

Mrs Elford: stage dancer and teacher in London, 1700-1730

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A dancer named Mrs Elford is known to have performed on stage in London at least sixty-eight times between 1700 and 1706 but, given the patchy survival of newspapers and theatre records from her time, and the frequent omission of dancers' names in those papers which do survive, the real number of her performances was probably well into three figures. She was one of the leading dancers on the London stage in the opening years of the eighteenth century; and although the research as yet is far from complete, some preliminary thoughts on her career may be offered here.

What evidence survives for Mrs Elford's performing career can be divided roughly into four phases:-

1. Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, 1700 -- 1703: dancing for Thomas Betterton.
2. The Subscription Musick 1703-4 and Queen Anne's birthday celebrations in 1704: dancing with Anthony L'Abbé.¹
3. Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, 1704-5.
4. Queen's Theatre, Haymarket, 1705-6 and Queen Anne's birthday celebrations in 1706: dancing with Messieurs L'Abbé and De Barques.

Phase 1: Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, 1700-1703

All the extant performance records naming Mrs Elford between 1700 and 1703 indicate that she performed in entr'acte dances. They include one benefit night for Mrs Elford herself (5 June 1703), some solo dances (*New Entry* in July 1700, *Chaconne* in June 1703), and dances before foreign envoys, all of which suggests that she was a respected performer. It is even more significant however that she partnered Monsieur L'Abbé in the leading roles of danced entertainments he created, notably his *Country Wedding* of 1703 – which itself may have originated as

the comic sub-plot of the afterpiece *Acis & Galathea*. Even the prologue to one play that season mentioned the L'Abbé-Elford partnership, a sure sign of their success.²

Yet more evidence of Mrs Elford's importance may be seen from the plan to set up a new United Theatre Company consisting of the best performers from both main theatres in London who would also supervise lesser mortals in the company: thus from Lincoln's Inn Fields, John Eccles would oversee the music, Thomas Betterton the actors, and Anthony L'Abbé the male dancers, while from Drury Lane Richard Leveridge would supervise the singers. Mrs Elford (Lincoln's Inn Fields) and Eleanor Mayers (Drury Lane) would jointly supervise the female dancers.³ The project came to nothing, partly because Betterton proposed to pay himself far too high a salary compared with the others – £150 as opposed to the £60 proposed for L'Abbé and the £40 each proposed for Eccles, Leveridge, Mrs Elford and Mrs Mayers – and partly because L'Abbé quarrelled with Betterton that summer and left his employment. That break-up with Betterton encouraged the second phase of Mrs Elford's performing career, as she joined L'Abbé to dance in Subscription Musick concerts. These events, financed by prominent Whig aristocrats, took place at both Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields, and also by royal command at the Court of St James.

Phase 2: The Subscription Musick 1703-4 and the Queen's birthday in 1704.

Ten Subscription concerts took place between November 1703 and March 1704, and have been the subject of an authoritative article by Olive Baldwin & Thelma Wilson.⁴ All ten featured vocal music by the soprano Catherine Tofts (apart from one evening when

she was ill), and dancing by Monsieur L'Abbé. Nine of the performances, and probably all ten, also featured dancing by Mrs Elford and other leading dancers who had been considered for the United Company: Philippe du Ruel, Eleanor Mayers (who later became Mrs du Ruel), René Cherrier, the vivacious young singer-dancer Mary-Ann Champion with whom L'Abbé had worked when he first came to London in 1698, and others.⁵ The importance of the Subscription Musick is not just that the concerts drew on performers from both main theatres, but also that they presented a variety of entertainments – from plays to operas – which all included dance. *Squire Trelooby*, for instance, the very successful English adaptation of Molière's farce *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, given by the Subscription Musick in 1704, ended each of its three acts with dancing, and Mrs Elford would certainly have taken part in the dancing which ended Act III (the Squire's wedding celebrations), as well as appearing in the dances between each act of the play.⁶

