Widening circles in finance, philanthropy and the arts. A study of the life of John Julius Angerstein 1735-1823

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CHAPTER NINE – THE CITY ELDER AND HIS LOAN SUBSCRIBERS

I CONTRACTING FOR LOANS

In October 1801 Angerstein wrote once more to Anthony Hamond, this time from North Willingham where he was staying with the Boucheretts, to say that he planned to return to London in mid-December:

That I may be ready to prepare for the loan which will come on after the Holidays. If you should wish to engage as you did the last I shall certainly put you into my List.

Hamond replied that he would like to be put down for £30,000 as he had a relation 'who wishes to be concerned with me'. Angerstein's timing was reasonably accurate, and no fewer than seven interested groups of would-be contractors were named in late January. The Peace of Amiens between Britain and France was signed on 27th March and bidding for the loan took place a few days later. On offer was a package consisting of fixed amounts of two existing stocks, plus as little as possible more of one of the stocks but with no interest paid on it until 1808. All seven groups tendered for this rather unpalatable mixture, and the Baring/Angerstein bid was fifth worst. There was a premium when trading began, but support gradually withered away over the weeks and investors could easily have been left with losses, so that Sir Francis and Angerstein were probably not sorry that they had been cautious on behalf of themselves and their subscribers.

The following year Angerstein was again not involved with the loan. The contractors who had handled it and the 1802 borrowing had burnt their fingers to the extent that they did not even attend the preliminary meeting with Henry Addington, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, to hear of the Government's requirements for 1804: those who were represented were Sir William Curtis and his group; Sir Francis Baring, Angerstein and their partners (who had shared the 1801 loan with the Curtis syndicate); and a party of bankers led by Lord Kinnaird, who was a man Angerstein certainly knew as he was an art collector and the Treasurer of the Royal Institution. The three groups considered their bids and returned to Downing Street a few days later, whereupon Lord Kinnaird proposed that there should be a fresh tender if 2 or all 3 of the groups offered the same terms. Addington would have none of it, saying that it might have been proper if such a condition had been made at the previous meeting and going on that:

It had been the custom to give the contract to the parties who made the lowest offer, whether such low offer proceeded from choice or concert (and it was doubtful whether concert was not favourable to the public, by enabling the parties, through an increase of strengths, to give better terms)...

Addington was not prepared to alter the rules; and after retiring to consider their positions the groups decided not to withdraw their tenders. Kinnaird was no doubt unsurprised when he learnt that he had been outbid by the other two groups who did indeed offer the same terms. Thus Sir Francis, Angerstein and their syndicate shared the business with another group made up of Messrs Robarts, Curtis, Goldsmid, Thellussons and others; the market moved favourably and the new omnium soon stood at a useful premium. The 1804 operation was the last in Sir Francis's career as a loan contractor: in October 1807 he wrote:

Although I have appeared as Contractor for loans yet I have not for three years had the least concern, nor gained or lost myself a single penny; but I have appeared because it was thought my name would be useful in the opinion of the publick, and at the desire of my successors.

The Thellussons referred to above were the sons of the Peter Thellusson who had been involved with Irish tontines many years earlier. Peter's eldest son was Peter Isaac Thellusson, who was a merchant, an MP and a director of the Bank of England; his wife was the daughter of John Cornwall, who was a Russia merchant and an initiator of the Marine Society and other subscriptions including the 'Bloody Royalist' appeal of 1778. In June 1804 *The Times* gave details of Mrs Thellusson's Masquerade, which was described as 'a mock representation of Bonaparte's Coronation': the Prince of Wales went dressed as a Highlander, with Mrs Fitzherbert in a 'fancy Highland dress'; the Duke of Cumberland was an Aethiopian, the Duke of Cambridge a sailor and Prince William of Gloucester wore Turkish costume, which also seemed popular with other
guests. There were nuns, abbesses and many other characters which did not require much imagination. More originally Angerstein went as a hoyden - a rude, boisterous noisy girl - showing that the 69 year-old had retained a sense of fun, though the connection with a mock Coronation is obscure. At the end of June Angerstein again gave a public breakfast, which was probably attended by some of those at the masquerade, but no details of the occasion have survived.

As usual one of the groups tendering for the 1805 loan was described as Sir Francis Baring & Co, but Alexander Baring, back from America, was now in charge of his firm's loan contracting and he must have been glad to have had the benefit of Angerstein's long experience. They shared the business with two other groups, and the operation was a profitable one since the price in the market started at 4 points premium. Prior to the issue Anthony Hamond had received a printed form which read:

If Mr Angerstein's Party get the whole Loan, your name will be in the List for £...

In Hamond's case the figure was £25,000, but shortly afterwards he received a letter explaining that as Angerstein's group had only got 1/3 of the total, his allocation had been cut down to £8,333-6-8.

One of the other successful groups consisted of the brothers Benjamin and Abraham Goldsmid, and they, like Angerstein knew Philip Rundell, whose business was prospering:

During the war the Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's was continually voting silver cups...to our naval officers, likewise pieces of plate to military officers for signal services: continually bringing the relatives to witness the same made the shop known to every person of respectability in all parts of the kingdom, they always keeping civil persons in their employ to shew anything worth seeing.

In favourable markets subscribing for loans must have seemed to outsiders to be an easy way to make money, yet later in the year the same consortia were called back to Downing Street to make bids for the Irish loan, where contractors in Dublin had twice made unacceptably low offers. The Irish financiers tried to make a third bid, but Pitt refused to listen, but was 'perfectly satisfied' with the terms offered by the London group: these were 8% better than had been offered in Dublin, and still omnium went to 6 points premium.

