

LANDOWNERSHIP

For over 850 years most of Taunton including the borough formed part of the bishops of Winchester's manor of Taunton Deane whose capital messuage was Taunton Castle in Bishops Hull. The main freehold was Taunton Priory manor and most borough property was held in free burgage without payment of fines and heriots. By 1612 the c. 75 free suitors included Sir Henry Portman and the earl of Bath.¹ In the mid 13th century the only episcopal tithing with free tenants was Holway, which included land outside Taunton, and even they paid rents to the bishop of 10s. a virgate or more.² Most copyholders in the post medieval period were not occupiers, some did not even live locally, and subdivision and subletting was probably widespread.³ By the 19th century for most purposes copyholders were regarded as owners.⁴ In 1849 there were said to be 260 freehold burgages, which still owed suit of court and small rents to the bishops of Winchester.⁵ In the 20th century most property in the town was owner occupied.⁶

TAUNTON DEANE MANOR

According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles in 710 King Ine fought King Geraint of Dumnonia and built a stronghold at Taunton, possibly the Tone was then a border with that British kingdom. The rebel Eadberht took the stronghold and in 722 was driven out by Queen Aethelburh who destroyed it.⁷ If Ine took the land from Dumnonia Taunton may have been retained as a royal estate. It was said to have been given by Queen Frithogyth or Frideswide

¹ SHC, DD/SP/331.

² T.J. Hunt, *The Medieval Customs of Taunton Manor* (SRS 66), 62—5. The names in the custumal appear in pipe rolls of the 1250s

³ e.g. Canon Street tithing: SHC, DD/HC/161/1.

⁴ e.g. SHC, tithe awards St James and St Mary.

⁵ SHC, DD/SP/65.

⁶ SHC, D/LT/t.

⁷ *VCH Som.* II, 176; A. Savage (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (1983), 58—60; M. Swanton (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (1996), 42—3.

wife of Aethelheard, Ine's successor, to the church of Winchester before 737. It not clear how or why but she is credited with restoring and endowing Taunton minster.⁸ A charter of Aethelheard refers to his queen's gift but that is a later interpolation, which also appears in a fabricated charter of Aethelwulf of 854.⁹ The minster tenants had to provide the king with a night's provisions and his falconers with nine nights, maintain eight hounds and their keepers, escort travellers to the nearest royal residence and transport the king's goods to Williton or Curry as required. In 904 King Edward the elder freed bishop Denewulf of Winchester's Taunton minster estate from those dues and the bishop possibly acquired at least part of a royal estate at Taunton.¹⁰ However, that may have been lost later, perhaps as part of an attempt to reform the Winchester see. A spurious charter dated 947 claiming to restore Taunton to Winchester was considered necessary at a later date as kings continued to grant out the bishopric's lands.¹¹ King Eadwig let Taunton to bishop Aelfsige in his personal capacity and in his will of the 950s Aelfsige surrendered it to the king. Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester gave a large quantity of gold and silver c. 970 to King Edgar and Queen Aelfthryth to have Taunton with full jurisdiction over the tenants, which can be seen as establishing the manor and hundred of Taunton.¹² Queen Aelfthryth is said to have negotiated an agreement whereby existing royal tenants could hold their lands for life with reversion to the bishopric of Winchester.¹³ The spurious charters probably date from the late 10th or early 11th century and may have been made to support the purchase of the charter c. 970 or to secure the bishopric's estate from depredations thereafter.¹⁴

⁸ H.P.R. Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester, 1964), 115; T Jones, ed. *Brenhinead y Saesson, Kings of the Saxons* (1971), 7; S. Pearce, *The Kingdom of Dumnonia* (Padstow, 1978), 113; below, rel. hist.

⁹ Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 115, 122, 126; Pearce, *Kingdom of Dumnonia*, 197.

¹⁰ Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 80, 128, 222—3. The interpolations concerning Taunton's privileges are later additions.

¹¹ *Bk of Fees*, I, 84; Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 135, 228—230.

¹² Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 47, 54, 144.—5, 228—30.

¹³ 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 of Wessex*, 230.

¹⁴ Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 234—5. 242—3.

By 1066 Stigand, who had been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury but until 1070 also remained bishop of Winchester, had a demesne free of geld and paid geld on 54 ½ hides together named Taunton although covering many parishes. The manor passed to Stigand's successors as bishops of Winchester.¹⁵ In 1284 the king released all claims to the manors of the bishops of Winchester, all fairs and markets and the hundred.¹⁶ The manor was regarded as a barony held of the king, who held it when the see was vacant.¹⁷

In 1551 the bishop gave Taunton to the Crown for other lands and although restored to bishop John Whyte in 1558, on his deprivation in 1559 it again went to the Crown and was excluded from the restoration of the bishopric estates to his successor Robert Horne in 1561.¹⁸ Instead the queen leased the castle, the manor and the borough to Sir Francis Knollys, his wife Catherine and their son Robert for a rent of £558 1s. 4 7/8 d.¹⁹ The lease remained in being in 1575 when Taunton was restored to Horne who granted sums to the Crown amounting to all the rents but from 1594 £400 a year was returned to the bishop.²⁰

After the Civil War the bishopric estates were confiscated and Taunton Deane manor was sold in 1647 in trust for the wealthy lawyer Roger Hill.²¹ He may not have been popular as few if any tenants paid the acknowledgement fee due to a new lord and there may have been difficulty collecting rents and dues.²² In 1662 he surrendered it and it was restored to the Winchester see.²³ The borough had been let separately to George Searle MP and Samuel Whetcombe, one of the constables, also unpopular as rents were in arrears and officers lax in attending court. After the Restoration it was also restored to Winchester.²⁴

¹⁵ *Domesday*, 234.

¹⁶ *Cal. Chart.* 1257—1300, 274.

¹⁷ *Feud. Aids*, IV, 284; *Cal. Lib. R.* 1245—51, p. 56.

¹⁸ *Acts of P.C.* 1550—2, p. 359; TNA, STAC3/6/48; *Cal. Pat.* 1557—8, 146—7; 1560—3, 146.

¹⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1560—3, 16.

²⁰ TNA, E210/10908; E355/269; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1591—4, p. 495; C. Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, p. 235

²¹ SHC, DD/X/WA/2—4, 6.

²² SHC, DD/SP/325/198a—203.

²³ SHC, D/X/WA/7; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1661—2, 372.

²⁴ H. Byard Sheppard, *Courts Leet and the Court Leet of the Borough of Taunton* (Taunton, 1909), 7, 35.

The very generous copyholds, later referred to as customary freeholds, allowed tenants to amass substantial estates.²⁵ Although the default inheritance was a form of borough english with the youngest son or daughter inheriting, most land passed by surrender and the customary rights of widows allowed them to keep their holdings on remarriage. Dormant surrenders were provisional and could be revoked, corrody surrenders made provision for elderly relatives, mortgage surrenders were a safe means of borrowing money and dayne surrenders allowed a tenant by parting with a dayne, a tiny piece of land, to retain the rest for life knowing it would pass securely to the dayne holder. Tenants could exchange lands for 8d. enabling them to gain more coherent holdings. Unusually tenants might live off the manor without licence, which may have encouraged non-residents to invest.²⁶ In the borough ancient burgages were freehold but extensions onto waste were not so one house in High Street had a freehold hall and kitchen but a copyhold parlour.²⁷ Quit rents, heriots and fees were fixed according to the nominal size of the holding. In 1813—14 the bishop, being unable to increase his traditional rents and fees, charged 4s. 4d. for acquittances of rent, which led to increasing difficulty in getting rents paid.²⁸

In 1822 the manor was sold by the then bishop and the commissioners for land tax redemption to Thomas Southwood of Pitminster, excluding existing leaseholds and mineral rights, still retained by the bishop.²⁹ Southwood left his estates to Robert Mattock (d. 1859) who secured a release of claim from Southwood's heirs in 1831.³⁰ In 1842 he sold the area of the manor known as Holway hundred with the castle tithing or liberty and borough to William Kinglake, owner of Taunton Priory manor, for over £11,000. In 1849—50 William sold the borough and castle tithing, except for enfranchised property, back to Mattock who

²⁵ TNA, C1/335/91.