Another Subscription Musick piece was Peter Motteux's 'musical interlude ... after the manner of an opera' called *Britain's Happiness*, and this included 'dances proper to the opera'.⁷ Nothing survives of the work except its word book, but it clearly caught the mood of the preparations for Marlborough's campaign which would culminate in victory at Blenheim. The dancers had quite a lot to do: first as sailors and rustics 'drinking, dancing and making merry on the shore' near Dover Castle; then, after a chorus in praise of 'happy Britains', came a sailors dance, then a patriotic drinking song followed by a dance of shepherds and shepherdesses. At that point a bad-tempered Neptune rose up out of the sea to complain that Queen Anne was now more powerful than he was; but Pallas Athene descended from the heavens to calm him down, and ordered a 'Dance of Several Nations' to entertain him. Finally, after a dance by 'Sailors and Clowns, each leading his Lass', the work ended with a grand chorus in praise of the Queen. True, Motteux seems to have re-used some ideas from his earlier work, *Europe's Revels for the Peace of Ryswick*,⁸ but it was an integrated

performance of instrumental music, song and dance, which was a hallmark of his works.

When the Subscription Musick dancers were commanded to perform at court to celebrate Queen Anne's 39th birthday, in February 1704, the dances took the form of entr'actes after each of the five acts of John Dryden's play *All for Love*, prefaced by a specially-written 'Overture'. Considering that *All for Love* was based on Shakespeare's *Antony & Cleopatra*, including Cleopatra's suicide at the end, some of the entr'actes seem a little strange to our eyes, consisting of a mixture of serious and comic songs and dances. L'Abbé and Mrs Elford danced a duet in the 'serious' style, Du Ruel danced a solo Scaramouche, he and his future wife danced a Dutch Skippers duet, and all the dancers took part in the Grand Spanish Dance which ended the whole performance.

Phase 3: Lincoln's Inn Fields 1704-5

The Subscription Musick concerts ended in March 1704 and Mrs Elford returned to dancing entr'actes at Lincoln's Inn Fields for the third phase of her performing career. L'Abbé does not seem to have returned with her, but he remained an influence because his younger brother and scholar appeared there with her, and L'Abbé himself danced with her in the entr'actes to Clayton's new Italianate opera *Arsinoe* at Drury Lane in January 1705.⁹ Otherwise, back at Lincoln's Inn Fields, Mrs Elford worked with another new French arrival, Mademoiselle de la Val, and for much of that season the two women received equal billing.

Phase 4: The Queen's Theatre, 1705-6, and England's Glory at Court, 5 Feb 1706

The last phase of her performing career began in the autumn of 1705, when Mrs Elford joined Monsieur L'Abbé at the newly-opened Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. They were joined there a few weeks later by two new stars, Monsieur De Barques¹⁰ and Mlle de Noissy from the Paris Opéra. The four of them – three prestigious French dancers and

Mrs Elford – led most of the dancing at the Queen’s Theatre throughout the rest of that season, with Mrs Elford frequently billed as partnering Monsieur De Barques in both serious and comic dances.

The old Subscription Musick dance troupe came together for one last time, to perform at Court again on the Queen’s birthday in February 1706. This time the work was another opera with integral dancing, Jakob Kremberg’s *England’s Glory*, performed probably as a prologue entertainment to Ravenscroft’s play *The Anatomist*.¹¹ Since *England’s Glory* was written to celebrate England’s victories in war, the opera followed the familiar structure of Bellona, goddess of war, restoring peace and plenty through Britannia and Ceres, and summoning the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, Neptune and Atlas, to all pay homage, in vocal music and dance, to Queen Anne. We know what words the singers sang, thanks to Kremberg’s word book, and we know that the dancers came from the old Subscription Musick dance troupe, thanks to John Downes noting their names,¹² but of course no music or dance steps survive. We do know however that there were some special stage effects: Bellona, for instance, descended from the heavens in a celestial machine, Neptune rose up from the sea in a chariot drawn by seahorses and accompanied by tritons and mermaids, and Atlas’s globe transformed itself into an obelisk. Kremberg used the obelisk image as the frontispiece to his word book (see Illustration 1), and described (on page 5) exactly what happened, namely, that at the end of a dance by Britannia and Ceres, the back of the globe presented by Atlas grew by stages into an obelisk wreathed in laurels, surmounted by a crown and supported by the lion and unicorn, and then the front of the globe opened to display a triptych of English victories at Barcelona, Blenheim and Gibraltar.¹³ The praises of Queen Anne were sung, there was a grand dance, and then the words ‘Long live our Queen Anna in glorious state’ were repeated as ‘A Grand Chorus to sing and to dance’, and so the entertainment ended.

