‘EXCEEDINGLY OBNOXIOUS TO OTHERS IN THE TRADE’: CARLISLE BOOKSELLER, PRINTER AND PUBLISHER CHARLES THURNAM (1796–1852)

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Early-nineteenth century traders, manufacturers and retailers are often depicted as inhabiting a world where approval, trust and reputation mattered. Positive engagements with customers, fellow business-people and with the wider community were all, apparently, important. This has been made most obvious in the literature in relation to clients whereby shop-keepers eager to please an increasingly affluent population, offered liberal terms to encourage repeat business. Entrants to the market place, keen to forge new connections with peers, drew on established links to enhance their own fledgling businesses. Publicised via newspapers, they promoted their integrative rather than disruptive appearance. The career of Carlisle printer and publisher Charles Thurnam questions this narrative. Intermingled with his civic engagement, Thurnam’s outbursts of violence and aggression, threatening behaviour, legal entanglements and witness intimidation reveal an approach seemingly at odds with the notion of a ‘polite and commercial’ people.

Keywords: copyright; John James; Samuel Jefferson; Longman & Co; spelling book; Whittaker & Co

Charles Thurnam’s obituary in the Carlisle Patriot in 1852 expressed appropriate sentiments, but was neither as fulsome, nor as accurate as it could have been:

Mr Thurnam was extensively known and highly respected. By his energy and skill he established in Carlisle one of the most flourishing bookselling, stationery, and printing businesses in the north of England, and conducted it with great skill, energy and success. Long will Mr Thurnam’s intimate friends – and he had many of them – remember the cordiality of his manner, and his genuine English hospitality.¹

¹ C[arlisle] P[atriot], 1 May 1852, p. 2.

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Using a micro-historical approach to examine the fractious nature of some business relationships, this article contributes to a growing number of studies on the publishing trade in the north-west of England. From newspapers, printed ephemera, solicitor’s papers, and handbills it pieces together untold stories of interactions between people associated with printing and publishing in Carlisle, the county town of Cumberland (population c. 17,000). By exploring individual agency in the middle stratum, it exposes strains and tensions at critical intersections when commercial relationships and rivalry erupted into open conflict. In particular, it analyses two episodes: Charles Thurnam’s repeated assaults on newspaper shareholder Dr John James, and Thurnam’s dispute with rival bookseller, Samuel Jefferson, over an Irish imprint of Carpenter’s spelling book. In doing so, it draws together national issues and local preoccupations, contemporary notions of politeness and the ‘motivation, resilience and effectiveness’ of those involved. In many respects Thurnam was simply continuing a long tradition of ‘aggressive business practices’ by booksellers that included, but were not limited to, undercutting rivals, pirated copies, and illegal imports. Focusing on Thurnam’s agency tests bland statements in advice manuals and the alleged cordiality of business relations in general and moves discussion of the book trade beyond a purely ‘metropolitan, legal-legislative approach’ to reveal aspects of its ‘ideological underbelly’.

Politeness and Business

John Styles notes that ‘Just as Georgian Britons frequently chose to characterize themselves as a commercial people, so too they often described themselves as a polite people’. For the present purposes politeness is taken to be a model of behaviour incorporating manners, openness and the requirement for people to make themselves agreeable. Although adhering to politeness necessitated individual control of ‘strong

2 Barry McKay, ‘Three Cumbrian Chapbook Printers: the Dunns of Whitehaven, Ann Bell, and Anthony Soulby of Penrith’, in Peter Isaac and Barry McKay (eds), Images & Texts: Their Production and Distribution in the 18th and 19th Centuries (Winchester: Print Networks, 1997), pp. 65–87; Peter Isaac, ‘The English Provincial Book Trade: A Northern Mosaic’, The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 95: 4, (2001), 410–41; Barry McKay, ‘Books in Eighteenth–Century Whitehaven’, in Barry McKay, John Hinks and Maureen Bell, Light on the Book Trade: Essays in Honour of Peter Isaac, (London: British Library, 2002), pp. 51–60; Peter Lucas, ‘The Significance of Stephen Soulby, Inventor and Newspaper Proprietor’, Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society, 3rd ser., 8 (2008), 207–18.

4 James Raven, ‘Booksellers in Court: Approaches to the Legal History of Copyright in England before 1842’, L[aw] J[ournal], 104:1 (2012–13), 115–34, 134; Vivienne Dunstan, ‘Book Ownership in Late–Eighteenth Century Scotland: A Local Case Study of Dumfriesshire Inventories’, The Scottish Historical Review, vol. 91: 232, part 2 (2012), 265–86, 266; John Mee and Jenifer Wilkes, ‘TransPennine Enlightenment: The Literary and Philosophical Societies and Knowledge Networks in the North, 1781–1830’, J[ournal] for E[ighteenth]–C[entury] S[tudies], 38:4 (2015), 599–612, 599.

5 Mark Rose, ‘Copyright, Authors and Censorship’, in Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (eds), Cambridge History of the Book vol. 5, 1695–1830 (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp. 118–31, p. 120.

6 Richard B. Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus in the Late–Eighteenth–Century Book Trade: the Edinburgh Booksellers’ Society in Comparative Perspective’, B[jook H[istory]], 1 (1998), 32–93, 81.

7 John Styles, ‘Introduction’, in Michael Snodin and John Styles, Design and the Decorative Arts: Georgian Britain, 1714–1827 (London: V&A Publications, 2004), p. 35.

8 Styles, ‘Introduction’, p. 35.
emotions and passions and required that argument should be based upon persuasion’, some contemporaries criticised it for its propensity to lead to ‘artificiality, insincerity and dishonesty’.9 Sweet points to the essentially urban nature of politeness seeing it as a necessary ‘part of commercial life’: without bookshops, circulating libraries and other social spaces which promoted discussion and information exchange, ‘the cultivation of politeness was impossible’.10 In this sense, bookshops and circulating libraries managed by the likes of Thurnam operated at an intersection of commercial and polite behaviour. To entice customers across the threshold, business owners deployed polite language in their adverts. Once inside, in a ‘conscious and sophisticated manipulation of the retail space’, ordered displays, folio racks, counters, chairs, and attentive staff sought to engender an atmosphere of sociability.11 Thurnam operated within these norms but also transgressed them. His litigious nature and use of the press to defend his position do not mark him out as unusual, however. Shoemaker demonstrates the increasing significance of legal process and print culture as methods of ‘conducting disputes’ while also permitting participants to maintain honour.12 Similarly, Tawny Paul’s exploration of credit, reputation and masculinity suggests that by turning to the courts to seek redress or to regulate the actions of others, men could protect their honour while also ‘furthering … interpersonal conflicts’.13

Business reputations were widely believed to rest on shared communal norms: Adam Smith thought, ‘Society may subsist among different men … without any mutual love or affection, if only they refrain from doing injury to each other’.14 Samuel Richardson advised a tradesman to advance ‘himself without hurting others’.15 Religious leaders entreated people ‘never to take advantage of other people’s mistakes, negligence or ignorance’, promoting instead the desirability of ‘A man of Justice and Integrity in his dealings’.16 In reality, however, manuals and tracts emphasising ‘courteous, honest and sober dealing’ in business were often ignored.17 The regularity with which such texts appeared, however, is indicative, as Lane