²⁶ G.B Shillibeer, *The Ancient Customs of the Manor of Taunton Deane...1817* (Taunton, 1821), passim.

²⁷ SHC, DD/HLM/8.

²⁸ SHC, DD/DP/43/4/7.

²⁹ SHC, DD/C/297.

³⁰ SHC, DD/SAS/S1122/1/35.

made William's sons Arthur and John clerk and steward of the castle. The borough estate by then comprised two houses and parcels of former manorial waste. Mattock left what remained unsold of the manor in trust for his nephew, also Robert Mattock, who put everything up for sale in 1866.³¹ The purchaser of the borough was lawyer Edward William Cox (d.1879), son of a Taunton ironmonger, who enfranchised the copyholds but retained lordship, which passed to his son Irwin (d. 1927) who died childless and whose brother Henry was a bankrupt.³² The manor and borough were considered worthless and the receiver in bankruptcy sold them for £350 in 1925 to Herbert Byard Sheppard (d. 1928) who had managed the manor. He was followed by his widow Beatrice (d. 1947), their elder daughter Beatrice (d. 1973), wife of Harold White, and her son John White.³³ The elder Beatrice extinguished the manorial rents for the borough in 1935 leaving only a nominal lordship.³⁴

William Kinglake (d.1852) left Holway hundred with his manors to his sons Alexander (d. 1891) and John (d. 1898).³⁵ They sold off and enfranchised all the land between 1853 and 1873 raising over £11,000.³⁶ Holway hundred and the Taunton priory lordship passed to John's widow Louisa who in 1898 gave them to her son Hamilton (d. 1923) but they were considered of no value by 1910.³⁷ His sister and heir Grace wife of banker William Harford died in 1928 when her Taunton estate passed to her second daughter Beata who tried unsuccessfully to enforce quit rents in the 1930s and lordship lapsed.³⁸

Pyrland

³¹ SHC, A/ASW/1; DD/AY/3; DD/SAS/S1122/1/35; DD/SP/461; B.L. Add. MS 30293; Bishops Hull, landownership.

³² VCH office, draft history containing inf. supplied by then Steward of Taunton Deane ; National Probate Register.

³³ SHC, A/EDJ/1/2; DD/IR/T/26/4, p. 19; DD/SP/461.

³⁴ SHC, DD/AY/76.

³⁵ SHC, A/ASW/1; Q/AC/13; Q/APb/3/52; DD/AY/11.

³⁶ SHC, DD/AY/28.

³⁷ SHC, DD/IR/T/26/4, p. 19.

³⁸ SHC, DD/AY/3, 73—4; *Taunton and West Somerset Annual 1897*(Taunton, 1896), 125.

Pyrland was a tithing in Taunton Deane manor and later became a coherent estate. In 1523 the house on the largest holding had a hall with chamber and solar at its upper end.³⁹

Presumably that was the Old Farm House with gardens held by John Grove, merchant, before 1737, then by George Deane (d. 1742) and his daughter Elizabeth (d. 1744). Elizabeth left her estates to Elizabeth Dyke later wife of Sir Thomas Acland but it was encumbered by George Deane's trusts and debts including £5,000 to his goddaughter Henrietta Johnson.⁴⁰ In 1747 Sir Thomas and Lady Acland agreed to surrender the premises to Henrietta so that it could be settled on her marriage to John Griffith the younger. By 1752 it was known as Pyrland House and in 1753 was sold to William Yea but difficulties over title took several years to resolve.⁴¹ Sir William also acquired Rapshill to the east with a homestead in Kingston parish, and by 1763 Slapes farm to the south-east, held by the Slape family possibly since 1614.⁴² By the 1830s the Yea's Pyrland estate comprised at least six 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.⁴³

Sir William Yea (cr. Bt in 1759) also acquired property in Taunton borough in an attempt to gain a Parliamentary seat, even allowing valuable properties to fall down, and in 1763 he considered buying the priory manor.⁴⁴ Sir William (d. 1806) was succeeded by his grandson Sir William Walter Yea (d.1862) whose sons predeceased him and whose brother died childless in 1864.⁴⁵ William Walter spent most of his life in an asylum and the estate (c. 225 a.) was run by his mother Jane who let it to Richard Meade King.⁴⁶ Sir William Walter's three daughters Eleanora, Charlotte wife of Cholmeley Dering and Julia wife of Henry Thompson sold the Pyrland Hall estate (c. 132 a.) before 1872 to Arthur Malet and their

³⁹ SHC, DD/SP/71, ff. 41—9; T/PH/win 1523—4.

⁴⁰ SHC, DD/HLM/8; DD/SP/319/45; DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, 217—49; DD/CH/76/4.

⁴¹ SHC, DD/CH/76/4; DD/SP/319/56, 60—1; BL, Add MS 47010, f. 172.

⁴² SHC, DD/DR/28; DD/PH/216/98.

⁴³ SHC, DD/SP/257 (Staplegrove 10, 1836).

⁴⁴ SHC, Q/AC/4; DD/HC/104/2/1, 126/6/1; Q/REL/35/25b (1792).

⁴⁵ Taunton St James, memorial inscriptions.

⁴⁶ SHC, DD/DR/28; DD/TAC/5/5/1.

trustees sold remaining land in lots in 1911.⁴⁷ George Withington (d. 1896) bought Pyrland before 1881 but his son predeceased him and his trustees sold the estate in 1919.⁴⁸ Col. Ernest Pemberton bought the hall and grounds and Pyrland Hall farm (119 a.) and during the Second World War the estate was a British Army camp.⁴⁹ In 1951 the house and grounds were bought by Kings College, Taunton for a junior school, which remained open in the 2020s, and remaining land was acquired by the National Trust.⁵⁰

Pyrland House was presumably the later Old Pyrland or Pyrland Hall Farm, which was replaced by New Pyrland or Pyrland Hall further west *c.* 1758 for Sir William Yea. About 20 a. of farmland was converted into a park crossed by a line of fishponds, with shrubberies and a pair of tree-lined avenues approaching the hall from the north.⁵¹ The deer were said to have been destroyed by poaching by the 1780s by the family of the housekeeper who later carried out a violent robbery at the hall.⁵² By 1878 Pyrland Hall had been extensively modernised and had a gas plant capable of supplying 120 lamps, central heating and bathrooms, oak floors, marble fire surrounds in the main rooms, plate glass windows, extensive cellarage in the basement and three new staff cottages.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴ The three-storey south façade has five bays, the central one breaking forward with three narrow windows on the upper floors and each outer bay having a single wide window. The stone façade is flanked by large single-storey rectangular pavilions,

⁴⁷ Taunton St James, memorial inscriptions; SHC, DD/CH/86/6; tithe award St James; DD/SCL/40.

⁴⁸ 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).

⁴⁹ SHC, D/R/ta/14/16/4; A/ARG/9.

⁵⁰ 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.

⁵¹ SHC, DD/CH/76/4; DD/HC/43/1; tithe award, St James.

⁵² SHC, DD/HC/43/1, 96/8.

⁵³ SHC, DD/CH/86/6.

