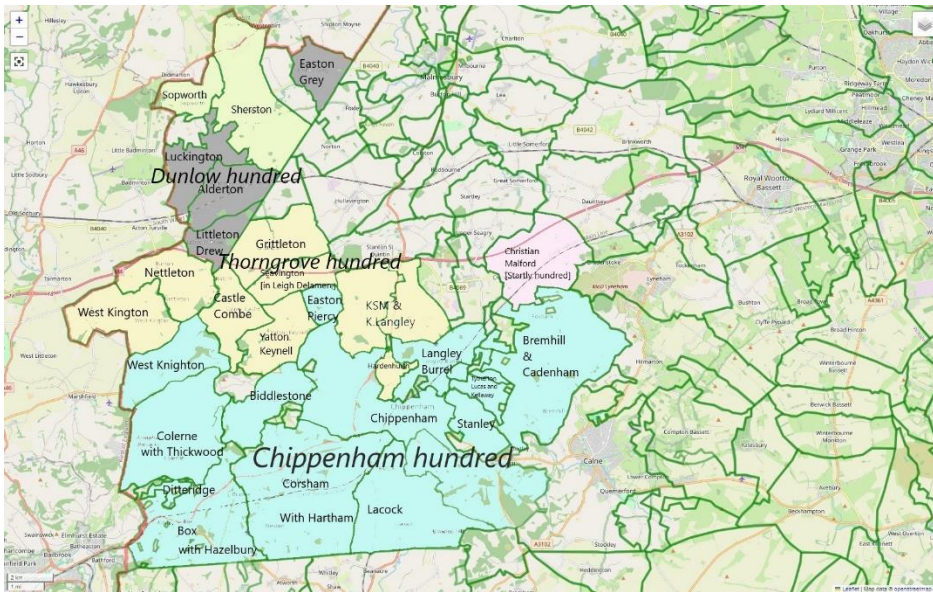


CHIPPENHAM HUNDRED

ORIGINS

Chippenham hundred originated as a Middle Saxon royal estate for which a payment of the farm of one night, originating from a time of a peripatetic royal household, was still paid in 1086.¹ The Saxon hundred meeting (*moot*) was held within the town.² Chippenham manor and hundred remained in royal hands in 1086 when it was assessed at 142 hides.³

BOUNDARIES



Domesday and the geld rolls do not record all places that would later become part of Chippenham hundred, nor can everywhere be ascribed with certainty to a particular hundred in 1086.

Chippenham hundred had at its core the royal estate and lands bounded by Wansdyke and the Roman Road to the south of Lacock, Corsham and Box parishes; and by the county boundary to the west of Box, Colerne and West Kingston. To the north of West Kingston, Biddestone, Allington (in Chippenham), Langley Burrell and Bremhill minor streams, roads and hedge lines formed the estate and hundred boundaries; and to the east they followed Cowage brook, the river Marden and the boundary of Pewsham forest.⁴

During the 12th century Chippenham hundred absorbed two hundreds which had been independent in 1086. Thorngrove, based on the estates of the abbot of Glastonbury, included Grittleton, Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Kington Langley, with Castle Combe, Easton Piercy, Hardenhuish, Sevington (in Leigh Delamere), West Kingston and probably Yatton Keynell.⁵ To the west was the county boundary with Gloucestershire, and elsewhere the border of this hundred

¹ S. A. Draper, *Landscape, Settlement and Society: Wiltshire in the first millennium AD*, (Durham, 2004, PhD), 107.

² Draper, *Landscape, settlement and society*, 114.

³ *VCH Wilts*, II, 186-7.

⁴ See individual parishes for detailed descriptions of their boundaries.