9 R. J. Morris, Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870, A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Classes (Cambridge, 2005), p. 23; Styles, ‘Introduction’, p. 35.
10 Rosemary Sweet, ‘Topographies of Politeness’, Transactions of the RHS, 12 (2002), 355–74, 355–6, 361–2; Abigail Williams, The Social Life of Books: Reading together in the eighteenth-century home (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 111, 113.
11 Andrew Hann and Jon Stobart, ‘Sites of Consumption: the Display of Goods in Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England’, Cultural and Social History, 2:2 (2005), 165–87, 172.
12 Robert Shoemaker, ‘The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence in London, 1660–1800’, The Historical Journal, 45:3, 525–45, 543–4.
13 K. Tawny Paul, ‘Credit, reputation and masculinity in British urban commerce: Edinburgh, c.1710–70’, The Economic History Review, 66:1 (2013), 226–48, 230–1
14 Quoted in Asa Briggs, England in the Age of Improvement, 1783–1867 (London: Folio, 1999), p. 9.
15 Quoted in Keith Wrightson, Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470–1750 (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 301.
16 Thomas Wilson, Sermons, by the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Wilson, D.D. Lord bishop of Sodor and Man, 4th edn (Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1785), III, p. 25.
17 Keith Thomas, In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilisation in Early Modern England (New Haven: YUP, 2018), p. 83; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850, 2nd edn. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), pp. 215–17; Mary B. Rose, ‘The Family Firm in British Business, 1780–1914’, in Maurice W. Kirby and Mary B. Rose (eds), Business Enterprise in Modern Britain from the Eighteenth Century to the Twentieth Century (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 61–87, pp. 66–7, 76.
comments, of ‘a set of values and standards … under attack, or no longer observed but valued by traditionalists’. 
It is not surprising, therefore, to find disputes and ill-feeling in business and simultaneous attempts to pre-empt or settle them through rules or legal processes. 
In 1721 the Rules and Directions to be Observ’d in Printing Houses were specific: no swearing, cursing or abusive speaking; no gaming, fighting, wrestling or throwing things at each other. General statements, however, rarely acknowledged the differences in outlook or values of those involved in the same industry. 
Publishers Richard Griffin & Co. of Glasgow ‘loathed … with a passion’ Oliver and Boyd of Edinburgh. Thomas Osborn(e) experienced the enmity of other London booksellers; and William Bent accused ‘self-interested and evil-minded persons’ of publishing and selling ‘spurious and imperfect editions’ of Dyche’s Guide to the English Tongue. The confrontation between Edinburgh booksellers Creech and Mudie exhibited jealousy, resentment, and irregularity of conduct. Undermining or attempting to discredit competitors through accusations of improper conduct was not restricted to the printing trades; Stobart, for instance, notes the increasingly ‘fierce and often vitriolic rivalry’ between London’s tea dealers in the 1820s. 

The Publishing Trade

Many histories of printing and publishing explore the extent to which leading London booksellers and publishers controlled and influenced production, markets and distribution in the face of infractions of copyright by Irish and Scottish printers and publishers. Discussion of legal cases including Donaldson v. Beckett (1774)

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18 Joan Lane, Apprenticeship in England, 1600–1914 (London: University College London Press, 1996), p. 188.
19 Jeremy Black, The English Press, 1621–1861 (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2001), p. 110; Rose, ‘Copyright, Authors and Censorship’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, pp. 122–3; Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, BH, 34; Bernard Warrington, ‘The Bankruptcy of William Pickering in 1853: The Hazards of Publishing and Bookselling in the First Half of the 19th Century’, PH, 27 (1990), 5–25.
20 James Watson, Rules and Directions to be Observ’d in Printing Houses (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1721).
21 Keith Thomas, The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early–Modern England (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p. 107.
22 Iain Beavan, ‘John Murray, Richard Griffin and Oliver & Boyd’, in John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (eds), Printing Places: Locations of Book Production and Distribution since 1500 (London: British Library, 2005), pp. 147–51, p. 149.
23 David Hounslow, “Self-interested and Evil-minded persons”: the Book–Trade Activities of Thomas Wilson, Robert Spence and Joseph Mawman of York and the Mozleys of Gainsborough’, in Hinks and Armstrong, Printing Places, pp. 89–106, pp. 91, 95.
24 Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, BH, 66–77.
25 Jon Stobart, Sugar and Spice, Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650–1830 (Oxford: OUP, 2013), p. 180.
26 David Fielding and Shef Rogers, ‘Monopoly Power in the Eighteenth–Century British Book Trade’, European Review of Economic History 21 (2017), 393–413; Raven, ‘Booksellers in Court: LLJ, 115–34; Rose, ‘Copyright, Authors and Censorship’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, pp. 122–3; Charles Benson, The Irish Trade’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, pp. 366–82; Iain Beavan and Warren McDougall, ‘The Scottish Book Trade’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, pp. 352–65; Aileen Fye, ‘Copyrights and Competition: Producing and Protecting Children’s Books in the Nineteenth Century’, Publishing History 45 (1999), 35–59; Warren McDougall, ‘Smugglers, Reprinters, and Hot Pursuers: The Irish–Scottish Book Trade, and Copyright Prosecutions in the Late Eighteenth Century’, in Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds), The Stationers’ Company and the Book Trade, 1550–1990 (New Castle, Del: Oak Knoll Press, 1997), pp. 151–83; John Feather, Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain (London:
which terminated perpetual copyright, illustrate the sometimes contested significance of watershed moments in publishing history. Legal challenges, landmark rulings and new acts of parliament changed the constitutional background of the book trade, but as Raven makes clear, a significant difference remained between the law and its application. After Donaldson, the English book trade was still dominated by metropolitan printing and publishing houses, and despite changes, some practices remained. One was the share-book system of copyright, that is, a title owned by more than one publisher, which, as Fyfe demonstrates, continued well into the nineteenth century. Shares ‘changed hands quite frequently’, although how and why often remain opaque. One such share-book, Thomas Carpenter’s The Scholar’s Spelling Assistant was published in 1796; a second edition, under a different publisher, appeared two years later. Spelling books were not the most dynamic of publications, but they were reliable sellers and publishers were generally keen to protect their commercial interests in them. By the 1830s the copyright in Carpenter’s book was owned jointly by Longman & Co., and Whittaker & Co.

Educational books were such solid investments that they inspired pirated copies. Through illegal imports along Scotland’s west coast, unauthorised Irish reprints found their way into English markets. For the eighteenth-century at least, however, they were insufficient to create ‘a decisive challenge to the London booksellers’. A more significant issue arose with the involvement of Scottish booksellers importing Irish reprints for re-export to England. In the early-nineteenth century, when the trade was expanding and new entrants faced pressure from established enterprises and vice versa, the issue provoked continuing consternation. What often remains obscure in this process is the manner in which publishers were informed about sales of illegal imports and copyright infringements, how evidence was gathered to substantiate accusations, and what happened in the aftermath. What follows, however, is not primarily a metropolitan versus provincial struggle with large publishers protecting their property against sales of illegal books. Charles Thurnam’s altercation with Samuel Jefferson was a struggle between two provincial rivals who used London publishing houses and national issues in their essentially local dispute.