⁵⁴ TNA, IR 58/3512 (3512).

which are linked across the front of the house by a covered eight-pillared arcade or portico accessed by French windows. The rear forms a brick quadrangle.⁵⁵

The old house, later Pyrland Hall Farm is a rough-cast stone building under a slate roof divided into two dwellings by 1951.⁵⁶ The lower and probably older south-west range of five wide bays with irregular fenestration is buttressed and has been extended west and north. The tall east-facing range with its gable end chimneys and sash windows is probably a later addition. In the large farmyard behind the house are several ranges of brick farmbuildings with tiled roofs, at least one with pantiles, which may date from the late 18th or early 19th century.

TAUNTON PRIORY MANOR

Taunton probably had a minster in the 7th century and in 1084 the priests of Taunton held two hides and a virgate, which possibly became part of the later priory estate.⁵⁷ In 1115 the priory was founded and endowed by William Giffard, bishop of Winchester. His gifts and those of Henry of Blois in 1158 included the land outside the east gate, later known as Extra Portam Prioris and the Sherford Stream for milling and the lands beside it in Wilton.⁵⁸ Further gifts by private individuals probably accounted for an estate at Obridge held by the priory 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 1536.⁵⁹ Each area had its own court and was treated as a separate manor. Excluding Obridge and tithes, over £50 came from Taunton property most of which went on clergy stipends and weekly alms to the poor.⁶⁰ Up to 18 cottages in Canon Street tithing belonged to the pittance office and were later known as

⁵⁵ SHC, DD/CH/86/6

⁵⁶ AHC, DD/MKG/28.

⁵⁷ *VCH Som.* I, 527.

⁵⁸ Below, rel. hist.; Wilton, landownership; SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2; B.L. Add. Ch. 16332; *Cal. Misc.* II, p. 74; *Cal. Chart* 1327—41, pp. 312, 316, 318; *PSANHS*, LXXXVIII, 118.

⁵⁹ B.L. Add. Ch. 16332; *Cal. Pat.* 1405—8, 196; *Valor. Eccl.* I, 169—70.

⁶⁰ *Valor. Eccl.* I, 169—70.

Petensary rents.⁶¹ In 1538—9 the priory's Taunton estate comprised the site and demesnes, let to tenants, Canon Street, Extra Portam Jacobi, estates in Obridge and Grasscroft in Taunton St James, land in Kingston St Mary, Taunton St Mary and West Monkton, and the tithes of both Taunton parishes and 12 mills belonging to the bishop of Winchester in Taunton hundred.⁶² The priory estate was charged with a pension to Bisham priory, also of Augustinian canons, in Berkshire⁶³ but also received 3*d.* a year from the hospital of St Margaret in West Monkton until the 18th century or later.⁶⁴ After the Dissolution the priory estate, said in 1839 to have covered 321 a. excluding town property, was regarded as part of the outfaring hundred of Taunton Deane.⁶⁵

In 1541 the king let the site and demesnes (c. 150 a.) with the tithes to royal servant John Ogan but they were bought in 1544 by Sir Francis Brian and Matthew Colthurst to hold for one twentieth of a knight's fee.⁶⁶ In 1549 Matthew sold to Thomas More.⁶⁷ Also in 1544 and 1545 John Pope bought and sold some of the Canon Street property and Thomas Godwyn bought the rest with Grasscroft and messuages in the borough to hold in free socage, possibly in trusts as they were later held by the Chaplin family.⁶⁸ In 1545 Taunton merchant William Chaplin with John Selwood bought the Extra Portam lands, and with William Leonard bought borough property but refused to convey one house to Leonard who had paid for it. There were many similar disputes between purchasers of priory land, most of whom were

⁶¹ SHC, DD/SP/409 (c. 1620, 1680, 1757).

⁶² Gloucs. R.O., D 326/T169; Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, supp., 86—91.

⁶³ Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, supp., 6.

⁶⁴ SHC, DD/HC/161/1.

⁶⁵ SHC, DD/SP/22/50; 36—47; TNA, IR 18/8802; below, local govt.

⁶⁶ *L&P Hen. VIII*, VIII, p. 723; Gloucs. R.O., D 326/T169; TNA, C66/760, m. 38.

⁶⁷ *Cal. Pat.* 1549—51, 53; Gloucs. R.O., D 326/T169.

⁶⁸ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XIX (2), p. 190, 192; TNA, SC6/EdwVI/402; PROB 11/52/319; S.W. Bates-Harbin, *Som. Enrolled Deeds*, pp. 78—9, 87; SHC, DD/SAS/C112/16. Chaplin is also spelt Chapeleyn and Chaplyn.

Taunton merchants.⁶⁹ John Chaplin, presumably related to William, had former priory land at Grasscroft *c.* 1568.⁷⁰ The manor of Obridge was sold off as a separate entity.⁷¹

William Chaplin ran his estate, consisting of Canon Street and Extra Portam tithings, as the manor of Taunton Priory.⁷² William (d. 1570) left the Canon Street estate and former pittancer's lands to his son Roger and Extra Portam with his mansion house and other former monastic property he gave to his wife Beatrix for life and then to his younger son Richard. He required that his estates follow the customs of Taunton Deane manor, which they did as a single manor until enfranchisement.⁷³ By 1605 the manor comprised 34 tenements, 114 cottages some divided into as many as eight dwellings, the St James' church house, a burgage near the East Gate and parcels of land including 4 a. in Holway, 1 a. at the Spital and six closes at Creechbarrow in West Monkton.⁷⁴ Roger (d. *c.* 1615) was followed by his grandson Roger son of his elder son Thomas.⁷⁵ Roger (d. 1628) succeeded to all his great grandfather's lands and in addition to the manor of Taunton late priory held of the king's manor of Canford and for which he kept courts, he had several small holdings including a 2-a. close held by knight service.⁷⁶ In 1622 he was in dispute with William, another grandson of William Chaplin, but in 1627 they settled and Roger (d. 1628) took possession of the capital messuage in St James Street and left his estates to his wife and then unborn child who was baptised Mary just before his death.⁷⁷ The manor was variously called Upper Priory or Chaplin's Hole or Hold and the tithings of Canon Street and Extra Portam were often described as a separate manor.⁷⁸ Mary Chaplin (d. 1710) married John Sweeting of Thorncombe, Bicknoller (d.

⁶⁹ *L&P Hen. VIII*, X, p. 211; TNA, E 318/26/258; C 1/1141/49; C 1/1357/33—5, 74—6.

⁷⁰ Bates-Harbin *Som. Enrolled Deeds*, pp. 78—9, 87. Land at Grasscroft later belonged to the Town Lands Charity.

⁷¹ Below, this section.

⁷² TNA, C 1/157/33—5; DD/SP/375.

⁷³ TNA, PROB 11/52/319; SHC, DD/SP/376; DD/SAS/2273/1/D2/1.

⁷⁴ SHC, DD/SP/409.

⁷⁵ TNA, C 78/246, no 11.

⁷⁶ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/138; M. Hawkins, *Sales of Wards 1603—41*, pp. 94—5.

⁷⁷ TNA, C78/281, no. 15: at waalt.uh.edu/index.php/C78 accessed May 2021; SHC, DD/SAS/C112/17.

⁷⁸ TNA, C6/271/15; DD/DP/80/1, 350 (1673).