⁵ *VCH Wilts*, II, 204.

consisted of minor roads, streams and field boundaries. Dunlow hundred comprised Alderton, Easton Grey, Littleton Drew and Luckington, and probably also Sherston and Sopworth, which cannot be securely placed in 1086, but later became part of an expanded Chippenham hundred.⁶ To Dunlow's north and west was the county boundary, to the east the Fosse Way and to the south minor roads and field boundaries. Kingswood, later a detached part of Chippenham hundred within Gloucestershire, was in Dunlow hundred by 1188.⁷

Chippenham, Thorngrove and Dunlow, the Domesday hundreds, were brought together during the 12th century in an assertion of royal control over county administration. This unity of the expanded hundred did not last, as the abbot of Glastonbury reasserted control over Grittleton, Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Kington Langley in the later 13th century and these formed part of North Damerham hundred, with Christian Malford, which can be assigned to Startley hundred in 1086.⁸

Although Glastonbury abbey retained the return of writs throughout its estates, in the 13th century until the 1260s its manors were routinely overseen by the bailiffs of Chippenham hundred.⁹ The hundred bailiffs followed the instructions of Geoffrey Gascelyn, farmer of Chippenham hundred from the Crown, who claimed extensive rights.¹⁰ From 1261 Ralph Russell, sheriff of Wiltshire, who had strong connections with Somerset and Glastonbury, allowed the abbey to extend its privileges.¹¹ North Damerham hundred established an independent identity,¹² but the early division was not clear cut. In 1280 Grittleton, Nettleton and Kington St Michael were said to have been withdrawn from attending the view of frankpledge at Chippenham by the abbot of Glastonbury, but the jurors of the hundred did not know by what authority.¹³ The villis remained within Chippenham hundred for the assessment of the fifteenth and tenth in 1334,¹⁴ but the 1379 poll tax assessed North Damerham hundred independently.¹⁵

Other lords besides the abbots of Glastonbury acquired the right to hold the view of frankpledge.¹⁶ By 1281 independent views were held at Bremhill, Grittleton, Kington St Michael, Stanley, Corsham, Littleton Drew, Castle Combe, Colerne, Nettleton and West Kington, and their tithingmen were not obliged to attend the hundred court for general business, although some appeared to present felonies including murder.¹⁷ The tithings of *Werdescombe* (in Castle Combe), Corsham, Grittleton, Nettleton and Bremhill Wick were all represented in 1281, despite not paying the hundred silver (*certum*) at this court.¹⁸ The remaining tithings, within manors which had no court leet, made graduated payments: Lacock, Langley Burrell and Sherston Magna all paid £1;

⁶ *VCH Wilts*, II, 188, 204; *VCH Wilts*, V, 3.

⁷ 35 Hen. II & 1 Ric. I *Pipe R* 1189 (Rec. Com.), 177.

⁸ *VCH Wilts*, II, 212.

⁹ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1268* (WRS 65), xxxv.

¹⁰ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1268* (WRS 65), xxxvi.

¹¹ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1268* (WRS 65), xxxvi.

¹² *VCH Wilts*, V, 3.

¹³ *Collectanea*, (WRS, 12), 91, 120.

¹⁴ TNA, E 179/196/10.