Mansell, 1994); John Feather, The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), pp. 1–11.
27 Raven, ‘Booksellers in Court’, LLJ, 127–8.
28 Raven, ‘Booksellers in Court’, LLJ, 134.
29 Fyfe, ‘Copyrights and Competition’, PH, 42.
30 Thomas Carpenter, The Scholar’s Spelling Assistant ... (London: C.D. Piguenit, 1796); Thomas Carpenter, The Scholar’s Spelling Assistant ... 2nd edn. (London: Lee and Hurst, 1798).
31 Hounslow, ‘Self–interested and Evil–minded persons’: in Hinks and Armstrong, Printing Places, p. 99.
32 Beavan and McDougall, ‘Scottish Book Trade’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, pp. 354, 356; Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, BH 64; Feather, Provincial Book Trade, pp. 6–7.
33 Raven, ‘Booksellers in Court’, LLJ, 130; Feather, Provincial Book Trade, p. 8.
34 Feather, Publishing, Piracy and Politics, pp. 71, 83.
Thurnam, Publishing and Civic Engagement in Carlisle

Thurnam had no immediate family connection to the printing trade; his antecedents lay firmly in medicine. The youngest of three brothers, Charles Hutchinson Thurnam was born in 1796 in Edinburgh, the child of Timothy (1770–98) and Dorothy Thurnam (1768–99). His father, an army surgeon, died when his ship sank on its return voyage from India; his mother was the daughter of Cumberland-born, Edinburgh-based surgeon, William Graham. Around 1799, Charles, and his brothers William Graham (b.1792) and John Dodsworth (b.1794) moved to Dalston, near Carlisle, and were brought up by their mother’s family. William joined the East India Company in 1807, dying in India in 1823. John Dodsworth died in 1829. According to the obituary of George Routledge (founder of the eponymous publishing house), before setting up as a printer in Carlisle Thurnam had been employed by the London firm of Baldwin and Craddock. Charles Thurnam’s wife, Ann (1800–57), the daughter of John Graham, a well-known Carlisle surgeon, joined him in business. Of their twelve children, eight survived into adulthood, and two, William Graham and James Graham, joined the enterprise. After Thurnum’s death, Ann managed the enterprise in collaboration with J. Harry until her death, whereupon William Graham and James Graham took control.

In the early-nineteenth century northern England had a flourishing publishing trade. Carlisle was no exception but lagged behind the major production and distribution centres of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. By the late-1820s it had a combined total of ten booksellers, printers, publishers, and book binders; two newspapers; a fortnightly periodical; circulating libraries; and a subscription library. The Tory-leaning Carlisle Patriot (established 1815), of which Thurnam became the printer, competed with the Cumberland Paquet (1774); the Whig Carlisle Journal (1798); and the Westmorland Gazette (1818). In 1838 average weekly circulation figures for the Journal, amounted to 1850 copies; the Paquet, 850; and the Patriot, 800. Giving a sense of the fractious nature of Carlisle’s printing fraternity, the Patriot disputed these numbers: ‘The public will … perceive … some egregious blunder here … The circulation of the Patriot is about one-third less than that of

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35 Old Parish Registers, St Cuthbert’s, Edinburgh, 685/2 300 248, Dorothy Graham, 30 June 1799: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk [accessed 30 April 2020].
36 Michael Twyman, ‘Printed Ephemera’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, pp. 66–7.
37 Old Parish Registers, St Cuthbert’s, Edinburgh, 685/2 120 83, John Dodsworth Thurnam, 24 March 1794, www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk [accessed 30 April 2020]; James Wilson (ed.), The Monumental Inscriptions of the Church, Churchyard and Cemetery of St Michael’s, Dalston, Cumberland (Dalston: W. R. Beck, 1890), p. 51.
38 BL, British India Office, Wills and Probate, Inventories and Accounts of Deceased Estates, Bombay, 1798–1837, L–AG–34–27–391, William Graham Thurnam, Bombay, 1824.
39 John Dodsworth Thurnam, 20 May 1829, memorial inscription, St Cuthbert’s, Carlisle, Cumbria.
40 [Carlisle] Journal, 18 December 1888, p. 2.
41 John Barrie and Peter Leslie, Thurnams: A 192 Year History (North Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), n.p; CP, 21 March 1857, p. 1.
42 Isaac, ‘Northern Mosaic’, 412.
43 John Brewer, The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 180.
44 Black, English Press, p. 111.
45 To the nearest 50: CP, 24 Nov. 1838, p. 2.
the *Journal*, and considerably more than that of the *Paquet*.\(^{46}\) Carlisle had also seen the launch and demise of three newspapers, the *Carlisle Chronicle* (1807–11); the *Carlisle Herald* (18 months); and the *Carlisle Independent* (two editions), and three periodicals: the *Pioneer* and the *Reflector* (both 1818), and the *Northern Observer* (1823).\(^{47}\) To survive in such an environment required perseverance, ingenuity and diversification.\(^{48}\)

For newcomers lacking connections and the necessary finance, business partnerships and loans were common.\(^{49}\) In conjunction with a Mr Loder, Thurnam opened a venture in English Street in April 1817 as a bookseller, printer, and vendor of lottery tickets, together with a circulating library.\(^{50}\) By May the partnership was over, but as Davidoff and Hall identified, temporary partnerships ‘dissolved when their objective had been fulfilled’; in this instance the establishment of a centrally-located business.\(^{51}\) Drawing in customers and augmenting the proprietor’s status, the address made good commercial sense.\(^{52}\) From then on Thurnam operated the business with assistants, apprentices (including George Routledge, 1827–33) and his family. Until 1820 Thurnam ignored a government requirement for press-makers, type-founders, and printing presses to be registered.\(^{53}\) Alongside posters, handbills, and blank bills (the stock-in-trade of most jobbing printers), he produced ledgers, account books, and the *Carlisle Patriot*.\(^{54}\) He stocked ‘a great variety of children’s books’; novels and plays including ‘Miss Edgeworth’s *Comic Dramas*, just published’; pamphlets, magazines, reviews, law reports, and engravings.\(^{55}\) Given Thurnam’s potential for aggressive behaviour, it was a brave person indeed who stole pocket books and almanacs from his shop in 1819.\(^{56}\) New publications arrived daily from London and Edinburgh.\(^{57}\) In 1836 standard texts included dictionaries, biographies, history, religious, and legal books; and works by Gibbon, Byron, Burke, and Burns.\(^{58}\) His circulating library, initially consisting of ‘upwards of 1500 volumes’, expanded so that by 1836 it contained some 13,000 volumes.\(^{59}\) Subscriptions cost from 4 s. monthly to £1 1 s. annually.\(^{60}\) Thurnam also offered binding and gilding, picture frames, and

46 *CP*, 24 Nov. 1838, p. 2.
47 Parson and White, *Directory of Cumberland*, p. 146.
48 Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth–Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 106; C. Y. Ferdinand, ‘Newspapers and the Sale of Books in the Provinces’, in Suarez and Turner, *History of the Book*, pp. 434–47, p. 436.
49 Warrington, ‘William Pickering’, *PH*, 7.
50 *CP*, 5 Apr. 1817, p. 2; 19 Apr. 1817, p. 1.
51 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 200.
52 Stobart, *Sugar and Spice*, p. 111.
53 Raven, ‘Booksellers in Court’. *LLJ*, 133; C(umbria) A(rchive) S(ervice), Carlisle, Q/RS/12, Cumberland Quarter Sessions, 1668–1948, Printers’ Registrations under the Seditious Societies Act 39 Geo.III. c 79, Charles Hutchinson Thurnam of Carlisle, 10 Nov. 1820.
54 Twyman, ‘Printed Ephemera’, pp. 66–7; CAS, DCL P/8/55, Butcher [T. Mitchell?] account ledger, 1836–7; *CP*, 18 Jun. 1825, p. 1; 24 Sep. 1825, p. 1/5; CAS, DX 8/l/26, Musgrave family of Edenhall, Bill of James Birney, String of Horses Inn, Carlisle, to Mr Martindale, 28 Feb. 1839.
55 *CP*, 31 May 1817, p. 2; 23 Feb. 1833, p. 1.
56 *CP*, 4 Dec. 1819, p. 3.
57 *CJ*, 2 Feb. 1833, p. 2.
58 *CP*, 11 Jun. 1836, p. 1.
59 *CP*, 31 May 1817, p. 2; 22 Oct. 1836, p. 1.
60 *CP*, 22 Oct. 1836 p. 1.
writing papers. He sold patent medicines, Warren’s blacking, shares, sheet music and pianos.\(^{61}\)