Following the death of Pitt the Ministry of All the Talents came to power and had only been in office for six weeks when discussions on the £20 million loan for 1806 took place. The new Prime Minister Lord Grenville led the Government side and was accompanied by Lord Henry Petty, the Chancellor, and Nicholas Vansittart, the Secretary to the Treasury. The would-be contractors present included Sir Francis Baring (seemingly fronting for the family firm though officially retired), Angerstein and more than a dozen other men, including for the first time the economist David Ricardo. There was an extended technical discussion about the details of the loan. The Press report has it that Baring and Angerstein headed a bidding group as usual, but Bank of England records suggest that on this occasion Angerstein was part of the Robarts Curtis partnership. The meeting ended with a statement from Lord Grenville:

...that as it was a first object of Government that an open fair and public competition be made for the loan, any person would be at liberty to offer himself as a bidder at the Treasury Chambers before three o'clock this day but not afterwards. And at ten o'clock on Friday he and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be ready to receive their sealed bids, and conclude the contract.

No fresh bidders appeared and the Robarts and Baring groups (one or other including Angerstein) and Goldsmid & Co offered the same terms and divided the business. Ricardo bid too little and failed to participate in a loan which reached four points premium in the market on the day that dealings began; but he and his colleagues learnt their lesson and outbid all the other groups for the next loan in March 1807.

At the end of May 1808 it was reported that:

Yesterday the several parties who propose to be Candidates for the Loan waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was attended by Mr Forster and Mr Huskisson, with the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank.

There were five potential bidding consortia, one being Messrs Baring, Angerstein, Ayton, Ellis and Battye, and another being Messrs Barnes, Steers and Ricardo who had taken the loan the previous year. If the Baring/Angerstein association had been broken in 1806 it was now plainly restored, with Alexander Baring, who was less than half Angerstein's age, still no doubt relying on his partner's far greater experience. The Chancellor, too, was inexperienced, since the Portland administration had been in power for little more than a year and this was Spencer Perceval's first loan. Perceval announced that the intention was to raise £10½ million plus a further small amount to be borrowed in Ireland. He proposed that the money should be raised in a new three per cent stock repayable at 80. This was a ridiculously complicated idea which Pitt would never have put forward. There was a long discussion during which Barnes argued:
That this was a proposition to which they could not accede; it was an untried, and likely to be an unpopular fund. They had no data upon which to make their calculations; for no one would chuse to invest his money in a fund so limited...

Perceval said little, most of the arguing for the idea being done by William Huskisson the Treasury Secretary. But he was defeated and with Perceval adamant that he would not borrow in the popular 3 per cents - popular with investors because they were the easiest to buy and sell - a compromise was reached and it was agreed that the loan would be in the 4 per cents\(^1\). When the bids were made the Baring and Angerstein group had offered the best price and so secured the whole of the loan. £10\(\frac{1}{2}\) million was a manageable amount and when dealings began the stock commanded a satisfactory but unspectacular premium. The likes of Anthony Hamond, who subscribed through Angerstein year after year, did so with the aim of taking a quick profit and thereby being in a position to take advantage of the next new loan: sometimes they must have been disappointed, but on this occasion they were probably well pleased.

Market conditions were very difficult in May 1810, but four groups bid for the £12 million loan, which was divided between Goldsmid & Co (who had taken the 1809 loan) and Baring and Angerstein. The opening price of omnium showed a small premium, but it soon fell back. Abraham Goldsmid tried to support the market, but succeeded only in increasing his firm’s holdings. To add to his worries, he had difficulties with a bill transaction with the East India Company and was knocked down in a traffic accident in Lombard Street: he had been depressed since the recent suicide of his brother Benjamin, and when omnium went to 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) discount in September he followed his brother’s example and shot himself. He had been a close friend of Nelson’s, and took the lead in helping Emma Hamilton after Nelson’s death, but finally felt unable to help himself. As soon as the news of his death reached the City, omnium fell four points further. The Government and the Bank of England quickly intervened and restored confidence enough for omnium to recover back up to 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) discount. Abraham Goldsmid’s partners eventually managed to pay back nearly all the firm’s debts, but they never again contracted for a government loan\(^{16}\). Throughout all Goldsmid’s problems, Baring and Angerstein were involved in the same collapsing market: Baring Brothers ended 1810 with a heavy loss and distributed no profits in 1811, 1812 or 1813\(^{17}\). Angerstein was probably similarly hit, though Barings had suffered an additional blow from the death of Sir Francis Baring on 10\(^{th}\) September, eighteen days before Abraham Goldsmid’s suicide. The loss of Sir Francis represented the loss of a figurehead, but he was undoubtedly the premier merchant of his generation. The paths of Angerstein and Sir Francis crossed on many occasions, and a family link between them had been forged three months before the latter’s death, when his son William married John Thomson’s daughter Frances.

Then, late in 1810, Angerstein was one of the unspoken targets of another attack, this time on the way in which Government loans were contracted for. It came in a pamphlet, written under the nom de plume Erinaceus, called Remarks on the present state of Public Credit and the consequences likely to result from the decease of Mr A Goldsmid and Sir F Baring...\(^{18}\) The 1810 loan had been shared between Goldsmids and the Baring/Angerstein partnership and this was the first time that the two groups had not had a third party involved as well. Erinaceus accused Goldsmid of ‘colleaguing with the house of Sir Francis Baring, in order to monopolise to themselves the whole profit of the loans, and thus to swell their already unwieldy fortunes to a still greater pitch’. The loan had gone to a discount, Sir Francis had died and Goldsmid had committed suicide, but:

...when the first paroxysm of dismay had passed over...the funds revived... and credit again looked up. I cannot avoid expressing my belief that their [Baring's and Goldsmid's] departure from the walks of life will be attended with beneficial consequences...The monopoly which paralysed the efforts of the inferior merchants, like a spell, has been suddenly dissolved; the giants of the Stock-Exchange, who stalked majestically to and fro...have fallen; and their places will now be occupied by a number of individuals who will fatten and flourish upon the ruins of those who are no more...The loan will again be distributed among lesser merchants...The stability of the funds will also be increased...the power of raising or depressing stocks will no longer be in the hands of an individual...