Apparently ‘twas well lik’d by all the Court’, according to John Downes.



Illustration 1: the globe transformed into a celebratory obelisk in *England’s Glory*

Within the dance troupe, however, frictions may have been surfacing between Cherrier and L’Abbé, and they would never work together again. When Durfey’s hugely expensive comic opera *Wonders in the Sun or The Kingdom of the Birds* played at the Queen’s Theatre in April 1706, the dancers were ‘Monsieur De Bargues, Monsieur L’Abbé’s brother, Mr Fairbank, Mrs Elford, and others’,¹⁴ and the old Subscription Musick dance troupe was no more. Mrs Elford nevertheless continued to dance at the Queen’s Theatre: she was granted a benefit night on 25 April, at which she also gave entr’acte dances with her own scholar,¹⁵ and she continued to dance for another six weeks. But after dancing a solo *Chaconne* and a solo *Passacaille* at de Barques’s benefit night on 13 June, she suddenly disappeared. That October Owen Swiney took over the management of the Queen’s Theatre and, probably with the connivance of Drury Lane, scrapped all danced entertainments there for over a year. Monsieur L’Abbé and his brother probably went back to France; Cherrier and

the Du Ruels went back to Drury Lane and when they returned to the Queen's Theatre eighteen months later they brought with them Cherrier's new protégée Hester Santlow. Mrs Elford's career as a performer was over.

The rising fame of Hester Santlow raises a question concerning the one extant notated dance attributed to Mrs Elford. This was L'Abbé's exquisite *Passacaille of Armide by Mrs Elford and Mrs Santlow*, set to music from Lully's *Armide* and published in notated form by F. Le Roussau in the 1720s as the second dance in *A New Collection of Dances... composed by Monsieur L'Abbé*. Both Carol Marsh and Moira Goff have indicated that its likely date of creation was 1706, the only year in which both Elford and Santlow could have performed together. Although there is no record of them ever having done so, Goff posits that this dance could have been performed at Dorset Garden theatre in August 1706 if Elford and Santlow were among the 'best performers' who appeared there [on 8 August] dancing entr'actes to Clayton's opera *Arsinoe*.¹⁶ The timing is indeed feasible for Mrs Elford to have performed at the Queen's Theatre on 13 June and then appeared at Dorset Garden on 8 August, but it seems strange that, given her fame at the Queen's Theatre in June, she should not be named as one of the dancers at Dorset Garden in July or August. For *Arsinoe* had already been performed at Dorset Garden on 9 July 1706, with former members of the Subscription Musick in the persons of Mrs Tofts (in *Arsinoe*), and Cherrier and Mrs Evans (in the associated 'entertainments of dancing') but again with no mention of Mrs Elford.¹⁷ We shall probably never know whether the *Passacaille of Armide* duet dates from Mrs Elford's last season on stage or not, just as we can only ponder whether the solo version of that dance, published a few years later by Edmund Pemberton, may have been L'Abbé's original version of the passacaille as a solo for her.¹⁸

Mrs Elford the dance teacher

The next fourteen years of Mrs Elford's life are silent. As yet, all we know about her until

1720 is that she resided in one of the newish houses on the west side of Dean Street, in Soho, and that Monsieur L'Abbé lived in nearby King's Square Court, for part of that time.¹⁹ However we can deduce that Mrs Elford became an accomplished teacher, having had at least two 'scholars' who had appeared on stage under her guidance. One was 'the little girl, Mrs Elford's scholar'²⁰ who danced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in August and September 1705; and the other was Miss or Mrs Bruce 'taught by Mrs Elford', who danced solos at Lincoln's Inn Fields that same year,²¹ joined Mrs Elford at the Queen's Theatre in 1706 and often partnered L'Abbé's brother.²²