In the expectation of increasing business, Thurnam’s adverts mixed commercial intelligence with the polite language and stock phrases to be found in other contemporary adverts and business letters.\(^{62}\) Thurnam begged to inform, respectfully informed or announced to friends, ladies, gentlemen and the public, his ‘assiduity and attention’ or his ‘unremitting attention’ to business. These, he hoped, would ‘merit a share of their favours’.\(^{63}\) He returned his sincere thanks for the liberal encouragement he had experienced; drew attention to the connections he had formed with the ‘first houses in the metropolis’ and solicited inspections of his stock which he was ‘disposed to sell on very Low Terms’.\(^{64}\) Lists of the latest publications added to his library and of publications available for purchase together with their prices informed customers about what was current.\(^{65}\) This deliberate ‘coupling of fashion, quality and price’ was designed to appeal to the ‘desires and aspirations’ of the middling ranks.\(^{66}\) Some groups were specifically targeted. Magistrates, churchwardens and overseers were informed of the ‘new form of Orders and Indentures for binding parish Apprentices’.\(^{67}\) In 1829 he announced to ‘Select Vestries, Parish Overseers &c., A Summary of the Law of Settlement’, and a ‘Treatise on the maintenance of the poor’, and in 1837 the *Poor Law Rate Book*, and the *Surveyor of the Highways Account Book*.\(^{68}\) Vestries were supplied with notices for county voters and memorandum books; indenture forms and parish registers.\(^{69}\) In supplying Hayton vestry with ‘blank’ indentures from 1820, Thurnam superseded other Carlisle printers including Francis Jollie and Benjamin Scott.\(^{70}\) Thurnam’s frequent advertising, prompt and attentive service and itemised bills are indicative of developments in retail and consumption identified in research by Church, Walsh and Stobart amongst others.\(^{71}\)

Davidoff and Hall note the difficulty first generation businesspeople (especially those in retail) had in attaining complete social integration.\(^{72}\) From the outset however, Thurnam courted with an increasingly affluent and engaged population

\(^{61}\) *CP*, 28 Nov. 1818, p. 1; 19 Aug. 1837, p. 1.

\(^{62}\) Jon Stobart, ‘*Selling (Through) Politeness*, *Cultural and Social History*, 5:3 (2008), 309–328, 312–16; Pat Hudson, ‘Correspondence and Commitment: British Traders’ Letters in the Long–Eighteenth Century’, *CSH*, 11:4 (2014), 527–553, 535–8; Sweet, ‘Topographies of Politeness’, 356–8, 367.

\(^{63}\) *CP*, 5 April 1817, p. 2; 31 May 1817, p. 2; *CJ*, 22 October 1836, p. 1.

\(^{64}\) *CP*, 5 April 1817, p. 2; *CJ*, 28 November 1818, p. 1; 22 October 1836, p. 1.

\(^{65}\) Stobart, ‘*Selling (Through) Politeness*, *CSH*, 311.

\(^{66}\) Stobart, ‘*Selling (Through) Politeness*, *CSH*, 310, 321, 324.

\(^{67}\) *CP*, 2 Aug. 1817, p. 1.

\(^{68}\) *CP*, 25 Apr. 1829, p. 1; 19 Aug. 1837, p. 1.

\(^{69}\) CAS, SPC44/2/48, Dalston Overseers’ Voucher, Charles Thurnam, 13 Apr.–21 May 1831; SPC44/2/47/16, Dalston Overseers’ Voucher, Charles Thurnam, settled 20 Jan. 1838; PR102/126, Hayton, St Mary Magdalene, Apprenticeship Indentures, 1783–1833; PR56/7, Kirklington Overseers’ Voucher, Charles Thurnam, 18 Mar. 1840.

\(^{70}\) CAS, PR102/126, Hayton, St Mary Magdalene, apprenticeship indentures, 1783–1833.

\(^{71}\) Roy Church, ‘Advertising Consumer Goods in Nineteenth–century Britain: Reinterpretations’, *EHR*, LIII, 4 (2000), 621–45; Stobart, *Sugar and Spice*, pp. 165–89; C. Walsh, ‘Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth–century London’, *Journal of Design History*, 8:35 (1995), 157–76; J. Stobart, A. Hann, V. Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption: Leisure and Shopping in the English Town c.1680–1830* (London: Routledge, 2007).

\(^{72}\) Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 244.
beyond his immediate business interests. His close connections with health and education institutions, and improvement schemes were shared by clerics, professionals and the more prosperous traders and manufacturers including solicitor William Nicholson Hodgson and surgeon John James. Both feature in the following case studies. Thurnam was not being purely altruistic. Through civic engagement, bonds formed in committee rooms and via subscriptions offered the potential to expand business networks and, as Brewer points out, conferred status and provided opportunities for ‘sensations of power and control over others’.73 A proposal for a House of Recovery for persons with contagious diseases attracted subscriptions from Thurnam, James and Hodgson.74 A public meeting in 1819, chaired by Hodgson, agreed to establish the House of Recovery; James was appointed to the committee.75 Thurnam had joined the committee by the mid-1830s.76 In 1828 Thurnam published a proposal for the creation of an infirmary in Carlisle and, in 1835, attended the annual meeting of Carlisle Dispensary.77 He was on and thanked by Carlisle’s public walks committee for improvements undertaken in cleansing the town’s streets.78 He was enrolled as a police commissioner in 1830 and was in post in 1833 when the Carlisle Journal carried a notice seeking fifty such commissioners.79 Under 100 persons were eligible, but they included Hodgson and James. In 1818 Carlisle’s Central School for poor children garnered subscriptions from Thurnam and Hodgson. By 1841 Thurnam had been elevated to committee member, where he sat alongside the bishop and dean of Carlisle.80 In 1823 he was on the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society.81

Thurnam’s interests extended to insurance and transport. Alongside Hodgson, he was agent and district committee member for the Manchester Assurance Company and a shareholder in the Carlisle canal company.82 In 1827 Carlisle’s leading citizens, including Thurnam, Hodgson and James, called for the construction of a railway between Carlisle and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.83 To all intents and purposes, therefore, Thurnam was the epitome of Blackstone’s description of England’s ‘polite and commercial people’.84 Lying behind this general statement, however, in a world where ‘dexterity in negotiating and manipulating complex codes of conduct and social rituals’ combined with ‘self-management and presentation’ were regarded as prerequisites, was the self-interest of individual traders, and suspicions amongst the wider

73 John Brewer, Commercialization of Politics, John Brewer, ‘Commercialization and Politics’, in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England (London: Europa, 1982), pp. 197–262, p. 227.
74 CP, 8 Nov. 1817, p. 2.
75 CP, 2 Jan. 1819, p. 2.
76 CP, 20 Dec. 1834, p. 4; 9 Dec. 1837, p. 4.
77 CP, 12 Sept. 1829, p. 4.
78 CP, 12 Sept. 1829, p. 4; CJ, 23 May 1835, p. 3.
79 The National Archives, HO 52/6/235, fol. 508–516B, Letter from Mr Nauson, Carlisle, Cumberland, 6 December 1830; CJ, 25 May 1833, p. 3.
80 CP, 14 Aug. 1841, p. 2.
81 CP, 12 Apr. 1823, p. 3.
82 CP, 24 Sep. 1825, p. 1; 15 Aug, 1818, p. 2.
83 CP, 23 Jun. 1827, p. 1.
84 Paul Langford, A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783 (Oxford: OUP, 1989), p. 1.
populace that some engaged in questionable practices. Indeed, Langford notes that in commerce ‘contemporary wisdom suggested the need for relatively free competition, [but] all kinds of covert interests, communal traditions, and collective sensibilities could present barriers to such freedom, including ‘the desire of relatively well-placed people to enable, enfranchise or empower only themselves’.