A very different view was put forward in another pamphlet published in 1810: this was written by George Rose, who was an MP for many years, and at various times was Secretary to the Treasury, Paymaster General and Treasurer to the Navy. If Angerstein did not come across Rose as a result of any of these appointments, he almost certainly did so in 1802 when the latter financed a Greathead life boat for Christchurch with the help of Lloyd’s. Rose’s pamphlet said that Pitt:
Originated the principle of open competition for loans...and would accept the lowest tenders that should be given in by persons of known credit; which tenders were to be opened in the presence of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank, in order to guard against any partiality on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and into the hands of those two gentlemen was previously put a memorandum, sealed up, of the lowest terms that would be accepted on the part of the public, to prevent any possible collusion among different sets of persons offering for the loan.

Clearly Rose believed that the system worked well and he went on to calculate that Pitt’s system had saved over £8 million between 1793 and 1810 by comparison with the former practice which was:

For the Minister to settle, with a few select friends in the City, the terms on which [loans] should be made; and then to give these lists of more private friends, intended to be favoured, with the specific sums for each.

Given the losses they had suffered in 1810, Angerstein and Baring must have considered their policy carefully when bids were sought for a £12 million loan in May 1811. They made an offer, but another group offered fractionally better terms. Dealings began in the market at a small premium, but within a few weeks the stock was at a discount, so that Angerstein was probably pleased not to have been involved. Then on 12th June 1812 there was a preliminary meeting to hear details of the latest loan. This time the amount required was £22½ million, of which £2½ million was for the East India Company. Those attending represented the same parties who had been in contention thirteen months before - Robarts Curtis, and Barnes Steers and Ricardo, who had been successful on that occasion; and the Baring Angerstein group and Reid Irving who had been outbid. In the event Reid Irving chose not to make an offer and the other three groups conferred, made the same bid and handled the loan jointly. George Rose’s description of practice seems to have been correct since Lord Liverpool and Nicholas Vansittart, respectively Prime Minister and Chancellor (and in office for less than a week), refused the joint bid of the three, again refused an improved offer and settled for a still better one which Lord Liverpool ‘had for his minimum’.

A year later the loan was for £27 million and Barnes Steers and Ricardo and the Baring Angerstein group divided the business, as they did for the £22 million needed in November 1813, the £24 million loan in June 1814, and, a year later and a few days before Waterloo, the last loan of the Napoleonic period, which was for no less than £36 million.

Thus in only four years Baring and Angerstein were involved in the raising of £131¼ million for the government in collaboration with Barnes Steers and Ricardo; and a small notebook has survived giving details of Angerstein’s 1812 to 1815 subscription lists. There would certainly have been close co-operation between Angerstein and Baring - to avoid, say, Thomas Coutts, whom both knew well, appearing on both their lists - and equally there would have been liaison with Barnes Steers and Ricardo for the same reason. Although there were said to be three groups contracting for the 1812 loan, Angerstein’s notes suggest that after £2 million had been deducted centrally (probably for the Bank of England, its directors and others) half of the remaining £20½ million was to be placed by Baring and Angerstein, each being responsible for £5,125,000. The Bank of England record of the £24 million 1814 loan shows the Baring and Angerstein group as including Barwis Ellis & Co and Trower Battye, with Barnes Steers and Ricardo handling £12 million, but Angerstein’s summary shows that the actual allocation, after £1.8 million for the ‘Public Offices’ was £5,350,000 each for himself and Baring and a little less for Barwis Ellis and Trower Battye together. The notebook suggests that Angerstein and Baring were each responsible in 1812-1815 for subscriptions totalling some £30 million, or perhaps £1½ billion at 2002 prices. Alexander Baring was bidding for Baring Brothers & Co, and had substantial corporate resources behind him, but Angerstein was approaching eighty years old and was bidding as himself; and yet he was prepared to take extraordinary risks again and again. One or two more occasions like 1810 could have wiped out his fortune, but as it turned out loan contracting proved to be highly profitable, not least when the news of Waterloo reached the market and a £1,000 down-payment for £10,000 stock became worth more than £2,000. Barings made a net profit of £190,000 from loan contracting between 1799 and 1815; and since Angerstein’s activities in that field extended back to 1789; there seems no reason to assume that he was less successful over his loan contracting career than the Barings, first Sir Francis and then Alexander.

II SUBSCRIBERS

The chief significance of Angerstein’s notebook is that it gives details of his subscribers. Something more than 250 names are included, many of whom formed a loyal core and appeared on four or even all five of the
lists. The bulk of the subscribers were businessmen, either those who were simply merchants, insurance brokers and the like, or those with wider responsibilities such as directorships. There were stockbrokers and bankers, acting no doubt for their clients as well as themselves, and there were other subscribers, some being less obvious ones with whom Angerstein probably had a personal, rather than a purely business, relationship.

For a time when the use of influence was the norm, and when the idea of conflicts of interest had barely been considered, Angerstein's list seems very straightforward, and it includes no Cabinet Ministers, no members of the Royal Family and only one peer. There are no Angersteins barring himself and on one occasion General Sablukov, no Locks except George and Augusta, no Burneys, no d'Arblays and no Academicians other than Lawrence; and family subscriptions are chiefly concentrated on his Thomson, Boucheron and Crokatt connections. While it is possible to conjecture that Angerstein's own subscriptions may have concealed sensitive applicants, these are more likely to have been within Thomas Coutts's allotments, which, with those to the closely allied stockbrokers Antrobus, Brown & Co, amounted to £3.28 million over the five loans, or almost 11% of Angerstein's total. At this time Coutts was banker to much of the royal family and a personal friend of the Prince of Wales. The solitary member of the House of Lords in Angerstein's list is the Marquess of Hertford, who became Master of the Horse to the Prince in 1804. The Hertfords were very wealthy and lived in state both in London and at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire, but the Marquess's brothers were much less well placed: Lord Robert and Lord George Seymour were regular loan subscribers on Angerstein's list. Both were MPs for some years: Lord Robert had an estate in Wales and a minor Crown appointment and was 'esteemed for his philanthropic work on behalf of lunatics and slaves', but Lord George was described as having an income inadequate to his rank and being 'an inveterate place-seeker'.

