

# How to read 'old' handwriting

BFHS March 2022

## Session One: 18<sup>th</sup> to late 17<sup>th</sup> centuries

- Maidenhead Corporation Quarter Sessions Order Book 1742 (BRO M/J Q s)
- As a corporate borough, Maidenhead held its own courts to deal with petty crime less serious than those reserved for County Quarter Sessions and Assizes) and local government matters. The Mayor and two local JPs presided.
- They were held near the traditional feasts of Epiphany (6 Jan), Easter, Trinity (Sun after Whit Sun) and Michaelmas (29 Sept).
- note some tricky letters: line 1 long s ſ as in Sessions; straight line of c as in peace; e like ‘o’ with line through as in Sessions; line across to form t is very low or not there at all; F written ff as in ffaith line 3
- Terms :felonies, petty constable, tithingman, recognizance.
- Keep the original, odd spelling. Do not modernise.

# Maidenhead Corporation Quarter Sessions

Town of Maidenhead & to wit  
in Session . . . . .

At a General Quarter Sessions of the peace of our Sovereign  
Lord George the Second over Great-Brittain &c King Defend  
of the Faith holden at the Guildhall of the said Town the  
fourteenth day of January in the sixteenth year of the  
reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second and in the  
year of our Lord 1742 before John Johnson Gent Mayor  
of the said Corporation Deputy Downey Esquire and ---  
Matthew Garry Gent two other of his Majties Justices of the  
peace for the said Corporation Assigned to hear and ---  
determine certain Troops of the said Town and ---  
committed in the same Town

Joseph Sharding Esq Constable of Cobham & Non appear Larned  
Thomas Smith Tythingman of the same & app  
Richard Littleton Esq Constable of Bray -- &  
Richard Lamball Tythingman of the same -- &

Robert Cullem stands on his Recognizance to appear at this Sessions To Answer John  
Dudley for Mary Wife of the said Robert Cullem Assaulting beating and wounding  
Frances Wife of the said John Dudley and in the mean time the said Mary Cullem  
to be of Good Behaviour

James Cullem stands likewise on his Recognizance to appear at this Sessions To Answer  
John Dudley also for assaulting beating and wounding Frances Dudley and in the  
mean time to be of Good Behaviour

Maidenhead Borough Quarter Sessions 1742 (BRON)

## Pauper settlement examination: William Rosier of Hungerford 1796

- Examination to ascertain the settlement (right to claim poor relief).
- The parish overseers of the poor brought the case before two local justices, here C[harles] Dundas and Henry Sawbridge.
- For details on this and other poor law papers from Hungerford see Peter Durrant, ed, Hungerford Overseers' Papers 1655-1834 (Berks Record Society vol 27, 2021) number 110.
- Note frequent use of capital letters when not needed.
- The date in December is missing

# William Rosier pauper examination page one

Berks to wit The Examination of William Rosier taken  
upon oath before us two of His Majesty's —  
Justices of the Peace ~~and~~ for the said County.

This Examt on his oath saith That ~~he~~ when he was  
between twelve and thirteen years of age He was bound  
Apprentice by Indenture by the Churchwardens and Overseers  
of the Poor of the Parish of Hungerford in the said County of  
Berks to his (his Examinant's) Uncle John Albury a  
Shoemaker who then lived in Baldwin's garden in the  
Parish of Saint Andrew Holborn above the Bars in the  
County of Middlesex where he served about half a year &  
then his said Uncle removed into Portpool Lane in the  
same Parish, where this Examinant served about a year  
and an half and then ran away from his said Master  
and never afterwards returned to his said Service ~~performed~~  
And this Examinant further saith That he hath not since he

## Probate inventory of William Berry the elder of Caversham, yeoman 23 October 1700

- Caversham was in Oxfordshire until 1911.
- Probate inventories were required by the church courts as part of the probate procedure – proving the will.
- The deceased's goods were appraised (priced) by two or more men, usually neighbours able to give an honest appraisal.
- The list of his goods usually begins with his clothes and ready money including debts owed him, then goods in the rooms of the house and finally the farm, manufactured or trading stock.
- The first item is In- or Imprimis, Latin for 'at first', each subsequent entry is 'Item', 'then' or 'next', often abbreviated to It' or It.
- Values are in £ s and d; here li (libra), s (solidi) and d (denarii)
- One signature is very clear, the others did not copy well.