Assaults on Dr John James

The entrepreneurial skill used to identify and take advantage of business opportunities was transferred seamlessly by Thurnam to pinpoint and then exploit what he regarded as ‘frailty’ or ‘failure’ in others. He targeted the susceptibilities of those from whom he had something to gain. Physical infirmity, ignorance, or inexperience; the individual nature of the ‘weakness’ mattered less to Thurnam than his ability to make use of it, and to dominate those characterised by it.

It was alleged that on 16 August 1836 Thurnam beat, wounded and ill-treated John James so that his life was greatly despaired of. James, a surgeon of ‘very old standing’ with a distinguished reputation, was advanced in years and infirm; the defendant young in comparison. As well as being a surgeon, James belonged to a consortium that owned the Carlisle Patriot. Amongst others, it included William Hodgson, and pawnbroker William Moss. Each had purchased shares to the value of £25. Overall control of the paper was in the hands of a committee chosen from among the proprietors, and regulated at meetings held at the Bush Inn, Carlisle. Day-to-day operations were managed by the editor and printer. In 1835 the committee appointed Thurnam to print the paper at the Patriot Office. Thurnam, however, thought it more convenient to print the paper at his own premises. Accordingly and without authority, he removed the Patriot press, types and other materials to his printing rooms. At a meeting at the Bush Inn the committee ordered Thurnam to return all that he had removed. One (unnamed) proprietor spoke strongly about Thurnam’s unaccountable conduct, when James was heard to remark, ‘I told you how it would be when you gave him the printing of it. You could expect nothing better from him’. The sources do not reveal whether Thurnam acquiesced to the...
committee’s demand, but whoever had physical possession of the press had greater influence in Carlisle’s printing industry and greater control of information. Thurnam was testing the mettle of the committee.

After the meeting, James followed the other proprietors to the stairs when Thurnam said, ‘You were the only one in the room that shewed any venom’ and called James a ‘d–d bloody-hearted knave’.94 James descended to the landing, turned, and though fearful of being hit, called out, ‘You shall answer for that another day’. Thurnam, a strongly-built, powerful man, known for his violent temper, then struck James in the face below the left eye and again in the neck. What happened next is subject to variations between the copy indictment and prosecution brief.95 In essence, Hodgson, upon hearing a scuffle and Thurnam calling James a ‘hoary old lecher whose dark ways are hidden from the public gaze’, turned round and saw Thurnam collar James, hold him against the wall, and seize hold of his walking stick. James then either tumbled down the stairs, or would have been knocked down them had his fall not been broken by Hodgson who ran back and separated the antagonists before calling out ‘What a shame for you Thurnam to strike an old man’.96 Thurnam’s verbal abuse of James continued into the street. Despite confusion over the sequence of events and inconsistencies within witnesses’ own accounts, there was no doubting that Thurnam had assaulted James. This, however, did not result in his conviction. Although present during the latter parts of the affray and hearing the abuse, according to the prosecution brief Hodgson denied seeing the actual attack.97 Hodgson’s differing accounts, glaring given his position as both a solicitor and the under-sheriff of the county, were compounded by a clear conflict of interest; Hodgson’s firm was acting for James in the case.98 William Moss, who had been standing behind Thurnam, also denied seeing anything of the actual assault and it was doubtful whether he could be induced to say anything even if put into the witness box.99 It is evident from surviving papers that, either directly or indirectly, witnesses had been intimidated. John James, therefore, became not just the victim but also the sole material witness. James’ aside at the meeting that the proprietors should have expected nothing better from Thurnam was both well-founded and portentous. Well-founded because this was not the first occasion when property had been conveyed without authority. In 1834 six men, including Thurnam, removed a painting from the King’s Arms, Carlisle, where the Wellington Club met. At a crowded meeting, for ‘conduct so utterly at variance with its rules and so insulting to every other member’, the men were publicly expelled and their names erased from the club’s books.100 Removing a

94 CAS, Hodgson MSS, DHOD/13/153, Prosecution Brief.
95 CAS, Hodgson MSS, DHOD/13/153, John James vs Charles Thurnam, Copy Indictment, 1836; Prosecution Brief.
96 CAS, Hodgson MSS, DHOD/13/153, Prosecution Brief.
97 CAS, Hodgson MSS, DHOD/13/153, Prosecution Brief.
98 CAS, Hodgson MSS, DHOD/13/153, Writ issued by Thomas Briggs on behalf of William Hodgson and Thomas Houghton Hodgson, attorneys for John James, 29 August 1836.
99 CAS, Hodgson MSS, DHOD/13/153, Prosecution Brief.
100 CJ, 12 Apr. 1834, p. 3.
painting was a minor offence, but arguably the public nature of the expulsion and the sense of humiliation it entailed affected the way in which Thurnam dealt with others who crossed him thereafter. Of more immediate significance, Thurnam’s volatile behaviour had resulted in several other alleged attacks on James. Between 1 July 1836 and on ‘divers days and times between that day and the commencement of this suit’ on 5 November, Thurnam had repeatedly assaulted James. What provoked the attacks is not recorded, but James suffered ‘many violent blows and strokes on and about his head, face, breast, back, shoulders, arms, legs and divers other parts of his body’. With ‘great force and violence’ Thurnam ‘shook and pulled about him’ so that he ‘rent and damaged James’ clothes’. James ‘greatly, hurt, bruised, and wounded’, and unable to conduct his affairs, sought damages of £100.

On the grounds that James had commenced a suit but subsequently preferred a bill of indictment without giving Thurnam notice, an application to respite the hearing in the case was made in January 1837. The court agreed to a postponement with the costs of the day being paid by the defendant. Hodgson wrote subsequently to both parties suggesting that they settle. On 16 January 1837 James responded. As the action had occasioned him ‘a good deal of anxiety’, he would be obliged if Hodgson would see the defendant and get ‘the same settled as speedily as possible as well as the Indictment … as I am willing to drop both the one and the other’. Two days later Thurnam also replied to Hodgson, ‘Your proposition of settling the matter … has my certain concurrence, provided that all proceedings be dropped. I am willing to pay my own expenses in the affair but … I shall pay no more’. The case was abandoned. James died in 1845 aged 73, respected for his ‘extensive and successful practice in which few had ever ‘attained the same degree of eminence so deservedly’.

The Campaign against Samuel Jefferson

The portentous nature of James’ comment about Thurnam’s conduct was borne out in 1838 when Thurnam initiated a chain of events that resulted in litigation against fellow printer and bookseller Samuel Jefferson (1808–46). The case gained widespread notoriety: a commercial traveller in the book trade passing through Carlisle described Thurnam as ‘exceedingly obnoxious to the rest of the trade’.

Samuel Jefferson was baptised in Basingstoke, Hampshire. He was a bookseller’s assistant before setting up on his own in Cockermouth, Cumberland. In 1834 he took over John Cockburn’s business in Scotch Street, Carlisle. In direct competition with Thurnam, Jefferson’s circulating library offered the public history,
novels, romances, tales, voyages, travels, poetry, essays, magazines and reviews.\textsuperscript{110} Subscriptions were cheaper than those offered by Thurnam: monthly, 2 s. 6 d; annual, 18 s. He also offered bookbinding; engraving and copper-plate printing; sold patent medicines; ledgers; paper; second-hand books; music and musical instruments; and was agent for the Yorkshire Fire and Life Insurance Company.\textsuperscript{111} In 1838 he published, jointly with Whittaker & Co., \textit{The History and Antiquities of Carlisle}.\textsuperscript{112}

Outwardly, the dispute between Thurnam and Jefferson was about the latter selling Irish reprints of a copyrighted book, but it disguised Thurnam’s intention to undermine the competition. It was not unusual for leading booksellers to resort to arbitration or to threaten legal proceedings over issues of copyright. Instigating proceedings to obtain injunctions against those selling illegal imports and reprints of books to which they held the copyright was also common, and the courts usually found in favour of the plaintiffs.\textsuperscript{113} It was more unusual for one bookseller to initiate proceedings in Chancery against another over the sale of a book to which neither owned the copyright. Yet, by a circuitous route and hiding behind the name of Longman & Co., this was precisely the tactic employed by Thurnam against Jefferson.