Angerstein also had further subscribers from the Prince's household. John McMahon was a self-made man, the son of a servant, who became an ensign and served throughout the American War, retiring in 1796 as a lieutenant-colonel. He then became in effect the Prince's Press Officer before becoming Vice-Treasurer in 1800 and finally Keeper of the Privy Purse and Private Secretary to the Prince from 1812 to 1817. He was an MP from 1802 to 1812, and enjoyed a position of great influence for many years. In 1815 his wife Elizabeth died leaving him £42,000, obtained by 'parsimony and stockjobbing', the objects of her life being described as 'making money and the adoration of her husband'. Both McMahon, who was made a baronet and died in 1817, and his wife were Angerstein clients, as was another member of the Prince's Household, Benjamin Bloomfield. He too was an MP and gradually advanced in influence, being Clerk Marshal and Equerry from 1812 to 1817 and later succeeding McMahon as Keeper of the Privy Purse and Private Secretary.

Another regular subscriber was General Jacob Budé. He came from a French Protestant family that had settled in Geneva, where he was born in 1737. In 1785 Fanny Burney wrote in her diary:

When I returned here I found a new gentleman, dressed in the King's Windsor uniform - which is blue and gold, turned up with red, and worn by all the men who belong to his Majesty, and come into his presence at Windsor...It was General Budé: what his post may be I have not yet learned...His person is tall and showy, and his manners and appearance are fashionable. But he has a sneer in his smile that looks sarcastic, and a distance in his manner that seems haughty.

In the 1770s Budé had been Governor to Prince Edward, the future Duke of Kent, and his brother, who became the Duke of Clarence and then William IV; and when Fanny met him he was just back from a difficult two years in Hanover as Prince William's mentor. As military tutor he was responsible for the initial army training of the 'good old' Duke of York who became Commander-in-Chief, and although he has been called 'bleak and unimaginative' he remained in royal service until his death in 1817 and was buried in the Chapel Royal at Windsor.

Angerstein's business with an overt royal flavour was quite small, amounting to only £1½ million out of the total of £30 million. Vastly more important were the subscriptions of Angerstein's de facto family the Thomsons. After the death of Andrew Thomson in 1795, the family business was carried on by Andrew's son John (who took two extra names and became John Buncombe Poulett Thomson in 1814) and John's cousin-cum-brother-in-law Thomson Bonar and their sons. John had two sisters living, Agnes, who was pursuing her botanical researches far from London, and Elizabeth, the widow of John Hankey whose family was represented in Angerstein's list by Robert, Elizabeth's brother-in-law and Governor of the London Assurance, Robert's son Augustus Robert, and Thomson, Elizabeth's son, as well as by the family bank
Hankey & Co. John Thomson's sister Lady Huntingfield had died in 1811, but her husband's family merchanting business continued as Gerard and Joshua van Neck and as such was on Angerstein's list. By this time there was no Peters in the Thomson, Bonar partnership, but Angerstein's list included Henry, the banker son of Jonas Hanway's old friend George Peters.

John Thomson had nine children: his eldest son Andrew Henry was in the family business by this time while the younger sons George and Charles were still in their teens. John's daughter Frances was married to the brother of Angerstein's fellow contractor Alexander Baring and was no doubt on the latter's list; Harriet was married to George Lock and, like her sister Charlotte, was on Angerstein's list in the person of her husband. Charlotte was married in 1808 to Charles William Taylor, who was described as 'a gentleman by birth, of liberal education and acquirements and polished manners, possessed of a handsome person, ample fortune, good health, and a cheerful disposition'. He was an MP for many years and owned estates in Somerset and Sussex; but he was also accused of being a gambler and an adulterer. In 1797 Admiral Jervis had been created Earl St Vincent as a result of his victory at Cape St Vincent, and Angerstein had chaired the Lloyd's appeal thereafter. St Vincent was childless, and was eventually succeeded by a nephew, Edward Jervis Ricketts, who married Mary Cassandra, daughter of Lord Saye and Sele, in 1790: they had had two children when, in 1798, Charles William Taylor was cited in a divorce action by Ricketts. The Ricketts's marriage was dissolved by Act of Parliament and Edward was awarded damages of £5,000 for Taylor's seduction of his wife.

John Angerstein's name does not appear and so presumably he was included in his father's allocation. Lawrence (Sir Thomas by the time of the 1815 loan) was regularly in Angerstein's list, but only for small amounts: clearly no attempt was made to solve his perpetual financial problems by securing large allotments for him. Edward Jenner appears twice, but again for trifling sums. Vincent Rivaz, Angerstein's last partner, was naturally enough a regular subscriber; and two members of his family were also included, as well as Charles Richard Harford, who later became Rivaz's partner. Harford came from a Bristol family, and was a distant cousin of Wilberforce's associate John Scandrett Harford. The Boucheretts and Henry Crokatt together took in all over £1 million stock. The large amounts allocated to the former (and no doubt carefully managed) would have been on account of Angerstein's special affection for Emilia and perhaps also to help Ayscoghe make ends meet: the family's financial circumstances were not helped by the lack of success of the Grimsby Haven project and in 1811 their town house had been sold. This economy alone was not enough and Boucherett wrote to John Angerstein in 1814:

I feel it d~d hard to be precluded seeing my friends in the manner I like. It has been my fate to build castles on too large a scale, and I have been under the continual necessity to retrench one thing after another...but that a liberal country establishment should become too chargeable for my income never entered my head.

