

LANDOWNERSHIP

For over 850 years most of Taunton including the borough lay in the Winchester bishopric's manor of Taunton Deane, whose capital messuage was Taunton Castle in Bishops Hull. The main freehold was Taunton Priory manor. Most borough property was held in free burgage without payment of fines and heriots. In 1849 260 freehold burgages still owed suit of court and small rents usually for extensions onto waste. In 1695 a High Street house had a freehold hall and kitchen but a copyhold parlour.¹ In the mid 13th century Holway was the only episcopal tithing with free tenants who paid quit rents of 10s. a virgate or more.² Most post-medieval copyholders were not occupiers, some did not live locally, and subdivision and subletting were widespread.³ By the 19th century copyholders were regarded as owners and in the 20th century most town property was owner occupied.⁴

TAUNTON DEANE MANOR

In 710 King Ine fought King Geraint of Dumnonia and reputedly built a stronghold at Taunton, taken by the rebel Eadberht and recovered and destroyed in 722 by Queen Aethelburh.⁵ Taunton probably remained a royal estate. Queen Frithogyth or Frideswide wife of Aethelheard, Ine's successor, reputedly gave it to the church of Winchester before 737 and is credited with restoring and endowing Taunton minster but later charters are fabricated.⁶ Minster tenants had onerous obligations, probably to facilitate royal hunting visits. In 904 King Edward the elder freed bishop Denewulf's minster estate from those dues.⁷ Any land grant was lost later, perhaps in reforming the Winchester see. A spurious charter dated 947

¹ SHC, DD/HLM/8; DD/SP/65.

² T.J. Hunt, *The Medieval Customs of Taunton Manor*, 62—5.

³ SHC, DD/HC/161/1.

⁴ Ibid. tithe awards, St James and St Mary; D/LT/t.

⁵ VCH Som. II, 176; M. Swanton (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (1996), 42—3.

⁶ H.P.R. Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester, 1964), 115, 122, 126; T Jones, ed. *Brenhinead y Saesson, Kings of the Saxons* (1971), 7; S. Pearce, *The Kingdom of Dumnonia* (Padstow, 1978), 113, 197.

⁷ Finberg, *Early Charters*, 80, 128, 222—3. The interpolations concerning Taunton's privileges are later.

claiming to restore Taunton to Winchester was probably an attempt, like others of the late 10th or early 11th century, to secure the bishopric's estate from royal depredations.⁸ King Eadwig let Taunton to bishop Aelfsige in his personal capacity and in his will of the 950s Aelfsige surrendered it. Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester gave gold and silver c. 970 to King Edgar and Queen Aelfthryth for Taunton with full jurisdiction, which can be seen as establishing the manor and hundred of Taunton.⁹ Queen Aelfthryth is said to have negotiated an agreement allowing existing royal tenants a life tenancy.¹⁰

By 1066 Stigand, both Archbishop of Canterbury and, until 1070, bishop of Winchester, paid geld on 54 ½ hides named Taunton although covering many parishes. The manor passed to Stigand's successors as bishops of Winchester.¹¹ In 1284 the king released all claims, fairs and markets and the hundred but regarded Taunton as a barony and held it when the see was vacant.¹² In 1551 Bishop Ponet gave Taunton to the Crown for other lands. Although restored in 1558, on John Whyte's deprivation in 1559 it returned to the Crown. It was excluded from the 1561 restoration to Robert Horne.¹³ The queen leased the castle, the manor and the borough to Sir Francis Knollys, his wife Catherine and their son Robert for £558 1s. 4 7/8 *d.* rent.¹⁴ In 1575 Taunton was restored to Horne but the lease was still extant. Horne granted most of his rents to the queen but from 1594 £400 a year was returned to the bishop.¹⁵ In 1647 the confiscated manor was sold in trust for wealthy lawyer Roger Hill.¹⁶ He was apparently unpopular leading to difficulty collecting rents and dues.¹⁷ The borough was let to George Searle MP and Samuel Whetcombe, one of the constables, but rents were in

⁸ *Bk of Fees*, I, 84; Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 135, 228—230, 234—5, 242—3.

⁹ Finberg, *Early Charters*, 47, 54, 144.—5, 228—30.

¹⁰ A. Raban, 'Female Advocacy and Royal Protection in Tenth-Century England: The Legal Career of Queen Aelfthryth', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 261—288; Finberg, *Early Charters*, 230.

¹¹ *Domesday*, 234.

¹² *Cal. Chart.* 1257—1300, 274; *Feud. Aids*, IV, 284; *Cal. Lib. R.* 1245—51, p. 56.

¹³ *Acts of P.C.* 1550—2, p. 359; TNA, STAC 3/6/48; *Cal. Pat.* 1557—8, 146—7; 1560—3, 146.

¹⁴ *Cal. Pat.* 1560—3, 16.

¹⁵ TNA, E 210/10908; E 355/269; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1591—4, p. 495; C. Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, p. 235

¹⁶ SHC, DD/X/WA/2—4, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* DD/SP/325/198a—203.

arrears and officers lax in attending court. Both were restored in 1662 to the Winchester see.¹⁸

Generous copyholds, later called customary freeholds, virtually fee-free land exchanges and no requirement to live on a copyhold allowed tenants to amass substantial estates.¹⁹ Although the default inheritance was the youngest son or daughter, most land passed by surrender and widows could keep their holdings on remarriage. Quit rents, heriots and fees were fixed so with inflation became nominal.²⁰

In 1822 the bishop and the commissioners for land tax redemption sold the manor to Thomas Southwood of Pitminster, excluding mineral rights.²¹ Southwood left his estates to Robert Mattock (d. 1859) who in 1842 sold Holway hundred, the castle tithing or liberty and the borough to William Kinglake, owner of Taunton Priory manor, for over £11,000. In 1849—50 William sold the borough and castle tithing back to Robert who made William's sons Arthur and John clerk and steward of the castle. Mattock's heir his nephew, also Robert Mattock, put Taunton up for sale in 1866.²² Taunton ironmonger's son Edward William Cox (d.1879) bought the borough and manor and enfranchised all copyholds. He retained lordship, which passed to his son Irwin (d. 1922) who died childless and whose brother Harding was bankrupt.²³ The receiver in bankruptcy considered the manor and borough worthless and sold them for £350 in 1925 to Herbert Byard Sheppard (d. 1928) who had managed them. He was followed by his widow Beatrice (d. 1947) who extinguished remaining manorial rents in 1935, their elder daughter Beatrice (d. 1973), wife of Harold White, and her son John White.²⁴

¹⁸ Ibid. D/X/WA/7; H. Byard Sheppard, *Courts Leet and the Court Leet of the Borough of Taunton* (Taunton, 1909), 7, 35; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1661—2, 372.