1688)⁷⁹ and 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). Her eldest son Joseph Sweeting (d. 1772) mortgaged the manor in 1748 and 1750 and it became subject to litigation.⁸⁰ 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 Joseph also acted as steward, which was of doubtful legality.⁸¹ Joseph Sweeting 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 Sweeting, whose representatives continued to sue for the estate including Abraham Perry Sweeting a naval surgeon who acted as lord from 1774—7 as devisee of Barbara.⁸² However, 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.⁸³ In 1781 Barbara's executors released all claim to Betty who left it to her youngest son Brudenell Wansbrough.⁸⁴ Brudenell (d. 1785) being childless left it to John Rogers, minor grandson of his half-brother John Sweeting.⁸⁵ In 1819 John Rogers and his trustee sold the manor to William Kinglake and it descended with William's other estates until enfranchised.⁸⁶

Priory demesne

Thomas More made a great deal of money from the former priory, built a house on the site, wore a gold chain worth £100 and married his children into landed families. In 1556 he settled the estate on Jasper (d. 1610 *s.p.*), his son by his second wife Elizabeth. Thomas died

⁷⁹ TNA, CP25/2/869/2 WILLIAM&MARYTRIN.; SHC, D/P/bic/2/1/2—3; DD/SP/360; Bicknoller ch., memorial inscriptions.

⁸⁰ *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.

⁸¹ SHC, DD/HC/16/7/6, 64/1/4, 126/6/1; D/DC/tau.d/25 (803); DD/DR/28.

⁸² SHC, DD/HC/16/7/10, 28; DD/HC/73/1; DD/HC/111/1/6; DD/HC/134/1/12—15; DD/SP/378.

⁸³ SHC, DD/HC/74/5/93—4.

⁸⁴ SHC, 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.

⁸⁵ TNA, PROB 11/1131/163; SHC, DD/AY/2; DD/SAS/C112/18/4.

⁸⁶ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25 (803); DD/AY/3, 6; above, this section.

in 1575, his eldest son Robert died childless and his second son Francis (d. 1595—6)⁸⁷ left infant sons Francis (d. 1596) and Thomas.⁸⁸ The younger Thomas inherited the estates of his childless uncles and c. 1624 brought an action for wasting timber on the priory site against Jasper's niece Elizabeth (fl. 1643), who held a life interest, and her second husband Sir William Guise (d. c. 1643).⁸⁹ The 'handsome' house was uninhabited in 1633 but the estate comprised a capital messuage and 260a. worth £60.⁹⁰ Thomas More (d. 1626) left his son Thomas a minor and the wardship was sold to the child's mother Rachel and her Wyndham relatives.⁹¹ When Thomas died in 1695 his estate was divided between his four surviving daughters. The priory passed to Rachel wife of Hugh Bickham.⁹² Hugh (d. 1724) left the estate after her death to their son Hugh.⁹³ Rachel (d. c. 1743) mortgaged the whole estate extending into Cheddon and West Monkton.⁹⁴

Litigation ensued as the estate was insufficient to meet debts. In 1750 Jane Bickham, widow of Hugh the younger, sued Rachel's executors and permission was given for John Halliday to buy Upper Priory or Priorswood farm (134 a.), which he added to his Yard estate.⁹⁵ Thomas Browne as Hugh Bickham's executor sold Lower Priory manor (c. 100 a.) to Philip Winter in 1767 except for the house and garden which had been bought by Jane.⁹⁶ Philip Winter (d. 1774) left it to his nephew Charles for life and then to Charles's son John (d. 1830).⁹⁷ 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). It passed to their nephews

⁸⁷ The sources do not agree on the date of the elder Francis's death: C 142/247/44 (1595), C78/143, no. 12 (1596).

⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/58/109; C 142/244/100; C 142/247/44; Gloucs. R.O., D326/T169.

⁸⁹ TNA, C2/JasI/M9/56; PROB10/639/20. It was presumably a life interest as her children did not inherit.

⁹⁰ E. H. Bates, *Gerard's Survey of Somerset, 1633*, 59.

⁹¹ TNA, C142/423/69; C142/439/43; M. Hawkins, *Sales of Wards 1603—41*, pp. 39—40.

⁹² Toulmin, *History of Taunton*, rev. J. Savage (Taunton, 1822), 96—7.

⁹³ TNA, PROB 11/595/382

⁹⁴ SHC, DD/MY/7.

⁹⁵ SHC, DD/MY/7; above this section.

⁹⁶ SHC, DD/PRY/7.

⁹⁷ SHC, Q/REI/35/25b; DD/LP/1, 3; tithe award St James.

Samuel (d. 1914) and William Fisher (d. 1922) who divided it and sold part for housing development. Their heirs sold the rest to the Priory Land Development Company in 1923.⁹⁸

Yard and Lyngford

Those estates were created out of Taunton Priory and Taunton Deane manors north of the river and were held by the lay rectors of Taunton St James.⁹⁹ Yard or Yarde, north-west of the town bridge and remembered in Yarde Place, comprised six half-virgate tenements and unspecified overland in 1647. It also included cottages, riverbank and fishery rights.

Lyngford, including Priorswood farm, lay in the rural north-east. Most of Yard and Priorswood farm were exempt from all tithe and the rest from small tithe as former priory land.¹⁰⁰

Thomas Hill reportedly built the 'fair' house with gardens and orchards near the town bridge but Thomas, a wealthy clothier, does not seem to have held Yard.¹⁰¹ Another 17th-century source has William Hill (d. c. 1538), father of Taunton merchant Roger Hill (d. 1545), as living at Yard.¹⁰² Roger's younger son Robert Hill (d. 1581) held Yard and added several Taunton Deane copyholds in Millane tithing.¹⁰³ His son James forfeited Yard to his sister Jane's husband Thomas Brereton (d. 1602) by defaulting on a large mortgage. Jane (d. 1615) married secondly Sir William Courtenay of Powderham, Devon and Yard passed to her son Thomas Brereton.¹⁰⁴ Thomas (d. 1632), MP for Taunton, settled his estate on his wife Elizabeth Anketil for life and then on his nephew (Sir) Francis Anketil, son of his sister

⁹⁸ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/6 (1028); DD/DP, box 126; above, intro.

⁹⁹ Below, rel. hist.

¹⁰⁰ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, p. 59; DD/CC/21; tithe award, St James.

¹⁰¹ E. H. Bates, *Gerard's Survey of Somerset, 1633*, 58.

¹⁰² SHC, DD/X/VNL/2; S. Rawlins and I. F. Jones, *Som. Wills from Exeter* (SRS 62), 20; TNA, PROB11/31/105.

¹⁰³ SHC, DD/SP/71, ff. 56—7; TNA, C142/197/59; PROB11/63/360.

¹⁰⁴ SHC, DD/SP/71, ff. 56—7; 325/136.

Jane.¹⁰⁵ Francis (d. 1635) predeceased his aunt Elizabeth Brereton (d. 1652) and the estate eventually passed to his son Brereton.¹⁰⁶ Brereton Anketil (o.s.p. 1661) left most of his Taunton estates to his cousin Francis (d. 1696) son of the Revd Henry Anketil, brother of Elizabeth.¹⁰⁷ Francis's son Francis (d. Dec. 1734) settled his estate in 1698 and his only son Francis having died childless in January 1734 it passed to his surviving daughters Anne and Jane.¹⁰⁸ They apparently leased Yard to John Halliday of Warminster, Wilts., who was resident there by 1737.¹⁰⁹

The Yard estate was subject to litigation in Chancery and the court ordered its sale. After protracted negotiations in the 1740s it was bought by Mary Welman, wife of John Halliday (d. 1754), with her £3,000 marriage portion.¹¹⁰ Mary (d. 1792) left her estate to her six younger children with the proviso that if her second son Simon (d. 1791) inherited the paternal estate, including Totterdells at Lyngford and Priorswood farm, he should not have a share in hers. However, the estate was surrendered to her eldest son John Halliday (d. 1805).¹¹¹ His father had bought Obridge manor, Totterdells and in 1754 an estate in Rowbarton from the Southerton family.¹¹² Both father and son served as MP for Taunton.¹¹³

The younger John's children were illegitimate and he left Yard and Lyngford in trust for sale. His surviving sisters Mary, Elizabeth and Prudence bought Yard House and 21 a. of ground for £4,000. The rest was bought by their brother Edmund Trowbridge Halliday (d. 1813) and his wife Jane (d. 1830).¹¹⁴ Prudence died in 1813, Mary in 1818 and Elizabeth (d.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, PROB 11/63/360; C142/526/18; historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-129 (Thomas Brereton); SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/8.