Angerstein's stepson James Crokatt, it seems, settled permanently in India and in 1804 died in Bengal leaving a wife Henrietta and a daughter Catherine Jane, and, like his father before him, a number of debts. In 1807 Angerstein made enquiries about Henrietta's position and was reassured to learn that James's debts in India had been settled by a composition with his creditors, and a subscription among his brother officers had raised 11,000 rupees, while Henrietta herself had some property and expectations under a will. But there was also a scandal to be probed. Angerstein was told:

With respect to the unfortunate lady in America, Mrs Crokatt will secure £50 per annum for her life and...has also consented to release her interest in £2,500 4 per cents in favour of the child, so as to give her £100 per annum independent when she attains her Age of 18, which period appears to be quite early enough for a Child in her situation.

James Crokatt's brother Henry was of course Angerstein's ex-partner; and he too had severe money problems, to the extent that he went bankrupt in 1811. Angerstein's attitude to Henry in March 1812 (before he had won the loan for that year) is shown in a letter which began:

I have just read your letter of yesterday and if you knew the amount of my unsettled account of money lent you would not wonder at my having made a resolution some time ago of never again lending money on any account whatever.

Henry's letter does not appear to have been a begging one, but rather was intended to sort out details of the annuity which Angerstein was buying for him. (Much later John Angerstein bought another annuity for Henry, who in 1845 listed his property as including 'one quarter due on two annuities given me by my generous friends the Angersteins'). Angerstein's letter to Henry went on:
I have hitherto not spoke to any one about your wish of return to Lloyds [sic] as an underwriter except to Rivaz, but now as you continue resolved upon it I will certainly speak to some of my Friends that they may not object to your name but to recommend it to be on their Policies. This was a remarkable offer by Angerstein so soon after the Commission of Bankruptcy, which had described Henry as ‘formerly in partnership with John Julius Angerstein and Thomas Lewis’. Henry’s affairs seem gradually to have improved, no doubt in part due to the stock allocated to him by Angerstein, as he was worth over £13,000 in 1845. But perhaps he was given some stern advice if he accepted the invitation to dine at Pall Mall with which Angerstein’s 1812 letter had concluded.

When Catherine Francis married George James Cholmondeley as his second wife in 1814, she gained a sister-in-law Hester, who for many years had been married to Sir William Bellingham. Sir William is not mentioned in the memoirs and letters of the Francis family, but he was one of Angerstein’s loan subscribers. Bellingham came of an Anglo-Irish family and as a young man knew the second Earl of Chatham, elder brother of William Pitt. Soon after joining the Cabinet in July 1782 as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Earl of Shelburne’s government, Pitt wrote to his mother:

My secretary, whom you would wish to know, is a person, whose Name you may probably never have heard, a Mr Bellingham, an Army friend of my Brother - You will wonder at a Secretary from the Army; but as the office is a perfect Sinecure, and has no Duty but that of receiving about four Hundred a yr, No Profession is unfit for it. I have not yet any private Secretary, nor do I perceive, at least as Yet, any Occasion for It.

On the face of it, Bellingham would have been in a position of great influence, particularly after Pitt became Prime Minister in 1783. But at this time it was unusual to have a Private Secretary - the King did not have one until 1805 - and in the first volume of John Ehrman’s The Younger Pitt Bellingham’s appointment is referred to on page 84, and the next (and final) reference to him is in a footnote to page 576. Bellingham became an MP in 1782 and later a Commissioner of Victualling. In 1796 he was Comptroller of the Storekeeper’s Accounts in the Navy Office and was made a baronet. When Pitt died in 1806, Lord Chatham was Chief Mourner and Sir William was his train-bearer at the state funeral. Sir William subscribed to all five loans through Angerstein - a total of £119,000 - and although he could once have been a useful man to know - as Charles Lock had told his father in 1799 - Angerstein’s relationship with Sir William could by this time hardly be other than one of friendship. It was Sir William’s sister-in-law Mary Henrietta who was the Miss Cholmondeley killed in 1806 in the Princess of Wales’s coach accident on the way to Norbury.

