

Additional history of 12 Pickwick, Corsham

The Mitchell and Stump families

Both these families were prominent at Corsham in the 17th and 18th centuries and were linked to 12 Pickwick. The Stump name first came to prominence at Malmesbury after the Dissolution when the clothier William Stump bought the abbot's house and other buildings of the abbey from the king and made a large contribution when the town bought the abbey church for use as a parish church.¹ He had been born at North Nibley in the Cotswolds and became MP for Malmesbury in 1529. He died in 1553. His eldest son James was knighted and appointed High Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1551 and 1559. A younger son John carried on the clothier business. The succeeding generations of Stumps were descended from the youngest son William or another John, brother of the original William Stump.

William Stump, a clothier, was living at Corsham in 1683 and was a churchwarden in 1689. On 20th May 1683 he leased the Rectory or Parsonage House at Corsham.² This was the manor house of the Rectory manor which was separate from the Royal manor of Corsham.³ It was adjacent to the house later called the Priory and owned in 1676 by Richard Smith.

Edward Mitchell, another clothier, was church warden in 1652. Edward Mitchell, probably of the next generation, married Alice Salway at Corsham on 7th May 1688. Alice died in 1695. It may be the same Edward Mitchell, gentleman who married Eleanor Harris at Corsham on 13th June 1703. He was described as 'clothier of Corsham' when he wrote his will on 5th July 1714. It was proved the same year.⁴ He left £60 to his dear and loving wife Eleanor. He made his good friends James Peirce of Corsham, clothier and Richard Handcock of Westfield, Corsham trustees of the household possessions which his wife had brought to the marriage. These were extensive and she may have already been a widow. They were the best bed, six cane chairs, 2 stools, 2 looking glasses, a trunk, a box 'now in the gatehouse chamber', a bell metal pot, a skillet, a skimmer, a basting ladle, 3 pewter platters, 6 plates, a pair of andirons, a shovel and tongs, a saucepan, 6 trenchers, 2 brass candlesticks, 2 pairs of sheets, 18 napkins, 2 pairs of pillow cases, 'my silver tankard', 2 silver spoons, a desk, a cabinet, 2 boxes, 2 barrels, 3 tubs, 12 bottles and the press bed. All these items were to be for his wife's use during her lifetime and afterwards the trustees were to 'permit my son Edward Mitchell to hold and enjoy the same'.

He also left Edward all the tithes of four grounds called Corn Close, Crow Croft, Home Close and [-] Croft which were in the possession of his brother Thomas Mitchell or Thomas's tenant. Also he left Edward the tithes of two grounds at Easton Down and a ground at Easton in the possession of William Guy. The right to the great tithes of Corsham, corn, grain and hay, were at this period leased to private people including the Stump and Mitchell families. All the rest of his possessions were left to his 'dear son' Edward. The trustee James Pierce died in 1727 and a monument in Corsham church describes him as a gentleman and a clothier. William Guy was a churchwarden in 1705. The first named witness to the will was Jonathan Deek described as gentlemen in a Glebe Terrier of Corsham.⁵ He too was a clothier and had married one of the two sisters and heiresses of Richard Smith.⁶ Through her he gained a half share of the Rectory house leased in 1683 by William Stump. He died in June 1717.

The two wealthy clothier families were united when a marriage licence for the heir Edward Mitchell and Jane Stump was issued on 25 November 1714. They were married at Hardenhuish that day. Jane

was the daughter of William Stump living at the Rectory. William wrote his will on April 18th, 1720 leaving Jane, his 'daughter Mitchell', £100 to be at her own disposal and the best bed in the best chamber.⁷ He left his brother Richard and his kinswoman Ann Champine £5 each. The rest of his personal estate and chattels was left to his son William. One of the witnesses was the clothier James Pierce. The testator signed his name as Sturp and his son's surname as Stunne so when the will was proved the son had to depose that his father was aged about 73 at his death and 'very weak in his sight' which he believed to be the reason for the mistakes.

The children of Edward and Jane Mitchell were Thomas, born 1715, Rebecca, born 1717, Edward, born 3rd July 1719, John born 1724, died 1743 and William, born 29th September 1726. Jane died in August 1751.