Mrs Elford's other teaching activities are as yet undiscovered, but she must have built up considerable experience outside the theatre because in 1720 she suddenly landed a trusted post as dancing mistress to the daughters of John, 2nd Duke of Montagu. He himself had been taught dancing as a child by Mr Isaac, but Mr Isaac was no longer around in the 1720s and the Duke's daughters – the thirteen-year old Lady Isabella, and the seven-year old Lady Mary who ultimately became the Duke's heiress – were taught between 1720 and 1729 by Mrs Elford. Until now we have never known her full name, but the Duke's household accounts tell us that she was Mrs Ann Elford (see Illustration 2).²³

Little is known about women dance teachers in the early eighteenth century, and these Montagu accounts reveal some very interesting things. First, that Ann Elford was reasonably well paid, although not as well as John Galliard or Louis Goupy who taught Lady Mary Montagu harpsichord and drawing.²⁴ Secondly, it looks as if for the nine 'Montagu years' Mrs Elford sub-let her house in Dean Street and perhaps took lodgings nearer to the Duke's residences in Bloomsbury and Northamptonshire. Whatever the reason, her name is marked 'gone away' in the parish rate books of Dean Street for 1720 and she does not reappear there until 1729, the exact time that she was teaching the Duke's daughters. This may have been a coincidence of course, except that the one apparent break in her employment by the

Duke came between late 1724 (when Lady Isabella married) and early 1726 (when tuition of Lady Mary commenced again), and it was in 1725 that Mrs Ann Elford (assuming she was the same person as the dancer) acquired a smaller house near Grosvenor Mews, perhaps as security against hard times if she ever had to sell the Dean Street house.²⁵

her wedding.²⁶ As for Ann herself, she retired (if she is the right Ann Elford) to her house in Bourdon Street which she had acquired in 1725 and would retain until 1749.²⁷ It was part of the cramped complex of small tenements, coach houses and stables which comprised Grosvenor Mews, and unfortunately it suggests that she passed her later years in some poverty.

24	Paid M ^r . Marchant for petty Payments as \pounds Account...	31	18	1½
May 4	Paid James Farrington in full for Disbursements as \pounds Bill ..	5	16	5
6	Paid John Montagu in full for Ditto as \pounds Bill	1	9	9
7	Paid Christopher Capper in full as \pounds Bill	5	10	..
	Paid M ^r . Galliard Harpsichord Master in full as \pounds Bill ..	16	16	..
	Paid M ^r . John Booth in full for Disbursements as \pounds Bill ..	5	..	3
	Paid Samuel Radford Shoemaker as \pounds Bill	3	6	..
	Paid Mary Willmain in full as \pounds Bill	23	1	..
	Paid M ^r . Elford Dancing Mistress as \pounds Bill	11	..	6
	Paid M ^r . Goupy Drawing Master as \pounds Bill	20	3	6
11	Paid Thomas Burton for Disbursements as \pounds Bill	5	1	3½

Illustration 2: Tuition fees to Mr Galliard, Mrs Elford, Mr Goupy, 7 May 1726 (Cash Book 7). By permission of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch

Thirdly, for much of the time that she was teaching the Duke's children, Anne Elford seems to have been chaperoned by her man of business, who received the payments on her behalf (see Illustration 3 for an example).