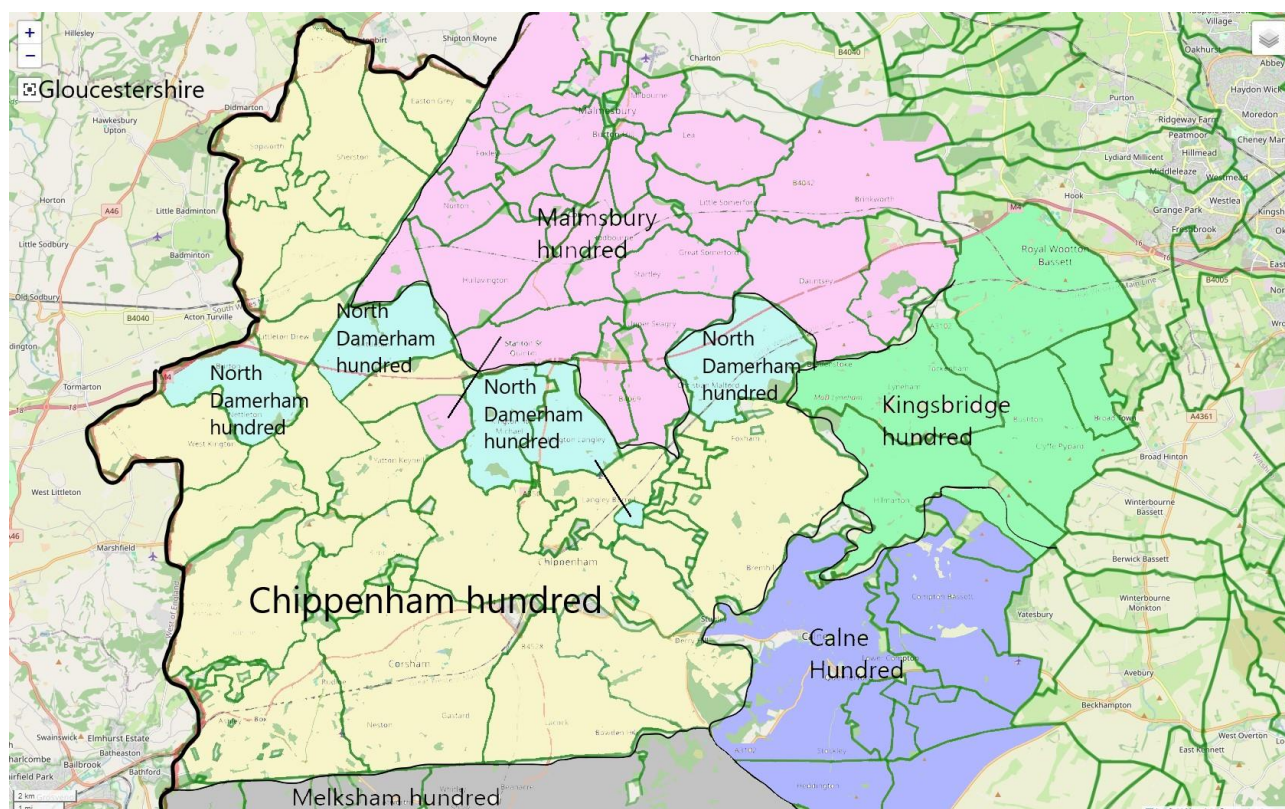
¹⁵ TNA, E 179/239/193 part 5 (assessment 1379).

¹⁶ Courts leet and rights acquired by manorial lords are discussed in the local government sections of each parish covered in this volume.

¹⁷ *Collectanea*, (WRS, 12), 52-3, 74.

¹⁸ *Collectanea*, (WRS 12), 74.

Alderton, Allington, Biddestone, Colerne, West Kington and Leigh Delamere with Sevington paid 13s. 4d.; the tithing based upon Gloucester abbey's holdings in Easton Grey, Kingswood (Glos.), Luckington, Slaughterford and North Wraxall paid 10s.; Roger le Rede's tithing, Alderton, Box, Reynold Grey's tithing within Easton Grey, *Fordway*, Gastard (in Corsham), Hardenhuish, Hartham (in Corsham), Hazelbury (in Box), [Tytherton] Kellaways, Kington St Michael, Peckingell (in Kington St Michael), Pickwick (in Corsham), Sheldon (in Chippenham), Sherston Parva (in Sherston Magna), Stanley (in Chippenham), Sopworth, Tytherton [Lucas], Yatton Keynell and West Yatton (in Yatton Keynell) all paid 6s. 8d.; while the contributions of Littleton Drew and *Cheslade* (unidentified) were not given.¹⁹



DESCENT AND JURISDICTION

The Crown had granted control of the hundred to lay lords by 1249, when it was held by Walter de Godarvill.²⁰ It passed with Sheldon manor to Geoffrey de Gascelyn by 1281 and to his son Edmund in 1286 with rights reserved to Geoffrey's widow Joan.²¹ Edmund (d.1307) was succeeded by his son Edmund.²² Edmund's son Geoffrey inherited two-thirds of Chippenham in 1337,²³ and the remaining third in 1349.²⁴ Geoffrey leased the hundred to Thomas Berkley in an agreement licensed

¹⁹ *Collectanea*, (WRS 12), 74.

²⁰ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1249*, (WRS 16), 124; for a more detailed descent, below: Chippenha, outer Chippenham (west), landownership.

²¹ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 2, 382; extent, TNA, C 133/47/12.

²² *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 5, 14-15.

²³ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 8, 68-9.