¹⁹ TNA, C 1/335/91.

²⁰ SHC, DD/DP/43/4/7.

²¹ Ibid. DD/C/297.

²² Ibid. A/ASW/1; DD/AY/3; DD/SAS/S1122/1/35; DD/SP/461; B.L. Add. MS 30293.

²³ VCH office, draft hist. [inf. from then steward]; *Nat. Prob. Reg.* (1879, 1922 Cox).

²⁴ SHC, A/EDJ/1/2; DD/IR/T/26/4, p. 19; DD/AY/76; DD/SP/461.

William Kinglake (d. 1852) left Holway hundred with his manors to his sons Alexander (d. 1891) and John (d. 1898).²⁵ They sold off and enfranchised all the land between 1853 and 1873 for £11,000.²⁶ Holway hundred and the priory lordship passed to John's widow Louisa who in 1898 gave them to her son Hamilton (d. 1923).²⁷ His sister and heir Grace (d. 1928) wife of banker William Harford was succeeded by her second daughter Beata who tried unsuccessfully to enforce quit rents in the 1930s and lordship lapsed.²⁸

Pyrland

Pyrland, a tithing in Taunton Deane manor, became a coherent estate. In 1523 the house on the largest holding had a hall with chamber and solar at its upper end.²⁹ Presumably that was the Old Farm House held by John Grove, merchant, before 1737, then by George Deane (d. 1742) and his daughter Elizabeth (d. 1744) who left it to Elizabeth Dyke later wife of Sir Thomas Acland. It was encumbered by George Deane's trusts and debts including £5,000 to his goddaughter Henrietta Johnson.³⁰ In 1747 Sir Thomas and Lady Dyke Acland agreed to surrender the premises to Henrietta for her marriage to John Griffith. Known as Pyrland House it was sold in 1753 to William Yea but difficulties over title took years to resolve.³¹ Sir William added Rapshill to the east with a homestead in Kingston parish and by 1763 Slapes farm, held by the Slape family possibly since 1614.³² Sir William (cr. Bt in 1759, High Sheriff 1760) bought and neglected town property, even trying to buy the priory manor, in a failed attempt on a Parliamentary seat.³³ By the 1830s Pyrland comprised at least six

²⁵ Ibid. A/ASW/1; Q/AC/13; Q/APb/3/52; DD/AY/11.

²⁶ Ibid. DD/AY/28.

²⁷ Ibid. DD/IR/T/26/4, p. 19.

²⁸ Ibid. DD/AY/3, 73—4; *Taunton and West Somerset Annual 1897* (Taunton, 1896), 125.

²⁹ SHC, DD/SP/71, ff. 41—9; T/PH/win 1523—4.

³⁰ Ibid. DD/HLM/8; DD/SP/319/45; DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, 217—49; DD/CH/76/4.

³¹ Ibid. DD/CH/76/4; DD/SP/319/56, 60—1; BL, Add MS 47010, f. 172.

³² SHC, DD/DR/28; DD/PH/216/98.

³³ Ibid. Q/AC/4; DD/HC/104/2/1, 126/6/1; Q/REL/35/25b (1792).

medieval farms, a cottage and nearly 80 a. of overland in St James parish and two small farmsteads and c. 23 a. of overland in Burland in Staplegrove.³⁴

Sir William (d. 1806) was succeeded by his grandson Sir William Walter Yea (d.1862) who was confined to an asylum so his mother Jane ran the estate (c. 225 a.). Her daughters Eleanora, Charlotte wife of Cholmeley Dering and Julia wife of Henry Thompson sold 132 a. before 1872 to Arthur Malet and their trustees sold remaining land in lots in 1911.³⁵ Before 1881 George Withington (d. 1896) bought Pyrland Hall but his son predeceased him and his trustees sold it in 1919.³⁶ Col. Ernest Pemberton bought the hall, grounds and Pyrland Hall farm (119 a.). During the Second World War it housed a British Army camp.³⁷ In 1951 Kings College, Taunton bought the house and grounds for a junior school, which it remained in the 2020s, and the National Trust acquired the farmland.³⁸

Sir William Yea replaced Pyrland House, presumably Old Pyrland or Pyrland Hall Farm, with New Pyrland or Pyrland Hall further west and converted c. 20 a. of farmland into a park with fishponds, shrubberies and two tree-lined avenues.³⁹ The deer were reputedly poached in the 1780s by the housekeeper's family who later carried out a violent robbery at the hall.⁴⁰ By 1878 Pyrland Hall had a gas plant supplying 120 lamps, central heating and bathrooms, oak floors, marble fire surrounds in the main rooms and three new staff cottages. In 1910 the hall had four reception rooms, a billiard room, 19 bedrooms, two bathrooms, 17 a. of grounds and coach houses used as garages. The three-storey, south façade of render imitating ashlar with some Bath stone dressings has five bays, the central three breaking forward, flanked by large single-storey projecting pavilions linked across the front of the

³⁴ Ibid. DD/SP/257 (Staplegrove 100, 1836).

³⁵ Taunton St James, memorial inscriptions; SHC, DD/DR/28; DD/TAC/5/5/1; DD/CH/86/6; tithe award, St James; DD/SCL/40.

³⁶ SHC, DD/IR/T//26/2, pp. 94, 98; DD/KIT/19/15; D/P/tau.a/2/1/3 (25 Jul. 1896); *Nat. Prob. Reg.* (1893, 1896 Withington).

³⁷ SHC, D/R/ta/14/16/4; A/ARG/9.

³⁸ SHC, D/R/ta/10/7, p. 95; DD/MKG/28; D/B/ta/3/13/14, pp. 33, 40, 93, 178; 3/2/27, p. 268; D/P/tau.ja/17/2/1.

³⁹ Ibid. DD/CH/76/4; DD/HC/43/1; tithe award, St James.

⁴⁰ Ibid. DD/HC/43/1, 96/8.

house by a ten-bay loggia of Ionic columns accessed by French windows. The rear forms a brick quadrangle but the school has added many buildings.⁴¹ Pyrland Hall was reputedly built in 1758 but the style is later with unadorned windows, simple cornice, and parapet. The wooden dividing staircase with stick balusters looks also late Georgian.⁴²

Pyrland Hall Farm of rough-cast stone under a slate roof was divided in two by 1951.⁴³ The lower south-west range of five wide bays has irregular fenestration and buttresses and has been extended west and north. The tall east range appears to be a late Georgian addition as presumably are the ranges of brick farmbuildings, at least one with pantiles.