He was Humphrey Denby (Danby), an oboist who had been employed at Court and for a few years had also been a near neighbour to Mrs Elford in Dean Street; in fact he lived right next door to another court musician, James Paisible. So there starts to emerge some intriguing links between the family of the 2nd Duke of Montagu (himself an outstanding patron of the arts and theatre), his old dancing teacher Mr Isaac and Mr Isaac's music collaborator James Paisible, Paisible's neighbour and colleague Humphry Denby, and Mrs Ann Elford. All that is missing from this charmed circle is Mr Isaac's brother-in-law and Ann Elford's old dancing partner Anthony L'Abbé – and along he comes in early 1730, taking over from her the last-minute tuition of Lady Mary Montagu before

Received y ^e . 10 th . of October 1722. of his grace y ^e . Duke of Montagu, by y ^e . Hands of m ^r . Andrew Marchant, y ^e . sum of twenty two Pounds fifteen shill. & 9 ^d . in full for -	258	22	16	9
10. teaching y ^e . young lady's to dance from November y ^e . 9 th . 1721. to May y ^e . 14. 1722. I say received. Humphrey Denby.				
for y ^e . grace of Ann: Elford:				

Illustration 3: Humphrey Denby receives payment on behalf of Mrs Anne Elford, according to bill no. 258, 10 October 1722 (Receipt Book 3). By permission of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch.

So who was Ann Elford?

Anne Elford's career is first documented from 1700, but she must have been dancing before then, and not necessarily in London. Being a noted soloist by 1700, with her own scholars

by 1705, suggests that she herself was probably born sometime before 1680; and from what we know so far, it seems likely that she never married. The hunt even within those parameters however is proving lengthy, and although a few contenders are emerging, the most likely one so far may be the Ann Elford baptised at St Margaret's church in Lincoln on 7 October 1675, which would have made her twenty-four when she started to be mentioned in London theatre notices. If so, her father was Thomas Elford, of Christ Church Oxford, who was a vicar-choral at Lincoln Cathedral and curate of St Margaret's, where he and his wife Ann baptised their nine children; the third child, Ann, was the eldest daughter. Two of the sons became singers: Thomas (1674-1751) became a chorister at St George's Chapel Windsor, and Richard (1677-1714)²⁸ became a well-known singer and composer at Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre before becoming a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. Richard did not go to London until 1699, and the employment both of himself and Ann Elford in the same theatre shortly after that adds weight to the possibility that they were siblings. Unfortunately the Elford family seems to have had an aversion to making wills,²⁹ so we have no useful data about Ann from their probate records. Records of Ann Elford's own death are best described at present as 'elusive'.³⁰

So, as yet, Ann Elford remains a mystery. The bigger question for dance research, however, is not so much who she was as where and from whom did she learn to dance so well that she became one of the leading female dancers of her day, was so highly respected by Monsieur L'Abbé that he partnered her for much of her performing career and created a dance of the calibre of the *Passacaille of Armide* for her, was so skilled that she performed effortlessly with the best French dancers in London, and was able to attract prestigious employment from a major patron of the arts in later years? There is a lot more to discover, but we can already sense that she was a very remarkable woman.

Notes

¹ I have followed the generally-held belief that the 'Monsieur L'Abbé' who came to England in 1698 was Anthony L'Abbé.

² 'While Elford and L'Abbé's high movement take': Roger Boyle, *Tragedy of King Saul* (1703), Prologue line 31: quoted in Pierre Danchin, *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (Nancy, 1990), I, 126. Danchin thought that the 'Elford' referred to was the tenor singer Richard Elford, but from the context it is clearly the dancer Mrs Elford.

³ The complete list is recorded in The National Archives (formerly PRO), LC 7/3, fols. 161-3. It was formerly thought to date from 1707 but Judith Milhous convincingly dated it to Spring 1703 in her article 'The date and import of the financial plan for a United Theatre Company in PRO LC 7/3', *Maske und Kothurn*, 21 (1975), 81-88.

⁴ Olive Baldwin & Thelma Wilson, 'The Subscription Musick of 1703-4', *Musical Times* (Winter 2012).

⁵ Miss Evans 'taught by Mr Siris', and Miss Mosse 'the Devonshire Girl'. For Monsieur L'Abbé's early work with Miss Campion, see Jennifer Thorp, *Le Palais des Plaisirs: Monsieur L'Abbé's Divertissement for the King at Kensington Palace, 1698* (forthcoming).