A list of Wiltshire freeholders in 1736 includes at Corsham the brothers-in-law William Stump, gent, and Edward Mitchell, gent, and also William Guy, gent.⁸

In 1748 Edward as bailiff of Corsham Court issued an order to his deputies Isaac Kingston and William Mitchell to cause beasts belonging to Joseph Tily which had been stolen by Isaac North to be returned to Tily and North to appear at the next manor court to answer the charge.⁹ If Edward's father was bailiff before him, the box in the 'gatehouse chamber' mentioned in his father's will may have been in the gatehouse of Corsham Court where the bailiff probably had an 'office'.

He also followed his father as a clothier and is recorded as taking an apprentice in 1718.¹⁰ His will was made on 11th May 1753 and he was buried on 3rd July, described as gentleman.¹¹ The will recites that the previous October he had charged several of his lands and tenements with the payment of £700 to each of his sons Edward and William. In the will he left £300 each to the sons as capital from which his executors were to pay the interest until they received their main sums. He left William his silver tankard marked with the letters WM and all his pewter with the same mark. The rest of his estate was left to his eldest son Thomas.

Thomas, the oldest son, is the first recorded coroner of the manor of Corsham.¹² This was a legal or medical role but at Corsham the custom of the manor going back to the medieval period was that the bailiff was also both sheriff and coroner so Thomas no doubt followed his father as bailiff of Corsham Court.¹³ Many clothiers had legal training as part of their education. Thomas presented bills for work as coroner in 1754 and 1758. He died in 1789, probably unmarried. His youngest brother William was coroner in 1768-9 and 1773-4. William was described as a clothier in 1769. He died in 1780. He may have had a son also named William as a man of that name was coroner in 1780 and 1792 and listed amongst the Corsham gentry in 1793-8.¹⁴

Returning to the Stumps, William Stump, the brother of Jane Stump/Mitchell, also succeeded his father as a clothier at Corsham. He died the same year as his brother-in-law Edward Mitchell and his will, written on 20th May 1750, was proved on 27 July 1753.¹⁵ An indication of his wealth is that he left his son Daniel £4,000 at the age of 21. Most of his estate was left to his older son William and William's sons John and Mark England were left £500 each. He was a Presbyterian and left money to the minister of the Corsham meeting house and an annuity of 1 guinea for 5 years to the poor of the meeting. He also left money to the infirmaries at Bath and Bristol and 5 guineas to the members of the Union Club at Bristol to be distributed as they thought fit. His dear and loving wife Catherine was to have sole use of his dwelling house at Corsham (perhaps the Rectory) and the gardens and yards

and all the household goods for a year after his death if she chose to live there. She was left for life his house at Chippenham 'wherein she lately dwelt'. She was to retain all the household goods which she had before their marriage except the 'books and scripture they are put in' and the pistols and swords but in return had to release her rights to his houses, lands and tenements except those charged with an annuity to her in their marriage settlement. Various houses and lands, both copyhold and leasehold, in Corsham manor and rectory and their tithes were put into the hands of his trustees Edward Mitchell and Anthony Guy of 'Westress', Corsham to settle his debts and pay the legacies. On 20th March 1754 the remaining administration of his estate was granted to his widow Phenicia Stump suggesting that his first wife Catherine had died and he had remarried since the will was written.

Edward, the second son of Edward Mitchell who died in 1753 was also a clothier. He married Rebecca Jarvis on 28th June 1742. Her parents were William and Rebecca Jarvis. She and Edward had a son Edward born 14th March 1743 but she died on 30th October that same year, aged only 23.¹⁶ Edward married again, to Eleanor and their children were Thomas, born 1746, Jane, 1751, (who died in infancy), Rebecca Whatley, 1753, Ann, 1759 and Eleanor, 1762. Ellen Leslie has identified him as a leading local Quaker. In 1754 as bailiff of Corsham Court he signed a receipt for the supply of wine and beer.¹⁷ Perhaps this was as deputy to his older brother or maybe they divided the roles of bailiff and coroner between them. In any case Edward followed Thomas as coroner of Corsham in 1761.

12, Pickwick

Edward was named in the Land Tax return as the owner of 12 Pickwick in 1756.¹⁸ Later in the century the house was called 'Mitchell late Stumps' in the returns but there is no way of knowing when it had been owned by the Stump family. It is possible that it came to Edward's father who died in 1753 through his marriage to Jane Stump.