TAUNTON PRIORY MANOR

In 1084 the Taunton priests, presumably of the minster, held two hides and a virgate, possibly given to the later priory.⁴⁴ In 1115 William Giffard, bishop of Winchester founded and endowed the priory. His gifts and those of Henry of Blois in 1158 included the land outside the east gate, which became Extra Portam Prioris or Jacobi, the Sherford Stream and lands beside it in Wilton.⁴⁵ Gifts by private individuals probably included the Obridge estate by 1319, a house and 9a. given in 1406 and property west of the priory demesnes, known as Canon Street and the most valuable by 1536.⁴⁶ Excluding Obridge and tithes, over £50 came from Taunton property, mostly used for clergy stipends and weekly alms.⁴⁷ Up to 18 cottages in Canon Street tithing later known as Petensary rents belonged to the pittance office.⁴⁸ In 1538—9 the priory's Taunton estate included demesnes, let to tenants, Canon Street, Extra Portam Jacobi, estates in Obridge, Grasscroft, Taunton St Mary, Kingston St Mary, Taunton

⁴¹ Ibid. DD/CH/86/6; TNA, IR 58/3512 (3512).

⁴² Inf. from J. Orbach.

⁴³ SHC, DD/MKG/28.

⁴⁴ *VCH Som.* I, 527.

⁴⁵ Below, rel. hist.; SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2; B.L. Add. Ch. 16332; *Cal. Misc.* II, p. 74; *Cal Chart* 1327—41, pp. 312, 316, 318; *PSAS*, LXXXVIII, 118.

⁴⁶ B.L. Add. Ch. 16332; *Cal. Pat.* 1405—8, 196; *Valor. Eccl.* I, 169—70.

⁴⁷ *Valor. Eccl.* I, 169—70.

⁴⁸ SHC, DD/SP/409 (c. 1620, 1680, 1757).

St Mary and West Monkton, and the tithes of both Taunton parishes and 12 mills in Taunton hundred.⁴⁹ The estate was charged with a pension to Bisham priory, Berkshire and received 3*d.* a year from the West Monkton hospital.⁵⁰ The estate, said in 1839 to have covered 321 a. excluding town property, formed part of the outfaring hundred of Taunton Deane.⁵¹

In 1541 the king let the site, demesnes (*c.* 150 a.) and tithes to royal servant John Ogan. They were bought in 1544 by Sir Francis Brian and Matthew Colthurst to hold for one twentieth of a knight's fee but sold in 1549 to Thomas More.⁵² In 1544—5 John Pope and Thomas Godwyn bought and sold Canon Street, Grasscroft and other property to hold in free socage. Godwyn was probably trustee for the Chaplin family as John Chaplin had the Grasscroft land *c.* 1568.⁵³ In 1545 William Chaplin, John Selwood and William Leonard, Taunton merchants, bought the Extra Portam and borough property but disputed ownership amongst themselves and with tenants.⁵⁴ Obridge was sold as a separate manor.⁵⁵

William Chaplin ran Canon Street and Extra Portam tithings as his manor of Taunton Priory, which followed the customs of Taunton Deane manor until enfranchisement.⁵⁶ In 1570 he left the Canon Street estate with former pittance's lands to his son Roger and Extra Portam with his mansion and other monastic property to his wife Beatrix for life and then to his younger son Richard.⁵⁷ In 1605 the priory manor comprised 34 tenements, 114 cottages some divided into many dwellings, the St James' church house, a burgage at East Gate and parcels of land in Holway and West Monkton.⁵⁸ Roger (d. *c.* 1615) was followed by Roger

⁴⁹ Gloucs. R.O., D 326/T169; Brett, *Crown Revenues*, supp., 86—91.

⁵⁰ Brett, *Crown Revenues*, supp., 6; SHC, DD/HC/161/1.

⁵¹ SHC, DD/SP/22/50; 36—47; TNA, IR 18/8802; below, local govt.

⁵² *L&P Hen. VIII*, VIII, p. 723; *Cal. Pat.* 1549—51, 53; Gloucs. R.O., D 326/T169; TNA, C 66/760, m. 38.

⁵³ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XIX (2), p. 190, 192; TNA, SC 6/EdwVI/402; PROB 11/52/319; S.W. Bates-Harbin, *Som. Enrolled Deeds*, pp. 78—9, 87; SHC, DD/SAS/C112/16.

⁵⁴ *L&P Hen. VIII*, X, p. 211; TNA, E 318/26/258; C 1/1141/49; C 1/1357/33—5, 74—6; REQ 2/90, no. 19.

⁵⁵ Below, this section.

⁵⁶ TNA, C 1/157/33—5; SHC, DD/SP/375—6; DD/SAS/2273/1/D2/1.

⁵⁷ TNA, PROB 11/52/319; C 142/154/101.

⁵⁸ SHC, DD/SP/409.

son of his elder son Thomas.⁵⁹ Roger eventually succeeded to all William's lands mostly held of the king's manor of Canford but tiny holdings including a 2-a. close were held by knight service.⁶⁰ After a lengthy dispute with a kinsman William Chaplin, in 1627 Roger (d. 1628) took possession of the capital messuage in St James Street and left his estates to his wife and then unborn child, baptised Mary just before his death.⁶¹ The manor was often divided between Upper Priory or Chaplin's Hold and Canon Street with Extra Portam.⁶²

Mary Chaplin (d. 1710) married John Sweeting of Thorncombe, Bicknoller (d. 1688).⁶³ She was succeeded by Joseph Sweeting, son of her son Joseph (d. 1707). The younger Joseph died in 1727 and his widow Betty married Brudenell Wansbrough (d. 1741) but her eldest son Joseph Sweeting (d. 1772) mortgaged the manor from 1748 resulting in litigation.⁶⁴ The mortgagee re-assigned it to Betty, to whom Joseph owed nearly £2,000, and they acted jointly as lord and lady of the manor although as Joseph was steward, that was of doubtful legality.⁶⁵ Joseph left the manor to his wife Barbara (d. 1773), who claimed to be lady of the manor in 1772—3, and then to his brother John, whose representatives claimed it including Abraham Perry Sweeting who acted as lord from 1774—7 as devisee of Barbara.⁶⁶ In 1777 Betty Wansbrough (d. 1783) won a Chancery case for dower and all the monies she was owed and apparently bought back the manor, sold under decree.⁶⁷ In 1781 Barbara's executors released all claim and Betty left the manor to her youngest son Brudenell Wansbrough.⁶⁸ Brudenell (d. 1785) being childless devised it to John Rogers, minor grandson

⁵⁹ TNA, C 78/246, no 11.