²⁴ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 9, 188-9; extent, TNA, C 135/96/18.

by the Crown in December 1351.²⁵ When Geoffrey died in 1375 his lands passed to his widow Elizabeth, who held them with her husband in jointure.²⁶ Geoffrey and Elizabeth's daughter, Christina wife of Richard Hales, inherited on the death of Elizabeth in 1394.²⁷ The widowed Christina Hales sold the hundred to Walter Hungerford, 1st Baron Hungerford, in 1424.²⁸ He was succeeded by his son Robert Hungerford (d.1459), and then Robert's son Robert, who was attainted in 1461 and executed in 1464, when the hundred escheated to the Crown. It was recovered by Walter Hungerford of Heytesbury who was granted licence to alienate Chippenham, Sheldon and Biddestone manors with Chippenham hundred in 1529.²⁹ However, he was in possession when he was attainted in 1538 and executed in 1542, again ceding the hundred with his manors to the Crown.³⁰

The Court of Augmentations administered Chippenham hundred,³¹ now separated from Sheldon manor, from 1540 until it was granted to Thomas Darcy in 1553.³² In the same year it was sold by Darcy to William Sharington of Lacock.³³ Sharington died almost immediately after the acquisition and was succeeded by his brother Henry Sharington. Henry Sharington died without a male heir and his estate was divided between his three daughters.³⁴ The hundred descended to Grace, the eldest, married to Sir Anthony Mildmay. Grace recovered the hundred from Lambarde, Fortescue and Wiggess, to whom it had been farmed, in 1595,³⁵ and obtained a licence to alienate a moiety to her daughter Mary and son-in-law Francis Fane, 1st Earl of Westmoreland, in 1599.³⁶ Mary appears to have retained the hundred in her widowhood as she was cited in a dispute relating to it in 1631.³⁷ Mary was succeeded by her son Mildmay Fane in 1640.³⁸

In 1650 it belonged to the Danvers family of Dauntsey.³⁹ Forfeited by the regicide John Danvers,⁴⁰ it was granted by James II to Charles Mordaunt 1st Earl of Peterborough.⁴¹ A private act appointed trustees for his property including the hundred in 1756.⁴² The hundred, with the function

²⁵ *Cal. Pat.*, 1350-4, 188.

²⁶ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 14, 132-3.

²⁷ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 17, 193.

²⁸ *Hungerford Cart.* (WRS 49), 77. *Cal. Pat.*, 1422-9, 269. <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/hungerford-sir-walter-1378-1449> (accessed 11/3/2022). majority of paragraph from the Complete Peerage online.

²⁹ *L&P HenVIII*, IV (3), p.2687. *Recs. Chippenham*, 296.

³⁰ Hoare, *History of South Wiltshire* I, 103-5. *Hist. Parl.* <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/hungerford-sir-walter-1527-9597>

³¹ *Recs. Chippenham*, xii.

³² *Cal. Pat.* 1547-1553, vol. 5, 98.

³³ *Cal. Pat.* 1547-1553, vol. 5, 109.

³⁴ <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/sharington-henry-1518-81> (accessed 25/10/2024).

³⁵ Northants RO, W(A) box 2/parcel XV/no. 3/c8

³⁶ Northants RO, W(A) box 2/parcel XV/no. 2/d2

³⁷ Northants RO, W(A) box 6/parcel VII

³⁸ ODNB, Fane, Mildmay, 2nd earl of Westmoreland.

³⁹ *Recs. Chippenham*, xii.

⁴⁰ *Recs. Chippenham*, xii.

⁴¹ ODNB, Mordaunt, Charles, 3rd earl of Peterborough and 1st earl of Monmouth

⁴² Act for vesting the estates of Charles Earl of Peterborow and Monmouth, 29 George II, c. 45 (Private Act).

of debt recovery removed,⁴³ eventually passed with the earldom of Peterborough to the 5th Earl and from him to his sister Harriat [*sic*], the 4th Earl's illegitimate daughter, who married Maurice Fenwick. Courts were held in the name of Revd Maurice George Fenwick by 1839.⁴⁴ Maurice's son Mordaunt Fenwick (later Mordaunt Fenwick Bisset) sold the hundred to Joseph Neeld in 1854.⁴⁵

BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

Once the hundred had passed from the Crown to lay lordship in the 13th century the lords of Chippenham hundred executed the king's writs by their own bailiffs but admitted the sheriff twice yearly to hold the tourn in their hundred courts.⁴⁶ Separate juries were empanelled in 1281 for the hundred and borough, although the courts for both jurisdictions appear to have been held in the same session.⁴⁷ At least as early as 1268 Robert Stoket was appointed bailiff for the hundred.⁴⁸ Stoket, having been accused of one murder, was hanged for another in 1281.⁴⁹ A complaint was raised in 1281 that whereas the lord of the hundred had formerly employed two beadles, who made their rounds on foot, now they went on horseback, with three servants in attendance, which 'overburdened the country to its great loss'.⁵⁰

By 1281 a distinction was made between Chippenham manor and borough, termed 'Chippenham', and the remainder of the hundred, Chippenham *Forinseca* (Chippenham Without).⁵¹ The inner part of Chippenham may have originated as the area outside *Hinlond* or *Inlond*, later 'England's', the land immediately adjacent to the town and perhaps the core of the Saxon royal estate.⁵² When convenient the sheriff and exchequer considered the hundred and borough as a single unit. For instance in both the assessments for the muster in 1539 and the hearth tax in 1662 the borough was assessed as a part of the hundred.⁵³

In 1514 a view of frankpledge with a court called 'sevenpound' [*cum curia vocatur sevenpound*] was held in Chippenham for a single tithing.⁵⁴ This court, which included a notice of perambulation of the liberty from the cross upon the bridge to *Fayreforde* alias *Hardneshe*, appears to be the court for inner Chippenham or Chippenham Within.

Chippenham Without appears to have been treated as a single administrative area in 1281.⁵⁵ A court styled the sheriff's tourn was held at Chippenham Without in April 1502, receiving presentments from tithingmen in all parts of the hundred.⁵⁶ From 1512 two annual courts held in

⁴³ Act for recovery of small debts in the hundreds of Chippenham, Calne, and Damerham North, and liberty of Corsham, 5 Geo. III, c.9.

⁴⁴ WSA, 2622/5.

⁴⁵ *Recs. Chippenham*, xii.

⁴⁶ See *VCH Wilts*, vol. V, 57.

⁴⁷ *Collectanea*, (WRS 12), 53.

⁴⁸ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1268* (WRS, 65), xxx.

⁴⁹ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1268* (WRS, 65), xxx.

⁵⁰ *Crown Pleas of the Wilts. Eyre, 1268* (WRS, 65), xxx.

⁵¹ *Collectanea*, (WRS 12), 52-3.

⁵² For *Hinlond* and *Inlond* see *Recs. Chippenham*, xvi; for Englands, below: Chippenham, borough government, borough lands.

⁵³ *L&P Hen VIII, 1539*, 14 pt 1, no.652. TNA, E179/259/29 part 2.

⁵⁴ TNA, SC 2/208/28.

⁵⁵ *Collectanea*, (WRS 12), 50-128.

⁵⁶ TNA, SC 2/208/29.

spring and autumn were at some times styled view of frankpledge and at others view of frankpledge with manor court. There is no indication of by whom these courts were held, where they were located, or of a three-weekly court.⁵⁷ Chippenham Without was considered too large for a single hundred court and was divided into northern and southern sessions. In the 16th century the southern session included the view of frankpledge for Box, Cadenham (in Bremhill), *Hill* (?Box Hill), Lackham, Leigh Delamere, North Wraxall, Tytherton Lucas and Yatton Keynell.

At the attainder of Lord Hungerford in 1540 the hundred was obliged to maintain stocks, pillory and a tumbrell.⁵⁸ Conflict arose between representatives of the Hungerford and Sharington families over the jurisdiction of the four fairs and the market at Chippenham, and whether they were incident to the manor or hundred.⁵⁹ Violence broke out between the retainers of the two families in 1566 in which the stalls were damaged.⁶⁰ The Sharingtons asserted control and the fairs and market were held by the bailiff of the hundred in 1581.⁶¹ The hundred bailiff's claim to these rights was repeated in 1610.⁶²

The earliest records of the three-weekly hundred court, styled court of the liberty and hundred, date from 1639–70.⁶³ The three volumes of court records contain little apart from pleas of debt, often at the maximum limit (39s. 11d.) that the court could administer. In 1765 an act for the recovery of small debts within Calne, Chippenham and North Damerham hundreds and Corsham liberty considerably reduced the hundred's remaining purpose of resolving disputes relating to debts below 40s.⁶⁴ This was a change to an alternative form of debt recovery court following one established for Bradford, Melksham and Whorwellsdown in 1762,⁶⁵ and preceding the Seven Hundreds of Cirencester (Glos.), where a court of requests was created in 1792.⁶⁶