In 1756 the house next door, no. 14 Pickwick, was owned by William Woodroffe and no. 18 by widow Crook. No other reference to the Woodroffe family in Corsham has been found except Roger Woodroffe, a pauper, who died in 1795. Of the Crook family, a Richard Crook was a linen draper and undertaker at Chippenham in 1783.¹⁹ John Crook was a tailor in 1793-8.

A church rate record survives for Corsham for the single year 1758.²⁰ The payments were: Mr Edward Mitchell 0.19.6 and Mr Thomas Mitchell 2.2.3. Mr Thomas Mitchell, the oldest brother, also paid for a number of smaller houses. He paid for Cundicks 0.5.5. He also paid for part of Hamtons and part of the Lanes, for James Porch, James Davis and Thomas Davis. For comparison, the two major payers at Corsham were Paul Methuen paying £9.4.2 and Robert Neale paying £9.8.6.

In 1763 a list of rents shows Edward Mitchell paying 8d half-yearly on one property and 9s 7d on another.²¹ This could possibly be nos. 12 and 14 as both properties later belonged to the Mitchells.

Edward Mitchell's will was written on 12th April 1771. He died the next day, was buried on April 19th and his will was proved in 1772.²² He was now described as Edward Mitchell senior, gentleman. He owed £300 to Mrs Mary Smith and he and his son had agreed to pay her an annuity of £24 instead, charged on 'all my estate in the parish of Corsham'. He left an annuity to his wife Eleanor of £50 a year and 60 quarter loads of coal and a load of faggot wood were to be delivered to her house. He charged this on 'all my freehold lands in Corsham'. He left a further sum of £100 to her. Also 'If she

and my son should part housekeeping and not live together' she should have furniture for 3 rooms. This was probably Eleanor's son Thomas. He left £1,500 to Thomas if he was not married in the testator's lifetime. If he had married then he was to have £500 after Edward's decease, £500 after 1 year and £500 after 2 years. He left his daughters Rebecca, Anne and Eleanor £800 each, £500 within a year of his decease and £300 after the death of his wife. In the meanwhile an annuity of £25 was to be paid out of the interest on the £300 until they reached 21. The rest of his estate went to his eldest son Edward, whose mother was his first wife Rebecca and this must have included 12 Pickwick.

This Edward Mitchell, son of the testator, was probably the man recorded as coroner in 1771, 1783 and 1785. The grandsons of William Stump who died in 1753 followed the Mitchells as coroner, John in 1777-8 and 1789-91 and Mark England in 1785. They perhaps took over as bailiffs.

Edward's wife was Susannah. Like his forbears he had sons called Edward (born 14.4.1777) and Thomas William (born 17.2.1779). He was buried on 30th August 1789. His widow was the owner of 12 Pickwick in subsequent Land Tax records though described interchangeably as Mrs Susannah Mitchell and Sarah Mitchell.²³

The will of Thomas Mitchell of Corsham, Edward's younger half-brother was written on 3rd November 1778 and proved in June 1780.²⁴ He had married. He firstly confirmed the marriage settlement of his wife Betty, late Betty Guy, spinster. She was probably related to the Guys mentioned in 1714 and 1736. He left the rest of his estate to his older brother Edward, gentleman and Anthony Guy of Chippenham esquire on trust for the benefit of his younger son Edward. They were appointed guardians of his two children John Guy Mitchell and Edward Mitchell during their minorities. On 23rd June 1780 administration of all his goods, chattels and credits was granted instead to his widow Betty, mother and guardian of Edward Mitchell, an infant and residuary legatee, until he reached 21 years as Edward Mitchell and Anthony Guy had renounced their roles in her favour. Anthony Guy is recorded as an attorney-at-law at Chippenham in 1793-8.²⁵

In 1780-90 no. 12 Pickwick was owned by 'Thomas Mitchell late Stump'.²⁶ After Thomas's death in 1789 this is likely to mean it was still part of his former estate. In 1790 no. 14 was owned by 'Mr. Mitchell for Woodruff'. Was this also Thomas or his nephew Edward, born in 1743, the son of Edward who died in 1771? Had the two families swapped houses? Did they live there at this time, next door to each other?