⁶⁰ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/138; M. Hawkins, *Sales of Wards 1603—41*, pp. 94—5.

⁶¹ TNA, C 78/281, no. 15: at waalt.uh.edu/index.php/C78 accessed May 2021; SHC, DD/SAS/C112/17.

⁶² TNA, C 6/271/15; SHC, DD/DP/80/1, 350 (1673).

⁶³ TNA, CP 25/2/869/2 WILLIAM&MARYTRIN.; SHC, D/P/bic/2/1/2—3; DD/SP/360; Bicknoller ch., memorial inscriptions.

⁶⁴ *VCH Som.* V, 14—15; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25 (803); DD/SAS/C112/20/1; DD/HC/73/1, 77/2/1, 99/3; DD/AY/2.

⁶⁵ SHC, DD/HC/16/7/6, 64/1/4, 126/6/1; D/DC/tau.d/25 (803); DD/DR/28.

⁶⁶ Ibid. DD/HC/16/7/10, 28; 73/1; 111/1/6; 134/1/12—15; DD/SP/378.

⁶⁷ Ibid. DD/HC/74/5/93—4.

⁶⁸ Ibid. D/DC/tau.d/25, no. 803; D/P/tau.ja/2/1/9; DD/HC/134/1; DD/SP/378; TNA, PROB 11/1109/87.

of his half-brother John Sweeting.⁶⁹ In 1819 Rogers sold the manor to William Kinglake and it descended with Holway.⁷⁰

Priory demesne

After 1549 Thomas More stripped the priory site, built a house there and married his children into landed families. In 1556 he settled the demesne on Jasper (d. 1610 *s.p.*), his son by his second wife Elizabeth. Thomas died in 1575, his eldest son Robert died childless and his second son Francis (d. 1595—6) left infant sons Francis (d. 1596 *s.p.*), and Thomas.⁷¹ The younger Thomas inherited the estates of his childless uncles and c. 1624 brought an action for wasting timber against his cousin Elizabeth (fl. 1643), who held a life interest.⁷² The ‘handsome’ house was uninhabited in 1633 but the estate covered 260 a. worth £60.⁷³ Thomas More (d. 1626) left an infant son Thomas whose wardship was sold to the child’s mother Rachel and her Wyndham relatives.⁷⁴ Thomas died in 1695 and his estate was divided between his daughters. The priory passed to Rachel wife of merchant Hugh Bickham.⁷⁵ Hugh (d. 1724) left the estate after her death to their son Hugh but Rachel (d. c. 1739) mortgaged it.⁷⁶

In 1750 Jane Bickham, widow of Hugh the younger, sued Rachel’s executors because the estate was insufficient to meet debts and John Halliday bought Upper Priory or Priorswood farm (134 a.) to add to his Yard estate.⁷⁷ Philip Winter bought Lower Priory (c. 100 a.) except for the house, which Jane bought but was later acquired by the Winters.⁷⁸

⁶⁹ TNA, PROB 11/1131/163; SHC, DD/AY/2; DD/SAS/C112/18/4.

⁷⁰ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25 (803); DD/AY/3, 6.

⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/58/109; C 142/244/100; C 142/247/44 (1595); C78/143, no. 12 (1596); Gloucs. R.O., D326/T169.

⁷² TNA, C 2/JasI/M9/56; PROB10/639/20.

⁷³ E. H. Bates, *Gerard’s Survey of Somerset, 1633*, 59.

⁷⁴ TNA, C 142/423/69; C 142/439/43; Hawkins, *Sales of Wards*, pp. 39—40.

⁷⁵ J. Toulmin, *History of Taunton*, rev. J. Savage (Taunton, 1822), 96—7.

⁷⁶ TNA, PROB 11/595/382; C 11/2080/6; SHC, DD/MY/7.

⁷⁷ SHC, DD/MY/7; below, this section.

⁷⁸ SHC, DD/PRY/7.

Philip (d. 1774) left it to his nephew Charles Winter for life and then to Charles's son John (d. 1830).⁷⁹ In 1873 the heir John Arundel Winter sold Priory House, land and cottages for £8,000 to brothers William (d. 1884) and John Webber (d. 1895). Their nephews Samuel (d. 1914) and William Fisher (d. 1922) sold part for housing development and their heirs sold the rest to the Priory Land Development Company in 1923.⁸⁰

Yard and Lyngford

Yard or Yarde, north of the river, comprised six half-virgate tenements and unspecified overland and cottages in 1647. Lyngford, including Priorswood farm, lay in the rural north-east. Most of Yard and Priorswood farm were former priory land but Lyngford and other land was held of Taunton Deane.⁸¹

Yard was probably occupied by William Hill (d. c. 1538), father of Roger (d. 1545).⁸² Roger's younger son Robert Hill (d. 1581) added neighbouring Taunton Deane copyholds to Yard. His son James forfeited Yard by defaulting on a large mortgage to his sister Jane's husband Thomas Brereton (d. 1602). Jane (d. 1615) was followed by her son Thomas Brereton.⁸³ Thomas (d. 1632), MP for Taunton, settled his estate on his wife Elizabeth Anketil for life and then on his sister Jane's son (Sir) Francis Anketil.⁸⁴ Elizabeth Brereton (d. 1652), the highest taxpayer in Taunton in 1641, was succeeded by Brereton son of Francis (d. 1635).⁸⁵ Brereton Anketil (1661 *s.p.*) left his Taunton estates to his cousin Francis (d. 1696) son of the Revd Henry Anketil, brother of Elizabeth.⁸⁶ Francis's son Francis (d. Dec.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Q/REI/35/25b; DD/LP/1, 3; tithe award, St James.

⁸⁰ Ibid. D/DC/tau.d/25/6 (1028); DD/DP, box 126; above, intro.

⁸¹ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, p. 59; DD/CC/21; tithe award, St James.

⁸² Ibid. DD/X/VNL/2; S. Rawlins and I. F. Jones, *Som. Wills from Exeter*, 20; TNA, PROB 11/31/105; C 142/85/49.

⁸³ TNA, C 142/197/59; PROB 11/63/360; SHC, DD/SP/71, ff. 56—7; 325/136.

⁸⁴ TNA, C 142/526/18; historyofparlamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629 (Thomas Brereton); SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/8.

⁸⁵ Hawkins, *Sale of Ward*, pp. 4—5; Howard and Storate, *Som. Prot. Returns*, 261; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/2; *Alumni Oxon.* (Brereton Anketil).

⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/304/206; SHC, DD/DP/79, 86 (Staplegrave 100, 1661), 135.