Sir William Abdy was born in 1779, his age suggesting that he was on Angerstein’s list as a result of an association with John and Amelia or with another younger member of the family. The Abdys had a country house in Essex, but as a rich and fashionable young couple they would have spent much of their time at their London house in Hill Street. Anne Abdy’s father was Marquess Wellesley, Governor-General of Bengal from 1797 to 1805 and the elder brother of the Duke of Wellington. Her mother was Hyacinthe Gabrielle Roland, to whom the Marquess was not married until 1794, by which time they had had five children including Anne. Sir William Abdy has been described as ‘dim and lethargic’ while Anne had ‘an Irish exuberance, a flirtatious nature and a French gaiety’. Whatever the connection with the Angersteins may have been, it was strong enough for Abdy to be allotted £60,000 stock in each of the first two loans in Angerstein’s notebook, about the subscription level of close associates such as Henry Crokatt and Vincent Rivaz. In 1815 there was a scandal when Lady Abdy went off with Lord Charles Bentinck, whom she married after a divorce by Act of Parliament. Harriette Wilson was not an Angerstein subscriber. She was the foremost courtesan of the day, and her Memoirs caused a publishing sensation when they appeared in 1825. She had, according to the Dictionary of National Biography, taken Teresa Constantia Phillips [Muilman] as her model and announced her plans in advance; her clear intention being to make money by taking bribes to leave men out of her book and to titillate her readers with stories about those that were left in. Among the latter was the Duke of Wellington, who is said to have replied ‘publish and be damned’ when invited to pay to be excluded. There is very little overlap between Harriette’s clientele and Angerstein’s; but Sir William Abdy, she says, ran to her for comfort when his wife eloped, and he is painted in her Memoirs not so much as dim and lethargic as unbelievably naïve.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the Thornton and the Wilberforce families lived in Hull; and the John Thornton and the William Wilberforce of the time were merchants trading to the Baltic. John Thornton had two sons, Robert and Godfrey, who moved to London; and a daughter Sarah, who, with her husband William Wilberforce, eventually became the grandparents of the eponymous reformer who, thanks to his forebears’ success in trade, did not need to earn his living. Robert and Godfrey Thornton prospered in...
London and both were directors of the Bank of England. Robert's son John continued in business as a Russia merchant to such effect that when he died in 1790 the Gentleman's Magazine called him 'the greatest merchant in Europe, except Mr Hope of Amsterdam'; while Godfrey's eponymous son continued the family tradition by being a Director of the Bank from 1772 to 1801, including being Governor from 1793 to 1795. The next generation of Thorntons were second cousins to William Wilberforce MP, and John Thornton's youngest son Henry was also his closest friend. Unlike his brothers Samuel and Robert, Henry ceased to be a Russia merchant and became a banker and was an MP for a number of years. In 1797 the partnership of [Samuel and Robert] Thorntons Smalley Bayley did the fourth largest trade with St Petersburg, while [Godfrey] Thornton & Cayley were a little smaller and ranked fifth, though Thomson Peters Bonar & Co did more business than both Thornton partnerships together. The brothers Samuel, Robert and Henry Thornton and their cousins Stephen and William were pillars of the City: Samuel and Stephen were Directors of the Bank, and Robert and William were Directors of the East India Company, both having spells as Chairman. All enjoyed considerable material success, and William, who confusingly changed his name to Astell on inheriting an estate in Bedfordshire, served on the East India Company board from 1800 until his death in 1847 (excluding the periods when he was 'out by rotation'). He was also an MP, Chairman of the Russia Company, and, towards the end of his life, Chairman of the Great Northern Railway, as well as being a substantial subscriber to four out of Angerstein's five 1812-1815 loans. All of the family had stronger or weaker Evangelical and philanthropic leanings, and as a group supported an astonishing number of good causes. But Samuel also sought social advancement and bought a house in St James' Square and an estate in Surrey. In 1810, however, Samuel and Robert's partner overcommitted their firm: Robert managed to satisfy some of his creditors and then fled to America, leaving his wife in England. Samuel Thornton had to sell Albury Park but held on to his positions as a director of the Bank and as Governor of the Russia Company, and was one of Angerstein's largest individual subscribers - £250,000 in all between the five loans. As major City figures Angerstein's and Thornton's paths would often have crossed, not least at the Marine Society, which both had supported from the 1780s onwards.

Lady Anne Lindsay was born in 1750, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Balcarres. As a young woman she knew a number of Scottish intellectuals and met Dr Johnson. In 1770 her younger sister Margaret had married a banker named Alexander Fordyce, who moved to London, made a fortune speculating in East India stock, and spent part of it on buying an estate and building a house at Roehampton. However in 1772 his luck turned and he lost so much that he could not meet his obligations and fled to France. The collapse of Fordyce's bank precipitated a default by the Ayr Bank and in turn the failure of a dozen or more other banks including the highly respected Glyn and Hallifax, while the shock waves extended to investors in Holland including members of the Muilman family. The Roehampton estate was sold, but enough seems to have been salvaged for Lady Margaret to continue to live fashionably in London, where she was joined by Lady Anne around 1773. During the next twenty years Lady Anne built up a wide and influential circle of friends, including the Prince of Wales and Mrs Fitzherbert. In 1784 Mrs Fitzherbert was called to Carlton House to be confronted by the Prince of Wales, bleeding profusely and insisting that:

Nothing would induce him to live unless she promised to become his wife, and permitted him to put a ring round her finger.

Faced with this ultimatum, Mrs Fitzherbert consented, and a ring borrowed from the Duchess of Devonshire was used for the purpose. Mrs Fitzherbert rapidly realised the impossible position she had been put in and went to see Lady Anne, who agreed to accompany her to Paris the next day on the first stage of an extended European tour which, for Mrs Fitzherbert, lasted over a year, though Lady Anne returned home before her. After several unsuccessful love affairs, in 1793 Lady Anne finally married Andrew Barnard, who was described as 'younger than herself, accomplished, but poor'. An appointment was found for him as Colonial Secretary at the Cape of Good Hope and the couple arrived there in May 1797. Ten years later Barnard was dead, and Lady Anne was back in London sharing a house with Lady Margaret, whose husband had died in 1789. The two widows rebuilt their active social life during the next five years, and then Lady Margaret decided to remarry in 1812. This left Lady Anne with too large and too expensive a house, and may have been the reason for her subscription via Angerstein to the first 1813 loan, though she must have had a strong distaste for any kind of speculation after the disastrous experiences of her brother-in-law. She was also on Angerstein's lists in 1814 and 1815, though the amounts were not large. Glyn and Hallifax, the bank which Alexander Fordyce had caused to close its doors in 1772, rapidly found fresh capital and reopened six weeks later as Glyn, Hallifax and Mills, and the successor to that firm was a substantial subscriber on all five of Angerstein's lists, with four also containing the name of Charles Mills. Having been almost ruined by a Scot
in 1772, Glyn, Mills subsequently flourished and was eventually bought by the Royal Bank of Scotland in 1939.