In 1784 a list of residents in town tithing includes William Mitchell [son of Edward who died in 1753], Edward Mitchell [William's nephew], Thomas Mitchell [William's brother], John Stump and Mark Stump.²⁷ All are described as 'gents'.

The Land Tax document for 1790 lists the properties in tithings and it is evident from this that the houses under consideration were included in the Town Tithing rather than the Pickwick tithing.

In 1791-5 the owner of both no. 12 and no 14 was referred to as 'late Edward Mitchell' as Thomas had died in 1789 and his nephew Edward had died the same year. We now have the names of tenants. The occupiers were John Bowshire and Mr. Ludlow. Bowshire is more often written Bowsher or Boucher, meaning butcher. In keeping with their name, John Bowsher and William Bowsher were butchers at Corsham in the period 1793-8.²⁸ (There are Corsham wills for Mary

Bowsher widow (1790), Richard Boucher senior (1790), Charles Bowsher (1801) and Susanna Bowcher (1832.) Mr Ludlow is likely to have been living at no. 12 and to be the man listed as a physician at Corsham in 1793-8.²⁹

Another medical man succeeded Mr Ludlow at no. 12, William Sainsbury, surgeon.³⁰ He was practising in the town in 1793-8 and occupying the house in 1800. At that date Susannah Mitchell, Edward's widow owned both 12 and 14. John Sweatman was the tenant of 14 which was valued at £1.14.0¾. No 12 was surprisingly valued at only 10s 5d. Sweatman was an innholder, probably holding the Methuen Arms. Innholders often had a separate family home.

In 1758 Thomas Mitchell had owned various property at Corsham and in 1800 his executors owned property occupied by Henry Banks and ten houses also occupied by the Banks family. In 1807 there is a tenant 'Farmer' Banks under 'Thomas Mitchell'. In 1803-5 nos. 12 and 14 were owned by 'Sarah Mitchell' and the tenant of 14 was James Banks. In 1806 it was Mary Banks but in 1807 the occupant of no. 14 was again John Sweatman who now remained there. From 1816- 1821 the owner was again put as Susanna Mitchell.

In 1822 the occupier of no. 12 was listed as 'Dr. Sainsbury or Mrs Michele'. No. 14 was still occupied by John Sweatman. The Land Tax remained as 10s 5d and £1 14s 6¾d. No. 18 was occupied by Thomas Gibbons. Gibbons was a common name in the Corsham area. William Gibbons was a tailor in 1793-8 and Gibbons (no first name) was a mantua maker at the same date.³¹ Thomas Gibbons himself was an insurance agent in 1830 and a grocer and tea dealer in 1842.³²

In 1832 'Mrs Mitchell' owned both nos. 12 and 14 and may have been living with her son Edward at Chippenham.³³ The houses were still occupied by Dr. Sainsbury and J. Sweatman and the land tax totalled £2 4s 11½d.

John Sweatman wrote his will on 23rd October 1824. It was proved on 13th July 1825.³⁴ He had a wife Margaret but no children. His nephew, also called John Sweatman, was living with him and was left £100, a copyhold close of land in Corsham bought from William Little and Edward Barton and all his other copyhold lands and the tithes attached to them. Another nephew Robert Spicer was left £20. His friends Thomas Little of Biddestone and John Mitchell of Sheldon, gentleman, were trustees of his 'stock in trade as an innkeeper', his farming stock live and dead, his household furniture, plate, linen, china and the book debts due to him were to be under the sole control and management of his wife for her life 'as long as she choose to carry on the business of an innholder'. After her death the trustees were to sell them to pay any bequests of his wife and the residue was to go to the nephew. If his wife ceased innkeeping they were to sell and invest the money for her benefit. The witnesses to the will were John Parsons, Edward Mitchell, attorney of Chippenham and Thomas Olive. John Parsons was a gentleman of Corsham in 1830.³⁵ This Edward Mitchell lived in St. Mary Street, Chippenham and was probably the son of Edward and Susannah rather than the Edward who was son of Thomas and Betty. In 1830 and 1842 the nephew John Sweatman was landlord of the Methuen Arms, the most important of the Corsham inns.