1734) outlived his only son Francis (Jan. 1734 *s.p.*) and was succeeded by his daughters Anne and Jane.⁸⁷ They apparently leased Yard to John Halliday of Warminster, Wilts.⁸⁸

After litigation in Chancery the court ordered Yard's sale and it was eventually bought in the 1740s by Mary Welman, wife of John Halliday (d. 1754).⁸⁹ Mary (d. 1792) left her estate to her younger children but the estate was surrendered to her eldest son John Halliday (d. 1805).⁹⁰ In the 1750s his father had bought Obridge manor, Totterdells and other land at Lyngford, divided between Obridge and Taunton Deane manors, Priorswood farm and the Southerton family estate in Rowbarton.⁹¹

As the younger John's children were illegitimate he left his estate in trust for sale. His sisters Mary, Elizabeth and Prudence bought Yard House and 21 a. of grounds for £4,000, his brother Edmund Trowbridge Halliday (d. 1813) and his wife Jane (d. 1830) bought the rest of Yard and Priorswood and the other estates were sold out of the family.⁹² Prudence (d. 1813), Mary (d. 1818) and Elizabeth (d. 1830) were followed by Edmund's son the Revd Edmund Trowbridge Halliday.⁹³ Edmund (d. 1844) left his estate to be sold to provide for his brother John's children but gave his sister Mary, wife of Peter Mynors, the right to buy Yard including his mother's land for £6,000.⁹⁴ Mary sold it in 1846 to Samuel Curry, brickmaker, who enfranchised it. The house was demolished before 1849, replaced by Yarde and North Town Houses, and terraced streets were built over the grounds.⁹⁵ Jane Halliday (d. 1830) left her share of Yard to her son Edmund but gave Priorswood farm to her son John's widow

⁸⁷ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/19 (581); DD/DP/44/9; DD/SP/83, pp. 269—73, 336—9; D/P/tau.ja/2/1/9 (1 Feb. 1733/4); TNA, PROB 11/663/275; Dors. HC, PE/SPV:RE1/1 (4 Dec. 1734).

⁸⁸ SHC, DD/HLM/8; DD/MY/7.

⁸⁹ Wilts and Swindon HC 445/40, 45; SHC, DD/CC/21; DD/MY/6; TNA PROB 11/813/380.

⁹⁰ SHC, DD/CH/62; DD/CC/21; Q/REI/35/25a; TNA PROB 11/1226/198; 11/1433/183.

⁹¹ SHC, DD/MY/7; *Hist. Parl. Commons 1754—1790*; historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790, s.v. Taunton: accessed 17 Oct. 2019.

⁹² SHC, DD/CH/62; DD/DP/43/14/15 (1805); DD/MY/40; TNA PROB 11/1433/183; 11/1548/205.

⁹³ SHC, D/P/pit/2/1/7; TNA PROB 11/1601/407, 437; 11/1766/396.

⁹⁴ SHC, tithe award, St James; DD/CH/61; DD/DK/13; TNA, PROB 11/2012/224.

⁹⁵ SHC, DD/CH/61—2; above intro.

Anne Innes Halliday (d. 1871).⁹⁶ Some Priorswood farm land went to build the railway and the rest was sold by Anne's heirs for housing.⁹⁷ Charles Welsh, who bought most of the Lyngford land, created Lyngford farm around the medieval farmhouse, which survives although the land was developed for housing in the early 20th century.⁹⁸

Nothing remains of the 'fair' 16th-century house, erroneously ascribed to Thomas Hill, or its successor.⁹⁹ In 1839 it was entered between entrance pillars surmounted by stone spaniels at the head of a large flight of steps leading into a vestibule containing Halliday portraits and busts. The grounds ran the length of Bridge Street and included a large octagonal 'gothick' summer house demolished in 1834.¹⁰⁰

OBRIDGE

In 1304 the Lambright family had mills and one and a half virgate of arable in Obridge, Taunton Deane manor had a large tithing of Obridge and there were possibly freeholds in 1340.¹⁰¹ However, by 1319 Obridge manor, with land in Kingston St Mary and north of East Reach, belonged to Taunton Priory, which retained it until the Dissolution.¹⁰² In 1544 Thomas Hill acquired the Kingston tenements to hold in chief for a fortieth of a fee. They passed to the Warres of Hestercombe with 35 a. at Lyngford, probably Wellsprings farm.¹⁰³

In 1545 Obridge manor was sold to Alexander Popham and William Halley to hold for a twentieth of a fee.¹⁰⁴ The following year Popham was licensed to alienate to Robert Hill (d. 1581).¹⁰⁵ In 1584 James the indebted son of Robert Hill alienated it to Thomas Symes

⁹⁶ TNA, PROB 11/1548/205; SHC, Q/REI/35/25a; tithe award, St James; DD/DK/13; *Nat. Probate Reg.* (1871 Halliday).

⁹⁷ SHC, DD/DP/43/13; above intro.

⁹⁸ SHC, Q/REI/35/25a (1808—32); DD/DP/49/4; tithe award, St James; above, intro.

⁹⁹ Bates, *Gerard's Survey*, 58; SHC, DD/MY/40.

¹⁰⁰ SHC, DD/SP/18/63; Wilts and Swindon History Centre, 2735/1.

¹⁰¹ E. Green, *Fees of Fines 1196—1307*, 330; B.L., Add. Ch. 25893.

¹⁰² SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/19 (581); B.L. Add. Ch. 16332.

¹⁰³ TNA, SC 6/EdwVI/402; C 2/Eliz2/K5/52; SHC, DD/DP/63/4; DD/MK/24.

¹⁰⁴ *L&P Hen. VIII*, X, p. 125.

¹⁰⁵ Brett, *Crown Revenues*, p. 77.

presumably on mortgage.¹⁰⁶ Like Yard it passed to James's sister Jane whose second husband Sir William Courtenay paid the tithe rent to the Crown in 1605.¹⁰⁷ It descended to Francis Anketil (d. 1734) whose daughter-in-law Sarah released Obridge to her husband's sisters Anne and Jane and it was settled in trust for sale in 1737.¹⁰⁸ John Halliday bought Obridge manor and settled it on trustees in 1752.¹⁰⁹

The Halliday estate was divided sold in 1804, Obridge farm (96 a.) to Robert Edwards and Obridge House farm (44 a.) to John Easton.¹¹⁰ The houses survive but the land went for housing in the early 20th century.¹¹¹ The lordship, possibly bought by Edwards, was acquired in 1831 for John Roy Allen (d. 1875) and his wife Lydia (d. 1890) who bought Edwards' land north of Lyngford where in the 1840s they built Lyngford House. Neither their son Charles (d. 1893) nor grandson son Jefferys claimed lordship.¹¹² Lyngford house was bought in 1945 and was used as a health training and conference centre until sold in 2017. In the 2020s it was proposed to convert the Regency Gothic house with its large three-bay turreted front, floor length windows, open arched porch and octagonal hall into apartments.¹¹³