¹⁰⁶ Hawkins, *Sale of Wards, 1603—41*, pp. 4—5; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/2; *Alumni Oxon.* (Brereton Anketil).

¹⁰⁷ TNA, PROB 11/304/206; SHC, DD/DP/79, 86 (Staplegrove 100, 1661), 135.

¹⁰⁸ 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).

¹⁰⁹ SHC, DD/HLM/8; DD/MY/7.

¹¹⁰ Wilts and Swindon HC 445/40, 45; SHC, DD/CC/21; DD/MY/6; TNA PROB11/813/380.

¹¹¹ SHC, DD/CH/62; DD/CC/21; Q/REI/35/25a; TNA PROB11/1226/198; PROB11/1433/183.

¹¹² SHC, DD/MY/7; below, this section, Obridge.

¹¹³ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1754—1790*; historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790, s.v. Taunton: accessed 17 Oct. 2019.

¹¹⁴ SHC, DD/CH/62; DD/DP/43/14/15 (1805); DD/MY/40; TNA PROB11/1433/183; PROB11/1548/205.

1830) left Yard to her nephew the Revd Edmund Trowbridge Halliday, son of her brother Edmund, requiring him to provide for her brother Simon's son Simon Welman Halliday for life and for the children of his own deceased brother John (d. 1826).¹¹⁵ Like his aunts Edmund (d. 1844) lived at Yard House and remained unmarried. He left his estate to be sold to provide for John's children but gave his sister Mary, wife of Peter Mynors, the right to buy the house and grounds to the north as far as the canal including large houses along Staplegrove Road for £6,000.¹¹⁶ She bought Yard but sold it in 1846 to Samuel Curry, brickmaker, who enfranchised it. The house was demolished before 1849, roads were laid through the grounds and the entire property was sold piecemeal for housing development.¹¹⁷ The rest of the original Yard estate lying to the south of the house bordering the river and Priorswood farm were divided on the death of Jane Halliday in 1830 with the Yard land going to her son the Revd Edmund Trowbridge Halliday (d. 1844) and Priorswood to her son John's widow Anne Innes Halliday (d. 1871).¹¹⁸ The Yard land was sold piecemeal for development, some Priorswood land went to build the railway and the rest for housing.¹¹⁹ Charles Welsh bought Lyngford and added to it before 1839 to create Lyngford farm whose medieval farmhouse survives although the land was developed for housing in the early 20th century.¹²⁰

Nothing remains of the 16th-century 'fair' house or its successor.¹²¹ Yard House stood in large grounds in 1839 with entrance pillars surmounted by stone spaniels at the head of a large flight of steps. The vestibule contained portraits and busts of the Halliday family. Yard

¹¹⁵ SHC, D/P/pit/2/1/7; TNA PROB11/1601/407, 437; PROB11/1766/396.

¹¹⁶ SHC, tithe award St James; DD/CH/61; DD/DK/13; TNA, PROB11/2012/224.

¹¹⁷ SHC, DD/CH/61—2; above intro.

¹¹⁸ TNA, PROB11/1548/205; SHC, Q/REI/35/25a; tithe award, St James; DD/DK/13; *Nat. Probate Cal.* 1871 (A.I. Halliday).

¹¹⁹ SHC, DD/DP/43/13; above intro.

¹²⁰ SHC, Q/REI/35/25a (1808—32); DD/DP/49/4; tithe award, St James; above, intro.; below, econ. hist., agric.

¹²¹ SHC, DD/MY/40.

and North Town Houses, 1—2 Staplegrove Road, stand on the site.¹²² A workshop in Wood Street with rubble walls may be part of the stables said to survive *c.* 1880.¹²³

OBRIDGE

In 1304 the Lambright, possibly Lambrook, family had mills and one and a half virgate of arable in Obridge, then called Tobridge.¹²⁴ By 1319 Obridge manor, whose lands extended into Kingston St Mary parish and along the north side of East Reach, belonged to Taunton Priory, which retained it until the Dissolution.¹²⁵ However, in 1340 Richard de Acton let a capital messuage at Obridge to Sara widow of William de Thorne in return for her dower lands there.¹²⁶ In 1544 the Kingston tenement rents were sold to Thomas Hill to hold in chief for a fortieth of a fee and later passed to the Warres of Hestercombe with 35 a. at Lyngford, probably Wellsprings farm.¹²⁷

In 1545 the manor was sold to Alexander Popham and William Halley to hold in chief for a twentieth of a fee.¹²⁸ The following year Popham was licensed to alienate to Robert Hill (d. 1581).¹²⁹ In 1584 James the indebted son of Robert Hill alienated it to Thomas Symes presumably on mortgage.¹³⁰ Like Yard it passed to Thomas Brereton husband of James's sister Jane whose second husband Sir William Courtenay paid the tithe rent to the Crown for the manor in 1605.¹³¹ Obridge descended like Yard to Francis Anketil (d. 1734) who settled Obridge on his son Francis who predeceased him leaving it to his wife Sarah.¹³² Sarah released Obridge, to her husband's sisters Anne and Jane who with their husbands settled it in

¹²² Goldsworthy, *Recollections of Old Taunton*, 5; SHC, tithe award, St James; DD/CHA/22.

¹²³ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7.

¹²⁴ E. Green, *Feet of Fines 1196—1307* (SRS 6), 330.

¹²⁵ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/19 (581); B.L. Add. Ch. 16332.

¹²⁶ B.L., Add. Ch. 25893.

¹²⁷ TNA, SC6/EdwVI/402; C2/Eliz2/K5/52; SHC, DD/DP/63/4; DD/MK/24.

¹²⁸ *L&P Hen. VIII*, X, p. 125.

¹²⁹ Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, p. 77.

¹³⁰ *Cal. Pat.* 1583—4, p. 165; TNA, CP 25/2/205/26 ELIZIEASTER.

¹³¹ TNA, PROB 11/63/360; Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, p. 77; below, rel. hist.

¹³² TNA, C 142/479/65; PROB 11/663/275; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/9 (1 Feb. 1733/4); Dors. HC, PE/SPV:RE1/1 (4 Dec. 1734).

trust for sale in 1737.¹³³ John Halliday bought Obridge manor, which he settled on trustees in 1752, the year he bought Totterdells at Lyngford, described as being divided between Obridge and Taunton Deane manors, after protracted litigation.¹³⁴

Obridge was presumably sold with other Halliday land in 1804 and was divided between many landowners. Robert Edwards bought Obridge farm (96 a.) and John Easton acquired Obridge House farm (44 a.).¹³⁵ Those houses survive but in the early 20th century Obridge was completely built over.¹³⁶ The lordship was possibly bought by Edwards but was acquired in 1831 for John Roy Allen (d. 1875) and his wife Lydia (d. 1890) who bought part of his land north of Lyngford. They built Lyngford House in the 1840s, which descended to their son Charles (d. 1893) and his son Jefferys but they ceased to claim lordship.¹³⁷ The house was bought in 1945 to build a new hospital, which was never built, and the house was used for nurse training and later as a conference centre until it was sold in 2017. Although surrounded by housing the Regency Tudor style house with its large three-bay front, floor length windows, open arched porch and octagonal hall survives in its gardens.¹³⁸

Plaistreet

A messuage called Playstrete was held by Taunton Priory with Obridge manor at the Dissolution.¹³⁹ In 1553 Robert son of Richard Hayman claimed it was freehold but in the 17th century it was bondland held by Thomas Gardner of Bishops Hull (d. 1679) and his second wife Frances.¹⁴⁰ In 1725 Plaistreet was acquired by Joshua Northcote who surrendered it to Thomas Brown (d. 1774) who mortgaged the estate. In 1775 it was bought by Susannah Blackman Longuet (d. 1817) but she sold it, apparently to Samuel Hicks who before 1808

¹³³ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/19 (581); DD/X/BBL1; below, rel. hist., St James.