# Inventor of William Berry the elder of Caversham 1700

kins and perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods and Chattels -  
Rights and Credits of William Berry the elder late of Caversham aforesaid  
Caversham in the County of Oxon Yeoman deceased taken and ~ ~ ~  
appraised the Thirtieth and Twentieth day of October Anno Domini 1700 =  
By us Edward Brookes of Caversham aforesaid Yeoman John Ward of Oxford in the County of Oxon Yeoman  
And Avery Henry of Caversham aforesaid Yeoman  
as followeth viz:

His wearing Apparel	04 = 00 = 00
in ready monies and debts sperate and desperate	26 = 17 = 09
In the best Chamber one Bed and Bedstead with furniture thereunto belonging	304 = 00 = 00
Two Chests one Chest of drawers w <sup>th</sup> other necessaries	01 = 15 = 00
Temperd and one sheet four table cloths one dore and ten napkins and three pillowcases	08 = 10 = 00
In the middle Chamber one Bedstead and Bedding one spanning press with a little Bed by with other necessaries	05 = 00 = 00
In the mens Chamber a Bed and other necessaries	01 = 10 = 00
The Grasse seed	01 = 01 = 00
His Shoes	02 = 05 = 00
In the Hall two tables three stools & other necessaries	09 = 08 = 00
Two silver spoons	00 = 12 = 00
In the kitchen one Table three stools and other necessaries	00 = 12 = 00
His Brass	03 = 08 = 00
The powder	02 = 10 = 00
His gun goods	01 = 02 = 06
His Buttery Dressell Bedd Dressell & other Lumber	03 = 11 = 00

His Brass	03 = 08 = 00
The powder	02 = 10 = 00
His gun goods	01 = 02 = 06
His Buttery Dressell Bedd Dressell & other Lumber	03 = 11 = 00
At the mill wheel	00 = 11 = 00
At the Baton	01 = 00 = 00
At the old Clock	00 = 06 = 08
At thirty one sheep	09 = 00 = 00
At the hoggs and pigg	10 = 10 = 00
At flower Doves and three Bullerks	17 = 00 = 00
At five horses beasts and two Dells	26 = 00 = 00
At the Waggon Cartd ploughed and harrowed	18 = 10 = 00
At the Cowards hogtoughed and other Lumber	00 = 15 = 00
At the Whaler	23 = 05 = 00
At the Mashin	08 = 00 = 00
At the Sawly	36 = 05 = 00
At the press	17 = 15 = 00
At the Oated	12 = 12 = 00
At the Hay	09 = 00 = 00
At other fioder	00 = 10 = 00
At the Sars ffam and other implements thereunto belonging	01 = 17 = 00
At the weights and scales	00 = 10 = 00
At the harness cart lined with other necessaries	03 = 12 = 00
At the wheats on the ground with plowing and dung	16 = 08 = 00
At the Flourty	00 = 08 = 00
At the fallowing the ground for Barly	03 = 00 = 00
At ten starks of Wood	01 = 15 = 00
At a saddle and other things forgotten and not setts	00 = 15 = 00
At a parcel of Apples	00 = 15 = 00
<b>Edward Brookes</b>	<b>308 = 04 = 11</b>

Inventory of William Berry  
Yeoman, of Caversham 1700.  
(Mss. Wills Oxon 161/2/37. O.1)

# Settlement certificate of William Beaver of Shinfield

## 1698

Men and women moving from one parish to another carried a certificate issued by the churchwardens and overseers of the poor who acknowledged their responsibility should they need support from the poor rate.

The certificate was attested by two J Ps; here .. Vachell and R Aldworth.

The signature of one churchwarden, John Jennings, and one overseer, John Jennings, are easy to read.

William Heaver with his wife and one child had moved from Sulhampsted [sic] Bannister to Shinfield 'for their better provision of employment'. The Shinfield Churchwardens would keep the certificate in the parish chest, to be produced should William or his family claim poor relief and could return them to Sulhampstead.

Note the abbreviation for parish on line 10 - p with the tail wrapped round; long s in many words —see 'parish' line 1

# Settlement certificate of William Beaver of Shinfield 1698

Borlgh.

To the Church Wardens and overseers  
of the Poore of the parish of  
in the County of Berks.

5<sup>th</sup> July 1698  
and by us

John Dutton

R. Moworth

Whereas <sup>William</sup> Beaver late of the parish of  
Sulhamstead Bailliff in the said County of Berks  
husbandman is lately gone from Sulhamstead  
Bailliffes aforesaid to him joint aforesaid residing  
with him his wife and one Child Intending  
to settle at Shinfield aforesaid for better better  
provision of employment there These things are  
to testify unto all whom it may concern  
That we John Dutton and John Dutton  
Church Wardens of the said parish and with  
Church of Sulhamstead Bailliffes aforesaid  
and Francis Underwood and Richard  
Bagley overseers of the Poore of the said  
parish of Sulhamstead Bailliffes aforesaid  
do hereby own and acknowledge the  
said <sup>William</sup> Beaver to be an Inhabitant  
in our said parish of Sulhamstead Bailliffes  
and to be there lawfully settled And do  
hereby for our selves and our Successors  
promise to receive him back againe  
with his family whensoever he shall be  
returned to be Dated under our hand  
and Seale the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July 1698

Sealed and deliv<sup>d</sup> with his word (William) In testimony  
in the presence of

John Dutton  
Richard Smith

John Jennings

Francis Underwood  
Richard Bagley

Settlement certificate  
Wm. Beaver, Shinfield  
BRD/P 71/13