Plaistreet

Playstrete messuage was held by Taunton Priory with Obridge manor at the Dissolution.¹¹⁴ In 1553 Robert son of Richard Hayman claimed it was freehold but Thomas Gardner of Bishops Hull (d. 1679) and his second wife Frances held it as bondland.¹¹⁵ In 1725 Plaistreet was acquired by Joshua Northcote who surrendered it to Thomas Brown (d. 1774). In 1775 it was

¹⁰⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1583—4, p. 165; TNA, CP 25/2/205/26 ELIZI/EASTER.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, PROB 11/63/360; Brett, *Crown Revenues*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, C 142/479/65; PROB 11/663/275; Dors. HC, PE/SPV:RE1/1; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/9 (1 Feb. 1733/4); D/DC/tau.d/25/19 (581); DD/X/BBL1.

¹⁰⁹ SHC, DD/MY/7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. DD/DP/49/4; tithe award, St James; DD/CCH/2/5.

¹¹¹ Above, intro.

¹¹² SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/12 (1873); A/ABP/1.

¹¹³ Ibid. A/DIF/44.

¹¹⁴ Brett, *Crown Revenues*, supp., 91.

¹¹⁵ TNA, STAC 3/6/48; SHC, DD/SP/358 (1775).

bought by Susannah Blackman Longuet (d. 1817) who sold it, apparently to Samuel Hicks and before 1808 Richard Heaviside bought the estate. The large house was offered for sale in 1833 with two Broadwood pianos, paintings by Rubens and Gainsborough and 3,000 books.¹¹⁶ Heaviside retained 25 a. but the house had been demolished by 1839. It gave its name to Plais Street.¹¹⁷

CHURCH AND CHARITY PROPERTY

In 1548 Taunton's chantries and fraternities owned 69 houses, 13 windows and chambers in the market, nine shambles, nine shops, several gardens, orchards and small plot let or sold piecemeal by the Crown.¹¹⁸ Charles I sold 27 houses, 22 were let and some lost by 1681 and others went in laying out the new market and Hammet Street.¹¹⁹ Lessees of c. 20 houses, the Crown had difficulty ascertaining how many it owned by the 18th century, were required to spend £200 rebuilding. They remained ruinous and were bought in 1818 in reversion by Alexander Baring, later Lord Ashburton, who sold them off in the 1820s.¹²⁰

Cleeve Abbey held 5 burgages under the bishop of Winchester and distributed 46s. rent in alms for the soul of bishop Beckington of Bath and Wells.¹²¹ By 1583 there were only two tenements last recorded in 1598.¹²² In 1413 Taunton property was settled on the sisters of White Hall, Ilchester.¹²³ In 1415 seven copyhold messuages and 10 a. in Taunton and Sherford, Wilton, were used to maintain an anniversary chaplain in Holy Trinity, Ilchester.¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ SHC, DD/SP/358 (1775); Q/REI/35/25a; TNA, PROB 11/1591/333; *Taunton Courier*, 11 Sep. 1833.

¹¹⁷ SHC, tithe award, St James.

¹¹⁸ E. Green, *Somerset Chantries*, 189—203; TNA, E 318/26/1460, 1694; *Cal. Pat.* 1547—8, pp. 408—9; 1548—9, pp. 199—202, 289, 364—5; 1549—51, pp. 120—2; 1572—5, pp. 363—4, 408—9, 489; 1580—2, pp. 258, 408; Bates-Harbin, *Som. Enrolled Deeds*, pp. 65—6; SHC, DD/DP/64/1.

¹¹⁹ TNA, SC 12/29/6, 25; E 367/2509—11, 3283; SHC, DD/AY/331.

¹²⁰ TNA, E 367/7316; CRES 2/1156; SHC, DD/CH/102/1.

¹²¹ *Valor Eccl.* I, 218; SHC, T/PH/hps/1.

¹²² TNA, SC 12/32/5, nos. 14, 16, 19.

¹²³ *Ibid.* C 143/445/19.

¹²⁴ *Cal. Pat.* 1413—16, 371.

The Phelips family were tenants in 1548 when it was suppressed but by 1555 several rents were lost.¹²⁵ The burgages were last recorded on a reversionary Crown lease from 1606.¹²⁶

Two burgages north-west of East Street, rebuilt before 1358, were held by the Aunger family of Bradford on Tone until the 1450s when they were released to John Bishop and his wife.¹²⁷ In 1465 Bishop settled the property, after his death, on William Waynflete, bishop of Winchester, but released his life interest in 1474 allowing Waynflete to include the estate in his endowment of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1482. The college took possession in 1496 but apparently sold or lost the burgages later.¹²⁸

Thomas Whalesborough gave a house in Church Lane to support his obit in Nettlecombe church, which retained it until the 1550s.¹²⁹ It was last recorded as Crown property in 1663 but the Trevelyan family had a town house in the 18th century.¹³⁰ Trull church had two houses in houses in East Reach in the 1530s, one named Our Lady's house, replaced by one dwelling before 1637 when the 40s. rent was paid on a tombstone in Trull churchyard.¹³¹ The house was demolished by 1734.¹³² The site was sold before 1805 when Trull churchwardens bought c. 18 a. of John Halliday's Totterdell land, which they retained until 1851 or later.¹³³

Taunton Town Lands Charity apparently originated in houses held by the town burgesses in the 1550s.¹³⁴ By 1713 the charity owned 40 houses, 10 shambles and two stalls in the market and estates in Ottery, Devon.¹³⁵ In 1615 Pitminster parish had Rackfield

¹²⁵ T. Hugo, 'White Hall in Ilchester' *PSAS XIII* (1866), 80, 85—7; SHC, DD/PH/53; DD/SAS/C795/M/22/1; T/PH/hps/1.

¹²⁶ Brett, *Crown Revenue*, pp. 44—5, 101n, supp. 106; *Cal. Pat.* 1599—1600, p. 218.

¹²⁷ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 6—9, 22—4, 29—30, 40—1, 44, 46, 50, 64, 67—8, 118: calendar in VCH office.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Ford 4, 10, 13, 21, 25, 34, 86—9, 99, 103, 105.

¹²⁹ *VCH Som.* V, 119; R. Dunning and M. McDermott, *Church Accounts 1457—1559*, 42, 44, 49, 74, 86, 93.