In 1837 tithe plots 211 and 210, no. 12 and no. 14 were both owned freehold by Rev. Timothy Conyers of Guyers House. 12, described as a house and garden, was still occupied by the Rev. William Rance Sainsbury and 14, described as a cottage, was occupied by Elizabeth Fry.³⁶ Together

they took up 14 perches of land. Nos. 18 and 16, plot 209, were owned by Thomas Gibbons and occupied by George Watson.

The 1841 census includes William Sainsbury, aged 67, Clerk, living with Elizabeth, presumably his wife, aged 76, and two female servants. Next door was Elizabeth Fry, aged 60, of independent means. Then came labourer James Woodward and family (perhaps in no. 16). Then George Watson, aged 40, a butcher, with a wife, six children and two servants, probably at no. 18. Dr William Sainsbury M.D. died on 3rd June 1841 aged 53.

Ellen Leslie's placing of Ann Merrett at no. 12 on the 1851 census (Fiche 74) is doubtful. Aged 74, she lived on the Pickwick Road, with her granddaughter Ann Cottle, a dressmaker. The names which occur in the 1841 census are in Pickwick itself. In 1851, butcher George Watson is still there, with 9 children, listed next to agricultural labourer Thomas Fry, aged 28, and his family. In proximity are 'common brewer' Henry Hulbert and Thomas Hatter, a brewer's labourer but it is uncertain who was the occupier of no. 12.

Conclusion

In the absence of deeds, the available sources do not provide a full and accurate picture of the properties of the Stump and Mitchell families. We know that Edward Mitchell owned 12 Pickwick in 1756 but do not know how long he had had it or whether he ever lived there. He was described as a gentleman, bailiff and clothier. We know that at that date no. 14 was owned by William Woodroffe and no. 18 by widow Crook. No. 12 was said to have been owned at an earlier date by one of the Stump family and Edward's father had married Jane Stump, daughter of the clothier William Stump, in 1714.

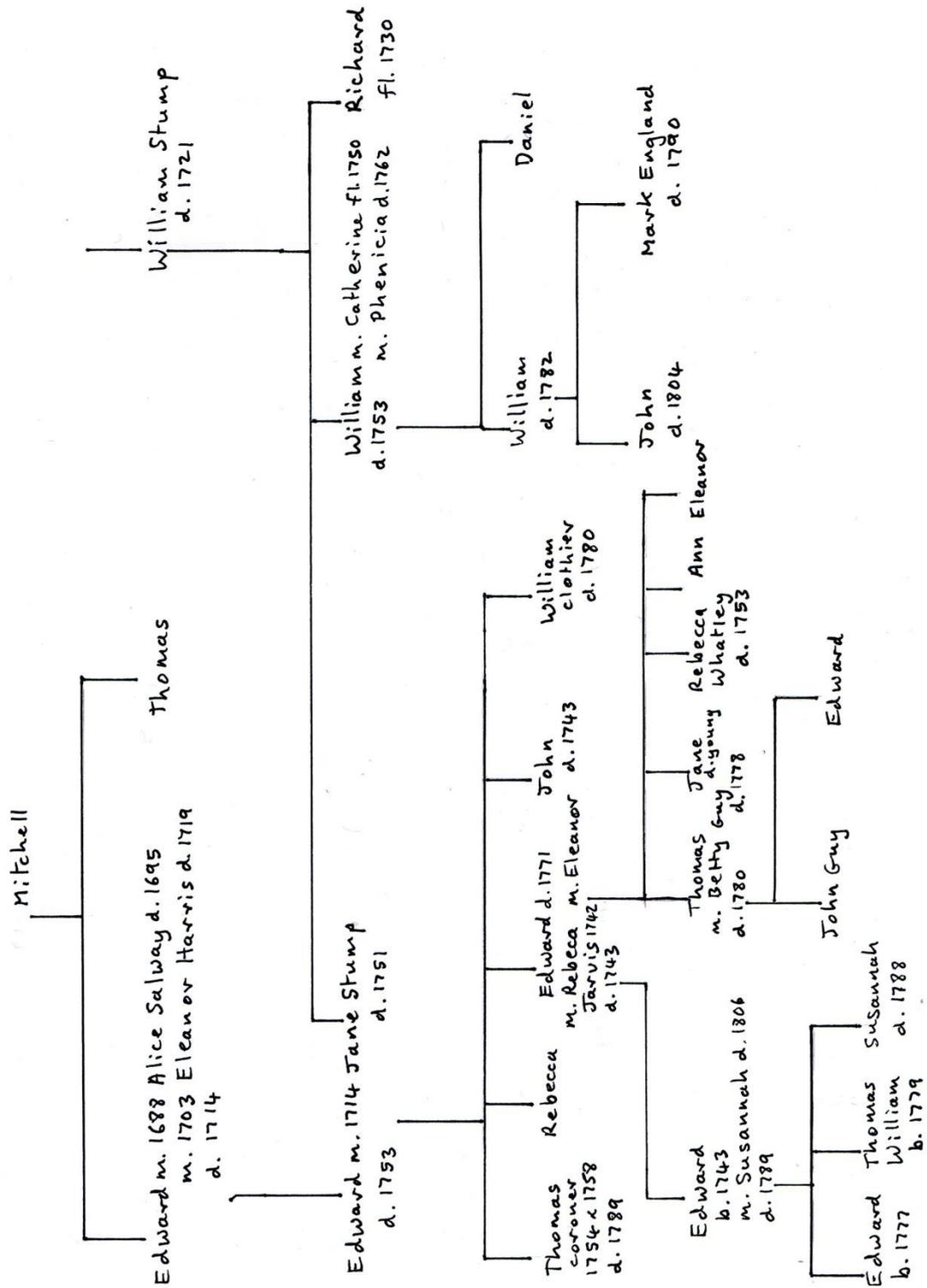
No. 12 remained in the Mitchell family until the early 19th century. By 1790 and perhaps as early as 1758 no. 14 was also owned by the Mitchells and during this period the pair were perhaps given the matching facades and brought up to date. The Land Tax records show that certainly from the 1790s the houses were tenanted. However, no. 12 attracted professional tenants whereas no. 14 attracted substantial tradesmen.