In his book *The Royal Exchange Assurance* Barry Supple wrote:

The Bosanquets were of Huguenot extraction, and during the century following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the members of the family who settled in England gained considerable commercial eminence as merchants and bankers, and as Directors of the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange Assurance, the East India Company and other bodies. When the Patriotic Fund was set up in 1803, the Committee co-opted several leading City figures including Jacob Bosanquet, then the Chairman of the East India Company. Professor Supple could have added the Dutch to his list of minorities, since Susanna Bosanquet married Charles van Notten, who, like the Mulmans and the van Neckses, Charles van Notten acted for Dutch investors in British Government stocks and was a pillar of the Dutch Church in Austin Friars. Unsurprisingly two of the Bosanquets were regulars on Angerstein’s lists, as were P & C van Notten on four occasions, the firm of merchants having kept its name even though Charles and Susanna van Notten’s son Charles had changed his name to Pole in 1787 and had been created a baronet in 1791.

Angerstein’s lists of subscribers show two links with the early exploration of the Pacific. The first of these was Edward Christian, elder brother of Fletcher Christian of the *Bounty*. Born about 1760, Edward went to Cambridge and became a Fellow of St John’s College, a barrister and, later, Downing Professor of Law at Cambridge. He knew the Wordsworth family well. After the 1792 court martial of ten of the *Bounty*’s crew - three men were hung - he took the lead in seeking to destroy Bligh’s reputation, publishing at his own expense a shortened version of the proceedings of the court martial, with his own long appendix based on detailed enquiries which he had made.

A less obvious connection with Australia was provided by Sir George Duckett, who changed his name from Jackson because of a provision in a will. His sister was Mrs Skottowe, wife of the Lord of the Manor of Great Ayton, Yorkshire, and her husband Thomas paid for James Cook to attend the village school and employed the latter’s father as farm bailiff. Sir George, who had a post in the Admiralty, was a useful person to have a link with and became a ‘zealous friend and early patron of Captain Cook’. The latter’s *Journal* mentions that:

...A safe Anchorage, which I called Port Jackson, lies 3 leagues to the Northward of Botany Bay.

Port Jackson is now often simply called Sydney Harbour, but Point Jackson and another Port Jackson, both in New Zealand, were also named for Sir George. He did much to develop Bishop’s Stortford by paying to make the River Stort navigable and thereby providing a link to the London markets for the malt which was the main local industry. Later he was, with Angerstein, a promoter of the abortive London and Cambridge Canal, which would have much increased the usefulness of the Stort Navigation. He died in 1822 aged 97, and was succeeded in the baronetcy by his son George, who was also an Angerstein client.

Attitudes to slavery divided society, even in the biased sample which Angerstein’s subscribers provides, and over time some individuals changed their opinions. Joseph Marryat, the MP who played a leading part in preserving the Lloyd’s status quo in 1810, was a regular client of Angerstein’s, who in 1807, as Agent for Trinidad, had petitioned against the abolition of the slave trade, yet in 1811 supported a move to enforce abolition. Subsequently he argued that, without the trade, slavery would die a natural death but that its enforced abolition would ruin the West Indies. Angerstein’s lists included very few men who had been involved in the slave trade prior to abolition. The information given in contemporary Parliamentary Committee reports together with the annual issues of the *Register of Ships* suggest that the ownership of slave ships in the period 1789-1805 was concentrated among about 100 men, though where they had common names it is not possible to be certain of their identity. However one man on Angerstein’s list, John F Throckmorton, who was a merchant and underwriter and a subscriber to the *Register of Ships* very probably was the owner of two slave ships that sailed to Africa in 1801. Early in 1792 the slave ship *London*, owned by Charles Herries, Joseph Nailer and James Drummond, was one of the vessels having ‘cleared out from the
Ports of London, Bristol and Liverpool, to the Coast of Africa, for the purpose of purchasing Slaves...'. This was their only recorded involvement in the slave trade; and two decades later Herries and Nailer were Angerstein subscribers. Herries was a banker who in 1779 had been associated with Brook Watson and seven other 'gentlemen mainly from mercantile firms in the City' in setting up the Light Horse Volunteers of London and Westminster. The corps was disbanded in 1783 without seeing action save during the Gordon Riots in 1780, the muster roll having included about 100 names, among them being Henry Crokatt, John Thomson and Francis Baring. In May 1794 there was a meeting at the London Tavern to revive the Volunteers, and to do so on a more ambitious scale, aiming at six troops of 50 men who were not to be called out or subject to military discipline except in the case of invasion, threat of invasion or insurrection, and Captain Charles Herries was the senior officer. The Volunteers were part-club (all members had to be proposed and seconded) and part-militia: there were four different 'ridings-houses' for drill and riding practice four days a week, and field days were held every Wednesday and Saturday from 6.30 to 8.30 am. The Volunteers soon saw action of a kind, dispersing a mob that was intent on destroying two City inns that were being used as crimping houses (where men were captured and forced into the navy, army or merchant service). They were thanked for their efforts by the Lord Mayor and the Secretary of State, and early in 1795 'as a tribute of respect due to that very patriotic institution, and of gratitude for the protection it has afforded to persons and property in this metropolis', a subscription was raised to improve the facilities available to the Volunteers. There was clearly an understanding that contributions should not exceed £100, which was given by each of some 60 City firms including Angerstein, Warren and Lock; Sir Robert Herries & Co; Thomas & Charles Hankey & Co; Glyn Mills & Co; Thomson, Peters Bonar & Co; Richard Muilmans & Co and other Angerstein clients. Among the volunteers were Spencer Perceval, the future Prime Minister, Nicholas Vansittart, later the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Charles Abbot, who became Speaker of the House of Commons. John Angerstein joined in March 1796 and served until after Waterloo. Herries became a colonel and kept the Volunteers in a high state of efficiency, to the extent that he neglected his own business: as a financier he had had an allocation of £250,000 of the £1796 loan for which Walter Boyd contracted; but when the latter got into difficulties Herries did too, to the extent that he went bankrupt in 1798. In September 1803 Hon William Hervey called on Herries 'confined in Beaumont's lockup house in Wych Street'. But his Volunteer colleagues clubbed together to buy him an annuity, and after his death in 1819 he was given a military funeral in Westminster Abbey. Herries and some 75 others on Angerstein's lists - more than a quarter of the total number of subscribers - appear on, or can with some confidence be linked to, men on the muster roll of the Light Horse Volunteers, a body which clearly appealed to Angerstein's practical patriotism.