Carlisle’s proximity to Scotland meant that cross-border trade in books was well-established and there appeared to be little risk of reprisal for those selling Scottish and Irish reprints of copyrighted works.\textsuperscript{114} According to Jefferson, since October 1836 he had been selling a ‘Cheap Edition of Carpenter’s Spelling Book’, at a shilling each, a text already available in Carlisle.\textsuperscript{115} The books, printed by John Cumming of Dublin, and Simms & M’Intyre of Belfast, were purchased by Jefferson from Francis Orr & Sons, and James Lumsden & Son, both of Glasgow.\textsuperscript{116} Jefferson pasted his usual label in the books, and sold them openly. There was no attempt to disguise the fact that the book was a cheap Irish edition: there was no false title page, no claims that it was from a London printer, nor was the publisher unknown.\textsuperscript{117} Upon the Irish edition Jefferson maintained he ‘had less profit than on the English one’.\textsuperscript{118} Chiming with his ‘generous exertions for the good of the reading part of the community’, Jefferson could reasonably believe that he was performing a public service, since its lower selling price than the English edition afforded the opportunity for more people to purchase it.\textsuperscript{119} This was a standard defence.\textsuperscript{120} An entirely separate case could be made that no-one could claim copyright on the rules of spelling or

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} \textit{CP}, 13 Aug. 1836, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{111} \textit{CP}, 13 Aug. 1836, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{112} \textit{CP}, 2 Jun. 1838, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Fielding and Rogers, ‘Monopoly Power’, 394; Feather, \textit{Publishing, Piracy and Politics}, pp. 68–9.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, \textit{BH}, 51; Isaac, ‘Northern Mosaic’, 430; Feather, \textit{Provincial Book Trade}, p. 10; Feather, \textit{Publishing, Piracy and Politics}, pp. 81, 83.
\item \textsuperscript{115} \textit{CP}, 2 Jun. 1838, p. 2; C(arlisle) L(ibrary), Jackson Collection, M174, S. Jefferson, \textit{Information to Mr C. Thurnam}, 2 June 1838 (hereinafter CL, Jackson Coll., M174).
\item \textsuperscript{116} CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Jefferson, \textit{Information to Mr C. Thurnam}, 2 Jun. 1838.
\item \textsuperscript{117} James J. Caudle, ‘Richard Francklin: A Controversial Publisher, Bookseller and Printer, 1718–1765’, in Suarez and Turner, \textit{History of the Book}, p. 395; Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, \textit{BH}, 64.
\item \textsuperscript{118} \textit{CP}, 2 Jun 1838, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, \textit{BH}, 39; Jefferson’s obituary, \textit{Sheffield Informer}, 14 Feb. 1846, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Feather, \textit{Publishing, Piracy and Politics}, p. 64.
\end{itemize}
grammars. Upon an order from Chancery, Jefferson stopped selling the book in June 1838, and there he thought the matter rested. In the aftermath of the injunction, the situation erupted when Jefferson learned of Thurnam’s surreptitious behaviour, and openly accused the latter of conspiring against him.

Taking full advantage of the presses at their disposal to bolster their claims, refute accusations and discredit their opponents, Jefferson and Thurnam set out their respective positions in a series of handbills. Many were reprinted in Carlisle’s newspapers. The language used is analogous to that between Atlantic trading partners, rivals and customers analysed by Hudson. When ‘relationships were under strain’, correspondents deployed ‘moral imperatives and accusations’ in exaggerated or stylised terms. Jefferson had not infringed copyright himself, but was guilty of selling Irish imports of a copyrighted book. He admitted his error. He could hardly have done otherwise, but avowed it was an honest mistake because of his ignorance about the legal position of the English version ‘which it now appears is the only edition saleable in England without infringing the law of copyright’. Given his experience in the trade, his association with Whittaker & Co., and the fact that he had written to them about the issue, this was a dubious claim. Jefferson’s stance was even less credulous considering that at the time parliament was once again debating copyright issues. Thurnam seized on Jefferson’s claim accusing him of ‘groundless, futile, and incongruous attempts to impose a specious tissue of bare-faced lies on the Public’:

One of us is endeavouring to protect his business and property – the other endeavouring to lure you, through the medium of ignorance of his trade; but blind ignorance and gross stupidity are no palliatives for dishonest intention, and if a man has not a knowledge of his business, he is unfit to follow it.

Regarding the episode as a ‘trial of right versus wrong’, Thurnam’s presentation of self as the upholder of ‘true’ business ethics was strengthened by his knowledge that Longman & Co. had previously circulated a notice preventing the sale of Irish editions. Had the copyright expired Longman’s ‘would have made effective arrangements to compete with the Irish editions ... and besides, this book which is so extensively circulated, would have been printed by hundreds in the trade’. Jefferson continued to maintain that he had made an honest mistake, but by inadvertently revealing his knowledge of the law, he came across as disingenuous. Claiming to be doing nothing new or unusual as others engaged in the same practice, he declared that the spelling book ‘is precisely similar to the Bibles, Testaments and Common Prayer books printed in Scotland, which, notwithstanding, have been generally sold on this side of the Borders’.

121 Hounslow, ‘Self–interested and Evil–minded persons’, in Hinks and Armstrong, Printing Places, p. 94.
122 Hudson, ‘Correspondence and Commitment’, CSH, 539–42.
123 CP, 2 Jun. 1838, p. 2.
124 CP, 9 Jun. 1838, p. 1.
125 Feather, Publishing, Piracy and Politics, pp. 128–41.
126 CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Charles Thurnam, Reply to a Slanderer, 7 Jun. 1838; CP, 9 Jun. 1838, p. 1.
127 CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Thurnam, Reply to a Slanderer, 7 Jun. 1838.
128 CP, 9 Jun. 1838, p. 1.
129 CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Jefferson, Information to Mr Thurnam, 2 Jun. 1838.
While feigning ignorance, on copyright Jefferson was on surer ground when he professed that he had no knowledge of proceedings against him (initiated on 9 March 1838) until he was informed on the 14 April that an injunction had been obtained on 12 April.\textsuperscript{130} He went on the offensive, exposed Thurnam’s duplicitous behaviour, threw out some well-aimed accusatory darts, and challenged Thurnam to refute them. Thurnam’s actions were unworthy of a man in business. Surely, Jefferson argued, any decent businessman would have had a gentlemanly word with a fellow trader rather than putting a case into Chancery. Up to a point, Jefferson’s tactics worked. Other Carlisle printers, including Hudson Scott, also thought Thurnam’s behaviour ungentlemanly. Thurnam accused Scott (referring to him as Sir Solomon Teetotal), of being in league with Jefferson. Scott denied this and countered accusing Thurnam of conduct unbecoming. Instead of a ‘tradesman of honour and veracity’ he was an informer with lowly business ethics:

Everyone must acknowledge that both Longman and Thurnam have a perfect right to protect their interests by law, but common courtesy and honour between man and man generally afford some sort of notice before law proceedings are entered into. This was not given by C. Thurnam. Had he done this, it would have saved his reputation.\textsuperscript{131} Any sympathy for Jefferson, however, did not translate into the purchase of his histories of Cumberland. ‘Far too costly to allow any prospect of remuneration’, they proved ‘disastrous to the author’.\textsuperscript{132}

Thurnam’s decision not to have a gentlemanly word over an alleged wrongdoing was to emerge again. Instances of unruly apprentice behaviour against the person or property of their masters or against propriety were frequent, as were the prosecutions which followed.\textsuperscript{133} In 1851 Thurnam took two of his apprentices to court for absenting themselves from work, getting intoxicated and then swearing at him.\textsuperscript{134} In the dock they apologised for their actions and promised to behave. The case was abandoned. Putting intellectual distance between himself and his opponents contributed to Thurnam’s narrative of self. Arguably, as in the Jefferson case, it was important to Thurnam that others admitted their failures and wrongdoings, apologised publicly, and were humbled in the process. In such a way Thurnam could legitimately declare, that whatever his methods and whatever his detractors might think, he had both legal and moral right on his side.