¹³⁰ TNA, E 367/2511; SHC, Q/REL/35/24 (1767); DD/WO/35/8/5.

¹³¹ Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accts*, 277—81, 287, 290—5, 299, 301—2; SHC, D/P/tru/5/1/2, 17/1/3.

¹³² SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/12 (Extra Portam); D/P/tru/5/1/7.

¹³³ Ibid. DD/DP/43/14/15 (1805); tithe award, St James; D/P/tru/17/1/1.

¹³⁴ Ibid. T/PH/hps/1.

¹³⁵ BL, Add. Ch.27481; SHC, DD/TAC/5/5/1—67; below, soc. hist., charities.

between Wilton House and Mount Street, occupied by houses on Upper High Street, a smithy, brewhouses and gardens of two public houses and agricultural buildings in 1777 when Sir Benjamin Hammet bought it for a £15 annuity to Pitminster's poor.¹³⁶ A house east of High Street belonged to Ilminster Grammar school between 1640 and 1802.¹³⁷ Dr Richard White's c. 1621 gift to the poor of Chardstock, Devon, was invested in 7 ½ a. near Holway, retained until c. 1872.¹³⁸

Meadows near the Ruishton boundary were used by the early 19th century to endow the benefices of Bradford, Compton Bishop, Lyng, Sampford Arundel and Wilton. Under an Act of 1839 the lands were sold to local farmers.¹³⁹

OTHER ESTATES

Landed families, not all from Somerset, invested in Taunton property.¹⁴⁰ The Cheddar family held 11 houses in Taunton by 1378 and 12 by 1443 with 31 a. sometimes called a manor but last recorded c. 1568.¹⁴¹ In 1677 a Cornish man sold a half messuage in Fore Street for £60.¹⁴²

Portman estate

In 1302 Thomas the Portman had urban property as did John Portman in 1327.¹⁴³ Robert Portman was portreeve in 1338.¹⁴⁴ The family accrued town property in the 15th century

¹³⁶ SHC, DD/SP/50 (Oct. 1615), 319/128; DD/DP/97/3.

¹³⁷ Ibid. DD/BD/83, 89; DD/IGS/2/4.

¹³⁸ Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/12, 41 (Holway tithing); tithe award, St Mary; DD/DP/183/1; Devon HC, 2590A/PF/19.

¹³⁹ SHC, DD/SP/186 (1813); DD/DP, box 103 (abstr. of title 1862); tithe award, St Mary.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, WARD 2/57A/204/45; SHC, DD/PM/7/2/24; T/PH/lrm/2; Dors. History Centre, D/FSI, box 11 (compoti).

¹⁴¹ Green, *Feet of Fines 1347—99*, 97—8; *Cal. Inq. pm.* XXVI, pp. 67—9; SHC, DD/HY/149; DD/X/BDN/6 (1556); *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, II, pp. 15, 260, 344; TNA, C 44/26/16; C 44/28/3; CP 25/2/9/10ELIZIMICH.

¹⁴² SHC, T/PH/lrm/2.

¹⁴³ E. Green, *Feet of Fines 1196—130*, 318; *Feet of Fines 1307—46*, 64; F. Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest etc.*, 274. The name may mean alderman or burgess.

¹⁴⁴ SHC, DD/S/SBY/6/1.

notably William Portman (d. c. 1413) and his son Walter (d. c. 1456), successive Taunton MPs.¹⁴⁵ Walter was followed by his second wife Christine, daughter and heir of William Orchard (d. c. 1422) whose family acquired Taunton property in the 14th century.¹⁴⁶ Their son John (d. 1486) held 17 houses of the bishop of Winchester by fealty and left a son John, a minor.¹⁴⁷ John Portman (d. 1521) was followed in the direct male line by Sir William (d. 1557), Sir Henry (d. 1591), Sir John (cr. Bt and d. 1612), Sir Henry (d. 1621) and his brothers John (d. 1624), Hugh (d. 1629) and William (d. 1645).¹⁴⁸ In 1632 Sir William disposed of Henry's Shuttern property but the Haydon copyholds were held by his niece, John's daughter, Grace Portman.¹⁴⁹

In 1645 confiscated town property was sold to raise £20,000 added to a £7,000 fine to relieve Taunton. Sir William's widow and trustees paid annual instalments to the mayor until the mid 1650s.¹⁵⁰ Sir William (d. 1690) inherited some houses including the White Lion at Eastgate, copyholds at Haydon and Wilton and St Mary's tithes. His cousin and successor William Berkeley (d. 1737) took the name Portman and described the estate as Taunton manor although the land was copyhold.¹⁵¹ The property passed to William's son Henry (d. 1761) and grandson Henry (d. 1796) and the latter's second son Edward Berkeley Portman (d. 1823). His widow Mary (d. 1852) was admitted to the Haydon copyholds and his son Edward Berkeley Portman (cr. Baron 1837, Vct Portman 1873, d. 1888), succeeded to some

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. DD/PM/3/5/1, 5/2/8—12, 7/1/1—2, 7/2/1—17; Green, *Feet of Fines 1347—99*, 146, 174—5; *Feet of Fines 1399—1485*, 76; R. Bowden and T. Mayberry *From Somerset to Portman Square* (2022), 13—14; TNA, E 326/3943.

¹⁴⁶ *Cal. Close*, 1468—76, p. 235; *Cal. Inq. pm.* XX, p. 29; XXVI, p. 171; SHC, DD/PM/5/2/5—7, 9, 11; 5/3/4; 7/2/16.

¹⁴⁷ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* Hen. VII, I, p. 90; SHC, DD/PM/5/2/18—19.

¹⁴⁸ SHC, DD/PM/1/6; 7/2/18, 20—4, 28; TNA, C 142/406/67; C 142/461/30; *VCH Som.* VI. 288; Hawkins, *Sales of Wards*, pp. 137—43.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, CRES 38/507, nos 2, 5; SHC, Q/AC/4; DD/SP/197.

¹⁵⁰ *Cal Cttee Compounding*, I, 150, II, 900; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1651—2, p. 63; SHC, DD/PM/7/4.