In 1777 a court held annually in October was styled court leet with view of frankpledge.⁶⁷ This court was held for both the borough and the out-hundred and appointed two high constables for each, as well as a bailiff for the hundred, and was divided into northern and southern sessions. The court for the southern session opened in the old town hall (Yelde Hall) in Chippenham, presided over by George Searle Bayliffe, steward of Chippenham manor. This court appointed tithingmen for 17 tithings: Ashley, Avon, Biddestone St Peter, Box, Cadenham, Hardenhuish, Hartham, Hill, Lackham, Langley Burrell, Leigh Delamere, Nethermore, Pewsham, Tytherton Lucas, Tytherton Kellaways, North Wraxall and Yatton Keynell. The following day a second court was convened at Alderton for the northern session, including the five tithings of Alderton, Littleton Drew, Luckington, Pinkney and Surrendell, presided over by James Dalby, steward of Alderton.

⁵⁷ TNA, SC 2/208/64-66, 68-70, 72-73, 75-76, 78-79.

⁵⁸ *Recs. Chippenham*, 294.

⁵⁹ *Recs. Chippenham*, 293-7; below, Chippenham, markets.

⁶⁰ *Recs. Chippenham*, 292-3.

⁶¹ WSA, 442/1.

⁶² WSA, 442/2.

⁶³ WSA, 2664/1/2H/4.

⁶⁴ Act for recovery of small debts in the hundreds of Chippenham, Calne, and Damerham North, and liberty of Corsham, 5 Geo. III, c.9.

⁶⁵ Act for more easy recovery of small debts within Bradford, Melksham and Whorlstdown, 1762, 3 Geo. III, c.19.

⁶⁶ Act for more easy recovery of small debts within Seven Hundreds of Cirencester, 1792, 32 Geo. III, c.77.

⁶⁷ WSA, 212A/27/21/5.

The court held in 1794 described revised arrangements of the northern session.⁶⁸ At some time between 1785 and 1794 the session split, opening at Littleton Drew at 11am, then adjourning to continue at Alderton from midday. By 1794 the tithingman of Easton Grey had joined the five tithingmen present at the Alderton session in 1777 as well as the haywards of Alderton, Easton Grey, Littleton Drew and Pinkney.

Tithingmen made all presentments at the hundred court until 1795, but thereafter they were made by a combination of constables and tithingmen, with constables making the presentments for Alderton, Box, Easton Grey, Hardenhuish, Langley Burrell, Leigh Delamere, Littleton Drew, Luckington, North Wraxall and Yatton Keynell.⁶⁹ From 1808 the southern session empanelled two juries: one for the borough and one for the section of the out-hundred attending the court.

The northern session held in 1839 was styled a court leet and view of frankpledge with court baron of Maurice Fenwick, the lord of the hundred, meeting in 'the accustomed place' at Littleton Drew, and then adjourning to the Crescent Inn at Easton Grey.⁷⁰ At the southern session in Chippenham there were some changes in the recorded officers: two high constables were appointed, rather than four, with no distinction as to whether they served the out-hundred or borough; the tithingman of Ford made a presentment for the first time; and five haywards were appointed for Box, Hill, Leigh Delamere, North Wraxall and Yatton Keynell. By 1839 only one jury was empanelled for the northern session.

Although Castle Combe held a court leet, and the tithingman did not present at Chippenham hundred, Thomas Child of Castle Combe, yeoman, was still considered a suitable candidate to serve as high constable in 1839.⁷¹

When the hundred was leased to Mr Gale around 1850 the single annual court was styled a court leet and rendered 24s. *court silver* together with the tolls of fairs and markets amounting to £12 and the standings of fairs and markets, two-thirds of the old town hall and a half-acre leased at Greenway Lane, collectively worth £2.⁷² The bailiff's salary was £8.⁷³

⁶⁸ WSA, 2622/4.

⁶⁹ WSA, 2622/4.

⁷⁰ WSA, 2622/5.

⁷¹ WSA, 2622/5.

⁷² WSA, 1305/77.

⁷³ WSA, 1305/77.