The problem for Thurnam was that when he alleged that he had no prior knowledge of proceedings against Jefferson before the injunction was issued, he was dissembling: he had been instrumental in generating the prosecution. In the initial stages of the campaign, secrecy was crucial. Any hint of what was afoot would have alerted his rival. The books would have been removed from sale and the required evidence would have disappeared. There would have been no injunction, no public admittance of wrongdoing and no questioning of a competitor’s trading practises. Adding to his increasingly fluid financial situation and independent of his own expenses in the affair, Jefferson would not have been landed with a hefty legal bill of

\textsuperscript{130} CL, Jackson Coll., M174, S. Jefferson, \textit{Bill of Costs in which the Prime Mover is not Named}, 20 Jun. 1838.
\textsuperscript{131} CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Hudson Scott, \textit{Postscript of a Letter from a Tee–Totaller [1838]}.
\textsuperscript{132} Sheffield Informer, 14 Feb. 1846, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{133} Lane, \textit{Apprenticeship in England}, pp. 189–98; Paul, ‘Credit, reputation and masculinity’, \textit{EHR}, 240.
\textsuperscript{134} CP, 11 Jul. 1851, p. 2.
nearly £74 either.\textsuperscript{135} In the aftermath of the injunction, however, it became apparent just how involved and methodical Thurnam had been. In March 1838 barber John Telford was detailed to go to Jefferson’s shop to purchase a copy of Carpenter’s spelling book.\textsuperscript{136} Telford did so and returned to Thurnam who asked Telford to write his name in the book and to leave it with him. Later, Thurnam accompanied Telford to see solicitor William Hodgson. Hodgson produced the spelling book and enquired whether it was the same as that which Telford had purchased from Jefferson’s shop. Upon confirmation, he signed an affidavit to that effect. On 2 April 1838 labourer Thomas Slack was ‘requested by Charles Thurnam to go to Mr Jefferson’s, and purchase Carpenter’s Spelling Book’, which he did.\textsuperscript{137} He too then endorsed an affidavit. The books were then forwarded to London.\textsuperscript{138} On its own, this evidence was sufficient to secure the injunction, but when existing evidence might appear insufficient, Thurnam was not averse to resorting to embellishment, nor to supplementing the genuine with information of his own devising:

To Mr C. Thurnam.

Dear Sir, We are much concerned to learn that you have been exposed to so much annoyance from Mr Jefferson, in consequence of the measures we thought proper to adopt in putting down a pirated edition of Carpenter’s Spelling book ... The steps we took were entirely at the suggestion of our legal adviser, and wholly without your suggestion or knowledge ... LONGMAN and CO.\textsuperscript{139}

Purportedly, Longman’s had taken legal advice and proceeded against Jefferson of their own volition, before writing to Thurnam expressing their dismay at how he was being treated. If, as Thurnam claimed, he had no knowledge of Longman’s activity, there was little point in them writing to tell him this because he already knew it. If, however, the contents of the letter were intended to exonerate Thurnam in the eyes of the public and the letter had originated from elsewhere rather than Longman’s, it looked as though someone was attempting to gild the lily. Indeed, correspondence, supported by legal bills, published in the \textit{Patriot} accused Thurnam of having, at best, misled Longmans, and at worst of having composed the letter himself in order to distance himself from accusations that he had acted unjustly.\textsuperscript{140} Printers and editors were adept at composing letters from fictitious readers, but it was another thing altogether to do so from real individuals or businesses.\textsuperscript{141}

Citing the Longman letter, Jefferson protested:

There is one passage ... which is at such variance with truth ... that I cannot refrain from giving an extract from an attorney’s bill, to confute it in the plainest manner. The passage ... is this: ‘The steps we took were entirely at the suggestion of our legal adviser,
and wholly without your suggestion or knowledge.’ … I shall now … prove this statement of Mr Thurnam’s … to be utterly and grossly false: -

“Attending Mr Thurnam upon his having learnt that the person employed by Slack to purchase a copy, declined making an affidavit, and I advised him to get Slack to purchase a copy himself, 6s 8d.”

“Attending Slack and Mr Thurnam afterwards, through whom I found Jefferson had given him another edition of the same book, and Mr Thurnam requested me to prepare fresh affidavits, &c, 6s 8d.”

By the time Jefferson questioned the authenticity of the Longman correspondence and Thurnam’s knowledge of events, the injunction had already been issued. It might seem that to continue to debate the topic was a futile exercise. It was important to both sides, however, that their perspectives were publicly aired as allegations of improper conduct and claims by Thurnam were not restricted to the Jefferson case and Jefferson was defending his reputation. A previous legal entanglement with Joseph Wilfrid Parkins, erstwhile sheriff of the City of London, served to undermine Thurnam’s proclamations and gave tangential substance to the suggestion that the Longman correspondence had been written by Thurnam. In 1825 the Carlisle Patriot reprinted Parkins’ handbill titled ‘To the Inhabitants of Carlisle’. Parkins made it clear that in coming to Carlisle his purpose was to scotch the ‘false accusation’ spread by Thurnam, and the editor of the Patriot, that he had previously left Carlisle without paying his election and other bills. Furthermore, Parkins wrote, he had already instigated proceedings against them for publishing two ‘sham addresses’, containing ‘scandalous libels’ that ended with the forging of Parkins’ signature. It was alleged that the letters were intended as part of wider moves by Thurnam and the editor to destroy Parkins’ character through the use of ‘every bare machination’ in their power.

Once Jefferson had complied with the injunction, and providing that he supplied details of the number of copies sold and expressed regret, Longman and Co. was advised to drop proceedings. The reality was that as Carpenter’s spelling book was neither new to the market nor expensive (publishers tended to guard their copyrights more if they were) and Jefferson had received only 24 copies from Orr and Sons, the cost of pursuing the case further was not financially worthwhile. Jefferson wrote to Whittakers,

acquainting them, as nearly as I had ascertained, with the exact number of copies I had sold and requesting them to apprise Messrs Longman & Co., that I was willing to compensate them for any injury they might have sustained by my selling the Irish edition.