¹³⁴ SHC, DD/MY/7; above this section.

¹³⁵ SHC, DD/DP/49/4; tithe award, st James; DD/CCH/2/5.

¹³⁶ Above, intro.

¹³⁷ SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/12 (1873); A/ABP/1.

¹³⁸ SHC, A/DIF/44.

¹³⁹ Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, supp., 91.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, STAC3/6/48; SHC, DD/SP/358 (1775).

sold it to Richard Heaviside. The large house was offered for sale in 1833 with two Broadwood pianos, paintings by Rubens and Gainsborough and 3,000 books.¹⁴¹ Heaviside retained 25 a. but the house had been demolished by 1839. It gave its name to Plais Street.¹⁴²

CHURCH AND CHARITY PROPERTY

Taunton's chantries and fraternities held considerable property, mainly town houses and almshouses.¹⁴³ In 1548 they collectively owned 69 houses, 13 windows and chambers in the market, nine shambles, nine shops, several gardens, orchards and small plots of land.¹⁴⁴ In 1548—50 property was sold piecemeal to Crown officers and others for onward sale.¹⁴⁵ Some property remained with the Crown and in 1675 John Prowse leased 28 former chantry houses but a 1681 survey was unable to locate many former chantry properties.¹⁴⁶ In 1769 Alexander Popham took a reversionary lease from 1783 of c. 20 houses, the Crown seemed to have difficulty ascertaining how many it still owned or whether they had been chantry or other church property, on condition that he spent £200 rebuilding those that were ruinous.¹⁴⁷ The reversion was bought by Alexander Baring, later Lord Ashburton, who sold the houses in the 1820s.¹⁴⁸

Cleeve Abbey held under the bishop of Winchester an estate in Taunton worth only 6d. beyond the 3s. 6d. in rent, suit of court and bailiff's fee and 46s. distributed in alms for the soul of bishop Bekyngton of Bath and Wells.¹⁴⁹ In 1555 the property was described as

¹⁴¹ SHC, DD/SP/358 (1775); Q/REI/35/25a; TNA, PROB11/1591/333; *Taunton Courier*, 11 Sep. 1833.

¹⁴² SHC, tithe award, St James.

¹⁴³ Below, rel. hist.

¹⁴⁴ E. Green, *Somerset Chantries*, 189—203.

¹⁴⁵ 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.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, SC 12/29/6, 25.

¹⁴⁷ SHC, DD/AY/331.

¹⁴⁸ SHC, DD/CH/102/1.

¹⁴⁹ *Valor Eccl.* I, 218.

five burgages¹⁵⁰ but in 1583 as two tenements let together for £2 11s. half of which was released. It was last recorded in 1598 when the tenant was in arrears.¹⁵¹

In 1413 a group of trustees was permitted to settle premises in Taunton on the sisters of White Hall, Ilchester.¹⁵² In 1415 the prioress was licensed to grant seven messuages and 10 a. in Taunton and Sherford, Wilton, copyhold of the manor of Taunton Deane, to maintain an anniversary chaplain in Holy Trinity, Ilchester, to pray for members of the Whittock family.¹⁵³ The seven burgages worth £3 11s. a year belonged to Holy Trinity when it was suppressed in 1548. The Phelips family, tenants from 1545, let two burgages at the west end of Magdalene Lane in 1578. A burgage west of High Street was Ilchester land in 1551 and one in Church Lane in 1555 but rents of others were lost.¹⁵⁴ The burgages were last recorded on a reversionary Crown lease from 1606 granted to Sir Christopher Hatton.¹⁵⁵

Two burgages, rebuilt by Walter Joy before 1358, north-west of East Street were held in 1404 by Thomas Aunger or Anger who inherited Ford in Bradford.¹⁵⁶ In 1415 Thomas settled his estates on his son, also Thomas (d. by 1421) and his wife Joan Malusell.¹⁵⁷ In 1439 Joan being childless leased the burgages to John Bishop and his wife Alice who in the 1450s secured releases from Aunger relatives.¹⁵⁸ In 1465 Bishop settled the property, after his death, on William Waynflete, bishop of Winchester, but released his life interest in 1474 allowing the burgages with the Bradford estate to form part of Waynflete's endowment of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1482.¹⁵⁹ The college took possession in 1496 but appears to have sold or

¹⁵⁰ SHC, T/PH/hps/1.

¹⁵¹ TNA, SC 12/32/5, nos. 14, 16, 19.

¹⁵² TNA, C 143/445/19.

¹⁵³ *Cal. Pat.* 1413—16, 371.

¹⁵⁴ T. Hugo, 'White Hall in Ilchester' *PSANHS XIII* (1866), 80, 85—7; SHC, DD/PH/53; DD/SAS/C795/M/22/1; T/PH/hps/1.

¹⁵⁵ Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, pp. 44—5, 101n, supp. 106; *Cal. Pat.* 1599—1600, p. 218.

¹⁵⁶ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 24, 46, 50, 64, 67—8: Calendar in VCH office; Bradford on Tone, landownership, forthcoming.

¹⁵⁷ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 40—1, 118.

¹⁵⁸ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 6—9, 22—3, 29—30, 44.

¹⁵⁹ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 4, 10, 13, 34; Bradford on Tone, landownership, forthcoming.

lost the burgages later.¹⁶⁰ A house east of High Street belonged to Ilminster Grammar school from 1640 and was sold shortly after 1802.¹⁶¹

Thomas Whalesborough gave a house in Church Lane to support his obit in Nettlecombe church.¹⁶² The church retained it until the 1550s, bringing in up to 16s. rent.¹⁶³ It may have been the house held by the Trevelyan family in the 18th century and last recorded in 1774.¹⁶⁴ Trull church had two houses in Taunton in the 1530s, one named Our Lady's house.¹⁶⁵ Later known as Trull poor lands, the two houses in East Reach were replaced by one before 1637 when the 40s. rent was paid on a tombstone in Trull churchyard.¹⁶⁶ The rent rose to £5 10s. in 1725 but the house was demolished by 1734.¹⁶⁷ The site was sold before 1805 when the churchwardens bought John Halliday's small farm (c. 18a.) at Totterdell's in Taunton St James, which they retained until 1851 or later.¹⁶⁸

Taunton Town Lands Charity owned a large estate consisting mainly of town centre properties. It appears to have originated in the houses held by the town burgesses in the 1550s.¹⁶⁹ By 1713 the charity had at least 40 houses, 10 shambles and two stalls in the market and estates in Ottery, Devon.¹⁷⁰ Dr Richard White c. 1621 gave money to invest in land for the poor of Chardstock, Devon, formerly in Dorset and 7 ½ a. was bought in the Holway area and retained until c. 1872.¹⁷¹ In 1615 Pitminster parish had borough property west of Carpenters Lane, called Rackfield by 1700.¹⁷² It comprised land between Wilton House and Mount Street, houses on Upper High Street, a smithy, brewhouses and gardens belonging to

¹⁶⁰ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 21, 25, 86—9, 99, 103, 105.