¹⁵¹ SHC, DD/PM/1/9, 6/1/4, 8/2/17, 8/8, 8/9, 22/2.

unsold houses but no longer claimed a manor.¹⁵² The Haydon land was sold to local farmers in 1853.¹⁵³

Pyntley, Grasscroft and Cock Street

In 1428 a 46-a. farm at Pyntley and two smaller holdings at Grasscroft or Grassgrove and Cock Street held of the bishops of Winchester were settled in trust for Sir Richard Hankeford (d. 1431). He probably inherited it from his mother Thomasine Stapledon who married Sir Richard Hankeford (d. 1419).¹⁵⁴ His elder daughter Thomasine (d. 1453) survived her sister and stepmother and the estate descended to her son Fulk Bouchier, Lord Fitzwarren and his heirs, the earls of Bath and Stamford, who called it a manor and were free suitors of the borough, having at least two houses there.¹⁵⁵ Thomas, indebted earl of Stamford (d. 1720) broke up and sold Grassgrove and Grasscroft in 1684—94.¹⁵⁶

Pyntley, a surname from the 13th century and now lost, was held by John Rogers (d. 1441) under the Hankefords for a rose rent.¹⁵⁷ John was followed by his son John (d. 1450) whose son Henry sold it. Pyntley land was given in 1461 by Thomas Cory to endow a chantry in St James' church but was last recorded in 1548.¹⁵⁸

Flook House

The Flook House estate in North Town originated as a large copyhold of Taunton Deane manor. Known from the 16th to 18th centuries as Flook or Hook Place, it was acquired by John Slape from Edward Chaplin after 1566 and passed to his son John and grandson

¹⁵² Burke, *Peerage* (1949), 1618—19; SHC, T/PH/bb/4; DD/PM/22/2.

¹⁵³ SHC, T/PH/bb/4; DD/HS/4/2; DD/DP/184/2; DD/DP, box 103 (abstr. of title 1852—62).

¹⁵⁴ *Complete Peerage*, V, 504—5.

¹⁵⁵ *Cal. Close* 1422—9, 57—8; 1461—8, 4; 1468—76, 253—4; TNA, CP 25/2/385/6JASIHil; C 142/407/69; C 8/420/65; SHC, DD/DP/93/4; DD/SP/331; Norton Fitzwarren, forthcoming.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, C 142/570/140; CP 25/2/806/1JASIEASTER; CP 25/2/898/6WILLIAM&MARYTRIN.; SHC, DD/SP/357 (bdle 2, 1692).

¹⁵⁷ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/60, 62, 73; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXV, p. 500.

¹⁵⁸ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/93; *Cal. Pat.* 1548—9, p. 364; below, rel. hist. St James. Pyntley also occurred in Staplegrove and Norton.

Richard. John Slape, possibly son of the last, left legacies that could not be met and after his widow Joan's death in 1700 Flook was sold with other estates enabling the family to retain Slapes farm.¹⁵⁹

Flook was acquired by Dr John Hall (fl.1708) but by 1716 belonged to the Button family who built the Quaker meeting house. It was settled on the marriage of Robert Button (d. 1726) and his first wife Mary Ellis. In 1755 their son Ellis left it to his wife Mary for life and then to Ellis Button Metford (d. 1820) son of Joseph Metford and Hannah Ellis.¹⁶⁰

William Ellis Metford, heir to Ellis's son William (d. 1868) sold it in 1873.¹⁶¹ The estate was developed with streets of terraced houses but the house was acquired by the Sibley family for a school. It was requisitioned during the Second World War and an American Red Cross hospital was built in the grounds, later used as postal training facilities, central kitchens for school meals and a driving test centre. In 1945 under the will of Miss A. B. Sibley the house was sold to the borough council and in the late 20th century the surviving range was the register office.¹⁶² In 1976 a public swimming pool was built in the garden and the remaining grounds and buildings were cleared for car parking and Deane House council offices in 1987.¹⁶³

The original house had the date 1652 on a strapwork overmantel in the south-east range, five stone mullioned windows, one of six lights, and a two-storey porch with a four-centred arch in 1967.¹⁶⁴ Attic dormers and sash windows were inserted possibly after 1823.¹⁶⁵ The north-west stuccoed section, all that remains, is probably 18th-century remodelled in the

¹⁵⁹ TNA, PROB 11/153/178; PROB 11/429/443; SHC, DD/KIT/4/19; DD/SP/71. f. 28; 72, f. 412; 79 (1671), 83, p. 332; D/P/tau.ja/2/1/18 (22 Oct. 1700).

¹⁶⁰ Birmingham Archives, MS3101/A/D/13/1; SHC, DD/SP, 83, p. 332; A/AXE/1; DD/SAS/C795/TN/37; TNA, PROB 11/610/32.

¹⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/1271/211, PROB 11/1280/212, PROB 11/1944/289; SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/4; DD/X/BT/3.

¹⁶² SHC, D/B/ta/3/13/14, pp. 61, 194, 233; D/DC/tau.d unlisted box 17, 1943—5 (Sep. 1945).

¹⁶³ Ibid. DD/KW/1945/1.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/192/10992.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. A/DQO/404/15/2a; A/DIF/44; D/B/ta/24/1/185/10980.

19th and gutted in 1966.¹⁶⁶ The Sibleys extended the house in 1878 and there was a coachhouse on Belvedere Road and a large walled garden. The house was poorly maintained and the council demolished most of it in 1967 although it was listed.¹⁶⁷

Grove House

A large mansion in Shuttern was built between 1789 and 1799 on the site of several houses for Prockter Thomas (d. 1801). Its grounds extended downhill between the Galmington and Gaol streams until c. 1847. Thomas's widow Susannah conveyed Grove House in 1804 to James Pearson whose trustees sold it in 1842 to Joseph Hitchcock. In 1851 the heir William Richards Hitchcock bought the freehold and sold it to the county for a shire hall.¹⁶⁸

Lower Portman Farm

Lower Portman farm (64 a.), a detached area of Taunton St James near Bishops Lydeard, was part of the Pyrland estate. George Deane left it in 1742 to his housekeeper Mary Bartlett.¹⁶⁹ In 1747 Mary's daughter Henrietta Johnson settled it on her marriage to John Griffiths. In 1759 they sold it to John Thomas whose son in law John Tytherleigh settled it in 1783 on his son John's marriage to Sarah Addams (d. 1815). In 1842 the farm was sold to William Davys.¹⁷⁰ In 1876 the Welman family added it to their Norton manor estate and it later became a county farm.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ J. Orbach, *S. & W. Som.* 620; SHC, A/DIF/44, 116; D/B/ta/24/1/185/10980.

¹⁶⁷ SHC, D/B/ta/3/37/2, p. 428; 24/1/11/394; 24/1/192/10992; DD/FIV/1/70.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. DD/DP/51/6; Q/AC/4.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. DD/SP/319/45, 73—4.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. DD/CH/73/7, 76/4; DD/SAS/C112/18/2; Q/REL/35/25a (1783—1832).

¹⁷¹ Ibid. DD/X/DEV/1; C/C/11; Norton Fitzwarren, forthcoming.