142 CP, 30 Jun. 1838, p. 2.
143 Warrington, ‘William Pickering’, PH, 11–15.
144 CJ, 25 Jun. 1825, p. 3.
145 CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Jefferson, Bill of Costs, 20 Jun. 1838.
146 CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Jefferson, 20 June 1838; Jefferson, Information to Mr C. Thurnam, 2 Jun. 1838; CP, 2 Jun. 1838, p. 2.
147 CP, 30 Jun. 1838, p. 2.
Whittaker’s responded:

Dear Sir, With respect to any pecuniary loss by the sake of the spurious Carpenter, it is so slight in your particular instance, that we cannot think it worthwhile to trouble you about it … We are glad to hear it will not be any serious injury to you, and have communicated your desire to Messrs Longman & Co., who concur with us in this reply.148

Given that the English publishers faced minimal financial loss and that the Irish edition was already on sale in Carlisle prior to Jefferson acquiring it for stock, why, Jefferson persisted in another line of attack, was he deemed to be at fault, singled out and ‘thrown into Chancery’, rather than others, including the Scottish distributors of the book.149 When Thurnam was carrying a large stock of the more expensive Longman edition, which he claimed ‘no-one would give me a remunerated price for’, was it, claimed Jefferson, that ‘they had no jealous and envious neighbour in the trade, with a disposition sufficiently malignant to seek their ruin by a stab in the dark’?150 Jefferson’s arrival in Carlisle, even to take over an established business, may not have initially perturbed Thurnam. After all, more than half of male-owned nineteenth-century enterprises folded within three years, new firms found it difficult to vie with well-established competitors, and there was no guarantee that an existing business would survive a change of ownership.151 By 1838, however, Jefferson had been operating in close proximity to Thurnam for four years. The longer he survived, the greater the challenge it posed, particularly when Jefferson was in the process of producing the first in his series of histories of Cumberland. With Thurnam’s production of engravings of local scenes and border histories, Jefferson was encroaching on an aspect of the book trade in which Thurnam had a growing reputation. It is perhaps no coincidence, therefore, that Thurnam initiated proceedings immediately prior to the publication of Jefferson’s work on Carlisle.

Thurnam had a ‘highly competitive sense of the market place that rewarded entrepreneurship’, but it was not without risk.152 Initially, his reputation suffered, but both it and his business survived. Moreover, his extensive civic engagement and name on subscription lists endorsed the belief that he was a worthy citizen.153 He continued supplying parish vestries with registers and forms, and by 1848, with 15,000 volumes, his circulating library was one of the most extensive and valuable outside of London and Edinburgh.154 Even the travelling bookseller, though appalled by Thurnam’s treatment of others, was anxious to do business with him. He was, after all, ‘by far the most active bookseller’ in Carlisle.155 Jefferson was not so fortunate. Despite collective action and mutual assistance in the form of wage-

148 CP, 30 Jun. 1838, p. 2.
149 CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Jefferson, Bill of Costs, 20 Jun. 1838; Benson, ‘The Irish Trade’, in Suarez and Turner, History of the Book, p. 369.
150 CP, 2 Jun. 1838, p. 2; CL, Jackson Coll., M174, Jefferson, Information to Mr C. Thurnam, 2 Jun. 1838.
151 Stana Nenadic, ‘The Small Family Firm in Victorian Britain’, Business History, 35:4 (1993), 86–114, 90; Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p. 30.
152 Brown, ‘James Tytler’, in Hinks and Armstrong, Printing Places, p. 48.
153 Christy Ford, ‘“An honour to the place”: Reading Associations and Improvement’, JECS, 38:4 (2015), 555–68, 559.
154 CAS, PR56/7, Kirklington Overseers’ Voucher, Charles Thurnam, 18 Mar. 1840; CP, 15 January 1848, p. 1.
155 Quoted in Barrie and Leslie, Thurnams, n.p.
setting, prices and standards in the book trade, Jefferson’s mistake had been to underestimate business rivalry in general, and in Thurnam in particular.\footnote{Sher, ‘Corporatism and Consensus’, BH, 34.} Furthermore, the effort and expense required of Jefferson to produce his histories of Cumberland ‘tended materially to confirm a predisposition to pulmonary consumption and from his declining health he was induced to part with his stock-in-trade having been promised a situation in the Customs’.\footnote{Kendal Mercury, 14 Jan. 1843, p. 2; CJ, 8 Jul. 1843, p. 2; CP, 20 Sep. 1844, p. 1.} This came to nothing. After short-lived attempts at running schools in Kendal, Westmorland, and in Dalston, Cumberland, in 1843, and a brief to return to Carlisle’s book trade, an indenture of assignment was issued against him in 1844.\footnote{Gentleman’s Magazine, 179 (1846), p. 547.} Leaving Cumberland, he sought employment in London working first for bookseller Mr Bell in Fleet Street and then as a writer for Sharpe’s \textit{London Magazine} until his ‘health utterly failed’.\footnote{Gentleman’s Magazine, new ser. xxv. 179 (1846), p. 546.} He died in 1846 aged 37 leaving a widow and five children under the age of seven.\footnote{Kendal Mercury, 14 Jan. 1843, p. 2; CJ, 8 Jul. 1843, p. 2; CP, 20 Sep. 1844, p. 1.} Lengthy obituaries in the \textit{Gentleman’s Magazine}, \textit{Sheffield Informer} and \textit{Carlisle Journal} side-stepped Jefferson’s brush with Chancery. Instead they focused on his ‘uncompromising, unflinching and iron firmness’, his ‘unspeakable, irrepressible scorn of the cold calculating, selfish and mean policy and ways of the world, and an intense love and admiration of the truth’, and his ‘perseverance and intelligence as well as his strict attention to integrity and good principle’.\footnote{Gentleman’s Magazine, 179 (1846), pp. 546–7.}

\section*{Conclusion}

Analysis of Thurnam’s activities has been framed within a wider discussion on politeness, and on legal contests and disagreements in the publishing trades in particular. At a time when the probity of a family enterprise was generally understood to be vested in the probity of the owner, James, Jefferson, Scott and the commercial traveller were all critical of Thurnam’s approach to business and his personal conduct.\footnote{Nenadic, ‘Small Family Firm’, Business History, 87.} The commercial traveller thought Thurnam ‘exceedingly obnoxious’, while Jefferson believed that Thurnam sought his ruination through a malignant disposition. Periodically, Thurnam resorted to questionable methods and physical aggression at odds with the mutual assistance and gentlemanly conduct thought to underpin business.\footnote{R. J. Morris, ‘Clubs, Societies and Associations’, in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), \textit{Cambridge Social History of England, 1750–1950: Social Agencies and Institutions}, vol. 3 (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp. 395–444, pp. 411–13.} \textit{Longman & Co. vs Jefferson} was clearly an attempt by one provincial printer-publisher to use the issues of copyright and illegal imports to weaken a rival in business. More often than not, however, Thurnam’s business practise adhered more closely to Caunce’s observation that while ‘effective businessmen’ had little sympathy for those unable or incapable of managing their concerns effectively, they...
stopped short of driving competitors to ruin.\textsuperscript{164} Engaging extensively in self-improvement, networking, clubbability, and civic and charitable activity, none could deny Thurnam’s capacity for hard work, resourcefulness or entrepreneurial spirit. Indeed, George Routledge’s obituary acknowledged the debt owed to Thurnam, especially ‘the habits of industry, perseverance and close attention to business’ and ‘the art of pleasing customers by taking an infinity of pains to oblige them’, but success and distance enabled magnanimous sentiments and, crucially, competitors were not customers.\textsuperscript{165} Ann Thurnam hoped that Carlisle would remember her husband’s cordiality of manner and his genuine English hospitality, but being obliging to customers often glossed what, at times, amounted to physical aggression, threats and intimidation.\textsuperscript{166} If Thurnam aspired to found a dynasty of printers and publishers, he achieved only partial success. His son William died in Rome in 1859 aged 23; and James followed aged 36 in 1872, after which the business was sold. Yet the name of Thurnam and the printing trade associated with it survived in Carlisle to 2008.

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\textsuperscript{164} Stephen Caunce, ‘Not Sprung from princes: middling society in eighteenth-century West Yorkshire’, in Alan Kidd and David Nichols (eds), The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Diversity since the Eighteenth Century (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998), pp. 19–41, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{165} CJ, 18 Dec. 1888, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{166} CP, 1 May 1852, p. 2.