Jewish merchants formed a distinct group in the City of London, and Jewish investors in British stocks in Amsterdam tended to deal with Jewish correspondents in London. But British Jews had for many years been involved in the raising of Government loans; and Sampson Gideon, who was of Portuguese Jewish extraction, was the leading loan contractor of the 1740s and 1750s, and had such influence that he was able to secure a baronetcy for his son, aged thirteen, in 1759. Later the Goldsmids and David Ricardo were Angerstein's rivals in loan contracting (as half a century before Gideon had been the rival of the van Necks and the Muilmans), and there was a handful of Jewish names in Angerstein's 1812-15 subscription lists, though the amounts allocated were small. The most interesting names are those of the Montefiore Brothers, who were stockbrokers: the elder brother, Moses, and Nathan Mayer Rothschild married sisters and lived next door to each other. Rothschild had not yet started his activities in raising loans in London for the British Government, but contracted successfully in 1819 for the first post-Napoleonic issue. Angerstein was not involved, though he still seems to have been looking after a few of his old clients. Lawrence was in Rome and wrote to Angerstein:

A thousand thanks, my dear Sir, for your recollecting me in the list of your friends for the loan. Is it not a very hazardous speculation for Mr Rothschild?

Lawrence was right as the stock did badly in the market. On this occasion the paths of Angerstein and Rothschild had perhaps crossed in a very minor way, but there is no indication that they ever worked together or even competed for the same business. It was not until July 1811 that Rothschild announced the closure of his Manchester office and the opening of his counting-house at New Court, St Swithin's Lane in the City of London. Niall Ferguson wrote:

Historians have never adequately explained how an obscure Jewish merchant banker - who only a few years before had been a smuggler, and a few years before that a minor textile exporter - was to become the principal conduit of money from the British government to the continental battlefields.
on which the fate of Europe was decided in 1814 and 1815. Of all the steps in the ascent of the house of Rothschild, this was surely the greatest; yet it is also the least understood. Rothschild had begun to make a name in the City by managing the investments of the Elector of Hesse-Kassel, and Ferguson argues that his rise to prominence came from three principal factors: an absence of competition, a close association with John Charles Herries who was appointed Commissary-in-Chief in October 1811 and an ability to move money across borders thanks to his brothers on the Continent. Thus it could crudely be said that Angerstein raised the loans which Rothschild transmitted to finance Wellington’s armies: Angerstein was not an international banker and Rothschild, at this stage, was not a loan contractor. Ferguson disposes of the myth that Rothschild made a fortune from Waterloo and comments that Far from being hugely profitable, the aftermath of Wellington’s victory was a period of acute crisis for the Rothschilds.

The crisis was of course overcome but Angerstein seems certain to have made more money out of Waterloo than Rothschild.

Another group who could to an extent be regarded as outsiders were the nabobs, men who had returned home from India with great fortunes. Before his death in 1804 Richard Barwell had been one and had subscribed to the Loyalty Loan in 1796 through Angerstein. His home was Stanstead House in Sussex, which he enlarged and remodelled almost regardless of expense, using money which he had made more or less unscrupulously in India, where he was an ally of Warren Hastings and an enemy of Philip Francis, on the Council of Bengal. In 1812-15 Angerstein had another nabob as a regular subscriber - Sir Charles Cockerell, who ranked behind only Angerstein himself and Thomas Coutts in the size of his allocations, which totalled £1.4 million over the five loans. Cockerell was born in 1755 and worked in India from 1775, ultimately becoming Postmaster-General of Bengal. He was friendly with Barwell and with Marquess Wellesley, Governor General from 1797 to 1805, who did business with the bankers Cockerell Trail in Calcutta. In 1794, Cockerell's brother John had bought the estate of Sezincote in Gloucestershire. Another brother, Samuel Pepys Cockerell was an architect, and took his names from the diarist because their maternal grandfather had been Pepys's nephew and heir. Samuel had designed Daylesford for Warren Hastings and began to alter and modernize Sezincote for John; but the latter died before the work was complete and the estate was acquired by Charles, who, with the money he had made in India, had much more elaborate plans for the house. Samuel was also Surveyor to the East India Company; and he and Charles, with Humphrey Repton as landscape gardener and Thomas Daniell, an artist who had spent several years in India, created what has been called a 'Taj in the Cotswolds'. The Prince of Wales admired Sezincote and asked Repton for his views on the style of architecture most suitable for the Brighton Pavilion. Repton produced designs in an Indian style, and the final appearance of the Pavilion, which gradually took shape over the next decade, thus had its origins in Charles Cockerell's vision.

There were many other names on Angerstein's loan subscription lists, some more and some less prominent in City terms. He was also a very large subscriber in his own name, averaging some £1 1/2 million per issue; though he may in part have been acting as a nominee. Fortunately all five stocks behaved well in the market and there would have been little difficulty in realizing profits for himself and his applicants. Perversely, however, the strong market in late 1812 brought heavy losses to some speculators. In December Farington recorded:

Ten guineas had been given at Lloyd's Coffee House to receive 100 guineas should omnium rise to 10 per cent premium before Christmas Day. Yesterday it rose to 10 per cent & in consequence losses were sustained to the amount, it was said, of £150,000.