The earlier history of the whole site is unknown. To speculate, No. 18 with no. 16 behind appears from its position to have been at an early stage linked with the other houses, on one original large plot. Since the Stump family were clothiers it is possible that the site of nos. 12 and 14 was a clothier's house in the 16th century and was succeeded by the building of no. 18 as the main house of the complex with no. 16 behind and 12 and 14 a rebuilding of the 16th century house, all occupied by weavers or other cloth workers. The roof structure of no. 12 (and perhaps that of 14 is similar) would have facilitated its use as a work area or for the storage of goods.

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Wiltshire Buildings Record 2019

MITCHELL and STUMP families of Corsham



¹ R.H. Luce *History of Malmesbury*
² H. Brakspear *Corsham Church*, 1924
³ Aubrey & Jackson *Wiltshire Collections*, p.79
⁴ TNA PROB 11/543/229
⁵ Wilts Record Society (WRS) vol. 56
⁶ H. Brakspear
⁷ TNA PROB 11/580/175
⁸ WRS vol. 11

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- ⁹ WSA2106/58
¹⁰ WRS vol.17 *Wiltshire Apprentices and their Masters*
¹¹ TNA PROB 11/803/105
¹² WRS vol.36, p. xlvii
¹³ H. Brakspear
¹⁴ WRS vol. 47
¹⁵ TNA PROB 11/803/255
¹⁶ WRS vol. 53
¹⁷ WSA 2106/64
¹⁸ WSA A1/345/125C, Land Tax
¹⁹ WRS vol 47
²⁰ WSA 2106/65
²¹ WSA 2106/66
²² TNA PROB 11/975/105
²³ WSA A1/345/125B
²⁴ TNA PROB 11/1066/294
²⁵ WRS vol. 47
²⁶ WSA Land Tax
²⁷ WSA 2106/72
²⁸ WRS vol. 47
²⁹ WRS vol. 47
³⁰ WRS vol. 47 and
³¹ WRS vol. 47
³² WRS vol. 47
³³ WSA A1/345/125C
³⁴ WSA P3/1825/33
³⁵ WRS vol. 47
³⁶ Tithe map

Postscript: Wiltshire Buildings Record report commissioned by John Maloney