⁶ The other two acts ended with dancing by male actors and dancers – a dance by eight buffoons assisting the apothecaries, and a dance by lawyers and notaries.

⁷ Peter Motteux, *Britain's Happiness* (London: 1704), preface. The work had vocal music by John Weldon for its Drury Lane subscription performance in February, and by Richard Leveridge for its Lincoln's Inn Fields subscription performance two weeks later: See *London Stage* for 22 Feb and 7 March 1703/4. The instrumental music however (which must have included the dances) seems to have been by Charles Dieupart in both instances.

⁸ *Europe's Revels* is discussed in detail by Kathryn Lowerre, 'A Ballet des nations for English audiences: *Europe's Revels for the Peace of Ryswick* (1697)', *Early Music* 35/3 (2007), 419-434, and *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 208-213.

⁹ Subsequent performances of this programme however name only the Drury Lane dancers (the Du Ruels, Cherrier, Mrs Mosse) for its entr'actes, and it is difficult to know whether L'Abbé and Elford were dropped or simply not named in the advertisements because not established Drury Lane dancers.

¹⁰ De Barques was later, and rather tactlessly, described by John Weaver as 'the best performer of the French style [of] Dancing that ever was in England': John Weaver, *Essay towards an History of Dancing* (London, 1712), 164; John Essex however thought that L'Abbé excelled him in the 'grave' style of dancing: John Essex, *The Dancing-Master* (London, 1728), xii.

¹¹ Jakob Kremberg, *England's Glory* (London, 1706); Edward Ravenscroft, *The Anatomist or the Sham Doctor* (1696). For more detailed description of the Queen's birthday celebrations at court in 1706, see Olive Baldwin & Thelma Wilson, 'England's Glory and the Celebrations at Court for Queen Anne's Birthday in 1706', *Theatre Notebook* 62/1 (2008), 7-19. In that article they note that *England's Glory* could have been either a prologue entertainment or an afterpiece to *The Anatomist*, but point to difficulties (if all this took place in the evening, prior to the ball) which an afterpiece would cause for those dancers who were also appearing at Drury Lane that same evening.

¹² John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus* (London, 1708), 47, listing the dancers as messrs L'Abbé, du Ruel, Cherrier, and mesdames Elford, Champion, Ruel and the Devonshire Girl [Mosse]. Baldwin & Wilson however note that Miss Champion was unlikely to have been present as she had left the stage and would die in childbirth that May.

¹³ The lettering on the obelisk reads 'Vivat Anna regina Magnae Britanniae Franciae et Hiberniae, Floreat, Crescat, Triumphet': ('Long live Anne, Queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland [this would become her title after the union with Scotland in 1707], May she [both Queen Anne and Great Britain] flourish, grow and triumph'). The medallion depicting Barcelona, held by the English-led allies since 1705, includes a map and the legend 'Delicium Populi' (Delight of the People), perhaps reflecting the joy of the town under British rule: in April 1706 the French and pro-Bourbon Spanish armies would fail to retake it. The medallion depicting Blenheim shows the battle scene of 1704, long remembered as

Marlborough's greatest victory) and the legend 'Terror Inimicorum' (Terror of the Enemies). The medallion depicting Gibraltar shows another map, with the legend 'Solatium Miseris' (Solace to the Wretched), alluding to plans to relieve Gibraltar which were achieved by Admiral Rooke and the Anglo-Dutch fleet in August 1706.

¹⁴ Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, 49-50, although he wrongly dated the performances to July 1706.

¹⁵ In the entr'actes to Dryden's *Aureng Zebe*.

¹⁶ Carol G. Marsh (ed.), *Anthony L'Abbé A New Collection of Dances originally published by F. Le Roussau, London c. 1725* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1991), xiii-xiv; the notation itself appears on pp.7-16; Moira Goff, *The Incomparable Hester Santlow* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), 6-7.

¹⁷ The dancers named at that date were Monsieur Cherrier, Mrs Santlow, Mrs Evans and Monsieur Klein.