¹⁶¹ SHC, DD/BD/83, 89; DD/IGS/2/4.

¹⁶² VCH Som. V, 119.

¹⁶³ R. Dunning and M. McDermott, *Church Accounts 1457—1559*, 42, 44, 49, 74, 86, 93.

¹⁶⁴ SHC, Q/REL/35/24 (1767); DD/WO/35/8/5.

¹⁶⁵ Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accts*, 277—81, 287, 290—5, 299, 301—2.

¹⁶⁶ SHC, D/P/tru/5/1/2, 17/1/3.

¹⁶⁷ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/12 (Extra Portam); D/P/tru/5/1/7.

¹⁶⁸ SHC, DD/DP/43/14/15 (1805); tithe award, St James; D/P/tru/17/1/1.

¹⁶⁹ SHC, T/PH/hps/1.

¹⁷⁰ BL, Add. Ch.27481; SHC, DD/TAC/5/5/1—67; below, soc. hist., charities.

¹⁷¹ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/12 (Holway tithing); 41 (Holway tithing); tithe award, St Mary; DD/DP/183/1; Devon HC, 2590A/PF/19.

¹⁷² SHC, DD/SP/50 (Oct. 1615); DD/SAS/C795/TN/12 (Holway tithing); 41 (Holway tithing); DD/DP/44/9.

two public houses and agricultural buildings. Sir Benjamin Hammet bought it in 1770 in return for a £15 annuity to the poor of Pitminster.¹⁷³

Meadows along the north-eastern boundary with Ruishton 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.¹⁷⁴

OTHER ESTATES

Landed families invested in Taunton property in the Middle Ages as large houses in Fore Street could be let for 26s. or more in the mid 14th century and 40s. by the late 16th.¹⁷⁵ The Cheddar family held 11 houses in Taunton by 1378 and by 1443 Thomas Cheddar held 12 messuages, 17 a. of land and 14 a. of pasture sometimes called a manor of Taunton but last recorded in 1500.¹⁷⁶ John Heyron paid £40 for 5 houses in 1484 and Richard Burton and his first wife Alice paid £200 for 14 houses before 1489.¹⁷⁷ The Strangways family had cottage property in Taunton between 1492 and 1549.¹⁷⁸ In 1677 two Cornish men traded a half messuage in Fore Street for £60.¹⁷⁹

Portman estate

Thomas the Portman¹⁸⁰ may have been a townsman as in 1302 he had urban property and a market stall as did John Portman in 1327 and Robert Portman was portreeve in 1338. The family continued to accrue town property in the 15th century notably William Portman (d. c.

¹⁷³ SHC, Q/REL/35/26a (1767, 1792); DD/DP/97/3; DD/SP/319/86, 128; tithe award, St Mary.

¹⁷⁴ SHC, DD/SP/186 (1813); DD/DP, box 103 (abstr. of title 1862); tithe award, St Mary.

¹⁷⁵ TNA, WARD/2/57A/204/45; DD/PM/7/2/24.

¹⁷⁶ Green, *Feet of Fines 1347—99*, 97—8; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXVI, pp. 67—9; SHC, DD/D/HY/149; *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, II, pp. 15, 260, 344.

¹⁷⁷ E. Green, *Feet of Fines 1399—1485* (SRS 22), 155; *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, I, p. 351.

¹⁷⁸ Dors. History Centre, D/FSI, box 11 (compoti).

¹⁷⁹ SHC, T/PH/lrm/2.

¹⁸⁰ The name may mean alderman or burgess.

1413) and his son Walter (d. c. 1456), successive MPs for Taunton.¹⁸¹ Walter was followed by his second wife Christine, daughter and heir of William Orchard (d. c. 1422) and widow of Philip Cary, and their son John. The Taunton property descended with Orchard Portman, inherited from Christine with additional Taunton burgages acquired by her family in the 14th century.¹⁸² John (d. 1486) had 16 houses and a half share in three others held of the bishop of Winchester by fealty and left a son John, a minor.¹⁸³ 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).¹⁸⁴ In 1632 Sir William disposed of property at Shuttern but the family held other copyholds in Holway where in 1650 Grace Portman, daughter of Sir John, paid £30 for licence to sublet her farm, and a smithy at Shoreditch.¹⁸⁵

In 1645 Portman town property was disposed of to raise £20,000 to relieve Taunton after the Civil War.¹⁸⁶ A fine of £7,000 imposed on the family was used for the same purpose and Sir William's widow and trustees paid annual instalments to the mayor until the mid 1650s.¹⁸⁷ Sir William (d. 1690) retained the White Lion at Eastgate and land at Haydon and in Wilton, together with St Mary's tithes. His cousin and successor William Berkeley (d. 1737), who took the name Portman, described the estate as a manor of Taunton although the land was copyhold of Taunton Deane.¹⁸⁸ There is no truth in the assertion that 15 Fore Street was their town house but they owned it with neighbouring property until the early 19th

¹⁸¹ SHC, DD/S/SBY/6/1; DD/PM/3/5/1, 5/2/8—12, 7/1/1—2, 7/2/1—17; F. Dickinson, *Kirbys Quest etc* (Som. Rec. Soc. 3), 274; E. Green, *Feet of Fines 1196—1307* (SRS 6), 318; *Feet of Fines 1307—46* (SRS 12), 64; *Feet of Fines 1347—99* (SRS 17), 146, 174—5; *Feet of Fines 1399—1485*, 76; R. Bowden and T. Mayberry *From Somerset to Portman Square* (2022), 13—14; TNA, E326/3943.

¹⁸² *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.

¹⁸³ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* Hen. VII, I, p. 90; SHC, DD/PM/5/2/18—19.

¹⁸⁴ 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 1603—41*, pp. 137—43.

¹⁸⁵ SHC, Q/AC/4; DD/SP/197.

¹⁸⁶ *Cal Cttee Compounding*, I, 150, II, 900.

¹⁸⁷ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1651—2, p. 63; SHC, DD/PM/7/4.

¹⁸⁸ SHC, DD/PM/1/9, 6/1/4, 8/2/17, 8/8, 8/9, 22/2.

century. The so-called manor descended to William's son Henry (d. 1761) and grandson Henry (d. 1796) who was followed by his second son Edward Berkeley Portman (d. 1823). Edward entered protracted litigation to regain St Mary's tithes from the vicar.¹⁸⁹ His son Edward Berkeley Portman, (cr. Baron 1837, Viscount Portman 1873) succeeded to the freehold houses, which had not been sold, and his widow Mary (d. 1852) was admitted to the Haydon lands but the manor was no longer mentioned.¹⁹⁰ The Haydon land was sold to local farmers in 1853.¹⁹¹

Pyntley, Grasscroft and Cock Street

In 1428 a 46-a. farm at Pyntley and two smaller holdings at Grasscroft or Grassgrove and Cock Street were settled in trust for Sir Richard Hankeforde (d. 1431) who held it of the bishops of Winchester for unknown service. He probably inherited it from his mother Thomasine Stapledon who married Sir Richard Hankeford (d. 1419) of Devon, son of Sir William Hankeford (d. 1423), Chief Justice of the King's Bench.¹⁹²

Sir Richard's elder daughter by his first wife Elizabeth Fitzwarren was Thomasine (d. 1453) who survived her sister and stepmother and held the Taunton estate, which descended with the manor of Norton Fitzwarren to her son Fulk Bouchier, Lord Fitzwarren and his heirs the earls of Bath and Stamford, who called it a manor of Taunton.¹⁹³ The estate probably included burgages as the earls were free suitors of the borough.¹⁹⁴ Thomas, earl of Stamford (d. 1720) was forced to break up and sell Grassgrove and Grasscroft in 1684—

94.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ SHC, DD/PM/7/10—12, 8/5, 13/1/14, 13/6, 22/2.

