had been a great instrument in ‘saving not only your country but the world’ and surely no-one could wish for a finer epitaph. His actual epitaph was in Alderbury church:

In memory of Thomas Stringer Esq of Ivychurch who departed this life May 6 Anno dom 1702 aged 63 years. Also in Memory of Jane, first wife to Thomas Stringer, late wife of Jon Hill of Cholderton who dyed July ye 17 1740 aged 89.
‘She opened her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue was the law of kindness.

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112 HRO 9M73/672/39 9 April 1706.
113 Written on back of a letter to Lord Fitzwalter.
114 Jane Hill to Lady Elizabeth Harries, quoted in Christie, op. cit.
115 HRO 9M73/924/1 Jane Hill to Lady Elizabeth Harris.
116 HRO 9M73/G238/19.
Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for ye end of yt man is peace.’

\[117\]

\textit{St John’s Wood, London}

\[117\] Sir Thomas Phillips, \textit{Monumental Inscriptions of Wiltshire} (1822), edited by Peter Sherlock, 337. Wiltshire Record Society, vol. 33, where it says the memorial is against the north wall of the chancel, but in 2008 it is no longer to be found.