¹⁸ Edmund Pemberton, *An Essay for the Further Improvement of Dancing* (London, Walsh & Hare, 1711). Dance historians are divided as to which came first, L'Abbé's solo or duet version of the *Passacaille of Armide*, and I can find no convincing reason to favour one or the other. There is also the possibility, of course, that the duet version was originally written for Mrs Elford and Mlle de la Val, or for Mrs Santlow and another female dancer, and that the attribution to Elford and Santlow derives only from Le Roussau's much later publication of the dance and a wish to honour the two female dancers of whom L'Abbé thought so highly.

¹⁹ Westminster Archives Centre, MF 24-25: parish rate books of St Anne's Soho, King's Square Division.

²⁰ And just possibly her illegitimate daughter. Mrs Elford was absent from the theatre rosters between late October 1701 and mid-December 1702. This may be due simply to incomplete documentation, or it may have something to do with the birth and baptism (at St Martin in the Fields on 31 July 1702) of a child named Anne Elford, illegitimate daughter of one Anne Elford. If she was the 'little girl, Mrs Elford's scholar' who danced twice at Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre in 1705, she would have been three years old; nothing more is heard of her after that year.

²¹ *Imitation of a Country Farmer's Daughter*, *Chaconne* (both 28 Sep 1705); *Country Farmer's Daughter*, *Entry*, and *The Wood Nymphs* (all 11

Oct 1705): see advertisements in *The London Stage* for those performances.

²² They shared a joint benefit night on 26 May 1706. She too would have lost her place at the Queen's Theatre under Swiney, and we hear no more of her.

²³ I am most grateful to His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, as the present owner of the Montagu archive, for permission to use this material as part of my work to catalogue his dance collection.

²⁴ All these figures however must be treated with great caution, as the half-yearly accounts never say how many hours of teaching are represented in the payments made.

²⁵ Although she was named as the ratepayer for the Dean Street address from 1729-1731, she may not have been resident there, particularly once the area (by Cockpit Court) started to be redeveloped to form Richmond's Buildings in about 1730, and it seems more likely that she moved at that date to the smaller house she had acquired in 1725.

²⁶ Both L'Abbé and the harpsichord teacher Galliard were paid off on or before 17 July 1730, Lady Mary having married the Hon. George Brudenell on 7 July: Cash Book 13.

²⁷ London Metropolitan Archives: Land Tax Assessments for the parish of St George Hanover Square, Dover Street Ward, Grosvenor Mews/Bourdon Street.

²⁸ See also *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *Oxford Music Online* entries for Richard Elford (1677-1714). Richard, his brother Thomas Elford and their father had choral connections with St George's Chapel in Windsor, although not simultaneously: see biographical register in Keri Dexter, *'A Good Quire of Voices': the Provision of Choral Music at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and Eton College, c. 1640-1733* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 250-252. An uncle (Thomas senior's brother Jeremiah) had also been a chorister briefly at Magdalen College Oxford, so the family was clearly musical. They also seem to have been distant cousins of the mercantile Elfordes of the City of London, Suffolk and Essex.

²⁹ Key figures such as Ann's father Thomas or her brother Richard both died intestate, Thomas in 1694, Richard in 1714. I am most grateful to Dr Nicholas Bennett for providing me with a copy of Thomas Elford's administration bond of 1694/5: Lincoln Dean & Chapter Archives 26/28.

Richard's widow Catherine née London, who died in 1715, did leave a will but bequeathed everything to her own side of the family, thereby provoking Chancery cases on behalf of her two young daughters, Anne and Bridget Elford: The National Archives, C11/1974/17 and C11/2346/34.

³⁰ If she was indeed the sister of Thomas and Richard Elford then she perhaps died in early 1750, as Thomas's will of 1751 makes no mention of any siblings (The National Archives, PROB 11/790/214), her niece Ann Elford's will of May 1750 suggests that her own sister Bridget and her family were by then her only living relatives (The National Archives, PROB 11/779), and the Land Tax records for Bourdon Street indicate that Mrs Ann Elford disappeared after 1749.