¹⁹⁰ Burke, *Peerage* (1949), 1618—19; SHC, T/PH/bb/4; DD/PM/22/2.

¹⁹¹ SHC, T/PH/bb/4; DD/HS/4/2; DD/DP/184/2; DD/DP, box 103 (abstr. of title 1852—62).

¹⁹² G. E. C., *The Complete Peerage*, vol. V (2nd ed.), (London, 1926), 504—5.

¹⁹³ *Cal. Close* 1422—9, 57—8; 1461—8, 4; 1468—76, 253—4; TNA, CP25/2/385/6JASIHil; C142/407/69; SHC, DD/DP/93/4; Norton Fitzwarren, landownership.

¹⁹⁴ SHC, DD/SP/331.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, C142/570/140; CP25/2/806/1JASIEASTER; CP25/2/898/6WILLIAM&MARYTRIN.; SHC, DD/SP/357 (bdle 2, 1692).

Pyntley, recorded as a surname from the 13th century but now lost, was held by John Rogers (d. 1441) of the Hankefordes for a rose rent.¹⁹⁶ John's son John (d. 1450) was followed by his son Henry who sold the estate. It was divided and in 1461 Thomas Cory gave his share to endow St Mary's chantry in St James' church, which owned it in 1548.¹⁹⁷

Flook House

The Flook House estate occupied much of the land between the Staplegrove and Kingston roads and was developed for housing in the later 19th century. It originated as a large copyhold in Obridge tithing of Taunton Deane manor. The house, known from the 16th to 18th centuries as Flook or Hook Place, was the home of the wealthy Slape family throughout the 17th century. John Slape acquired it from Edward Chaplin after 1566 and it passed to his son John and grandson Richard. John, 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 land at Pyrland enabling the family to retain one farm, known as Slapes, until the 1760s.¹⁹⁸

Flook was acquired by Dr John Hall (fl.1708) but by 1716 it belonged to the Quaker Button family who also held the large burgage in Fore Street, including Hunts Court and built the meeting house. Flook Place was settled on the marriage of Robert Button (d. 1726) and his first wife Mary Ellis and passed to their son Ellis Button who in 1755 left it to his wife Mary for life and them to his infant kinsman Ellis Button Metford (d. 1820) son of Joseph Metford and Hannah Ellis.¹⁹⁹ He was followed by his son William (d. 1868) whose heir William Ellis Metford sold it in 1873.²⁰⁰ The lands were laid out with streets of terraced

¹⁹⁶ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/60, 62, 73; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXV, p. 500.

¹⁹⁷ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/93; *Cal. Pat.* 1548—9, p. 364; below, rel. hist. St James. Pyntley occurred in Staplegrove and Norton as well so may be the low land later occupied by the canal and railway.

¹⁹⁸ TNA, PROB11/153/178; PROB11/429/443; 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); above, this section, Pyrland.

¹⁹⁹ 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.

²⁰⁰ TNA, PROB 111/1271/211, 11/1280/212, 11/1944/289; SHC, tithe award St James; DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/4; DD/X/BT/3; above, intro.

houses but the house and grounds were acquired by the Sibley family for a school.²⁰¹ It was requisitioned by the military during the Second World War and an American Red Cross hospital was built in the grounds. It was later used as postal training facilities, central kitchens for the school meal service and a driving test centre. In 1945 under the will of Miss A. B. Sibley the house was sold to the borough council for offices and in the late 20th century the surviving range was the register office.²⁰² In 1976 a public swimming pool was built in the garden and the remaining grounds and buildings were cleared for car parking and for Deane House council offices in 1987.²⁰³

The original house may have been built in 1652, the date on a strapwork overmantel in the south-east range, and had five stone mullioned windows and a two-storey porch with a four-centred arch surviving in 1967.²⁰⁴ The southern room had a six-light window. By the early 19th century it had attic dormers and four large sash windows had been inserted in the south gable.²⁰⁵ The north-west stuccoed section, the only part that remains, is probably an 18th-century extension remodelled in the 19th century and virtually gutted to create offices in 1966.²⁰⁶ The house was extended again in 1878 and ultimately consisted of a large block, which incorporated the original house facing east and had a large south porch. The wing had a central projecting bay and small additions to the north and east. There was a coachhouse on Belvedere Road and a very large walled garden. The house had been poorly maintained and the council demolished the original house in 1967 despite objections that it was listed.²⁰⁷

Grove House

²⁰¹ Below, soc. hist. educ., private schs.

²⁰² SHC, D/B/ta/3/13/14, pp. 61, 194, 233; D/DC/tau.d unlisted box 17, 1943—5 (Sep. 1945).

²⁰³ SHC, DD/KW/1945/1; below, soc. hist.; local govt.

²⁰⁴ SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/192/10992.

²⁰⁵ SHC, A/DIF/44; D/B/ta/24/1/185/10980.

²⁰⁶ J. Orbach, *S. & W. Som.* 620; SHC, A/DIF/44, 116; D/B/ta/24/1/185/10980.

²⁰⁷ SHC, D/B/ta/3/37/2, p. 428; 24/1/11/394; 24/1/192/10992; DD/FIV/1/70.

A large mansion in Shuttern was built between 1789 and 1799 on the site of four small houses for Prockter Thomas (d. 1801). Its grounds extended downhill west of the Gaol stream and across the present Park Street to include a small dairy and meadows, a large fishpond and kitchen gardens in the tongue of Wilton parish between the Galmington and Gaol streams now occupied by houses and the magistrates' courts.²⁰⁸ The occupiers also claimed Cann Street as a private road.²⁰⁹ Grove House passed to Thomas's widow Susannah who conveyed it in 1804 to James Pearson whose trustees sold it in 1842 to Joseph Hitchcock (d. 1851). Joseph sold off outlying land c. 1847 and his heir William Richards Hitchcock bought the freehold in 1851. In 1855 he sold the house and grounds to the county as a site for a new shire hall.²¹⁰

Lower Portman Farm

Lower Portman farm (64 a.) near Bishops Lydeard was a detached area of Taunton St James, which appears to have formed part of the Pyrland estate of George Deane left in 1742 to his housekeeper Mary Bartlett.²¹¹ In 1747 Henrietta Johnson daughter and heir of Mary settled it on her marriage to John Griffiths. In 1759 she and her husband sold it to John Thomas who was followed by his son in law John Tytherleigh.²¹² In 1783 Tytherleigh (d. 1834) settled it on his son John's marriage to Sarah Addams (d. 1815). In 1842 their daughter Sarah released her claim allowing her father to sell the farm to William Davys.²¹³ In 1876 it was bought by the Welman family and became part of the Norton manor estate. In the early 20th century it became a county farm.²¹⁴

²⁰⁸ SHC, DD/DP/51/6; Q/AC/4.

²⁰⁹ Bishops Hull, intro.

²¹⁰ SHC, DD/DP/51/6; Q/AC/4; below, local govt.

²¹¹ SHC, DD/SP/319/45, 73—4.

²¹² SHC, DD/CH/76/4; DD/SAS/C112/18/2.

²¹³ SHC, Q/REL/35/25a (1783—1832); DD/CH/73/7.

²¹⁴ SHC, DD/X/DEV/1; C/C/11; Norton Fitzwarren, landownership.