

How to read 'old' handwriting

BFHS March 2022

Session One: 18th to late 17th 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

Maidenhead Borough Quarter Sessions 1742 (BRo M)

At a General Quarter Sessions of the peace of our Sovereign
Lord George the Second over Great-Brittain & King of Ireland
of the Gaith holden at the Guild-hall 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 Demyston Downey Esquire and
Matthew Quary Gent-Sw-officer of his Majties Justices of the
peace for the said Corporation Assigned to hear and
determine certain Troops papers Pleas and misdemeanors
committed in the same Town

Joseph Harding Esqy Constable of Cobham & Non appear Lamed
Thomas Smith Tythingman of the same & appo
Richard Littleton Esqy 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

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 is~~ 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 Hingford in the said County of
Berks to his (his Examinant's) Uncle John Albany a
Shoemaker who then lived in Baldwin's Gardens 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 Postpool 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 Uncle ~~neither~~
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

And perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods and Chattels -
 Rights and Credits of William Berry the elder 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 Chilton in the County of Oxon Yeoman
 and Avery Henry of Caversham aforesaid Yeoman
 as followeth viz:

His wearing Apparel	07 = 00 = 00
in ready monyes and debts sperals and desperals	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 th other necessaries	01 = 15 = 00
Temperd and one sheet four table clothes 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 & other necessary	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 Iron Goods	01 = 02 = 06
The Buttery Dressell Bedd & Dressell & other Lumber	03 = 11 = 00

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His Brass	03 = 08 = 00
The powder	02 = 10 = 00
His Iron Goods	01 = 02 = 06
The Buttery Dressell Bedd & Dressell & other Lumber	03 = 11 = 00
At the Milk Wessel	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 Dullorke	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 hogtroughed and other Lumber	00 = 15 = 00
At the Wheate	23 = 05 = 00
At the Mashin	08 = 00 = 00
At the Sawy	36 = 05 = 00
At the press	17 = 15 = 00
At the Oates	12 = 12 = 00
At the Hay	09 = 00 = 00
At other ffeede	00 = 10 = 00
At the Cart's ffarm 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 wheate on the Ground with plowing and dung	16 = 08 = 00
At the Rowerty	00 = 08 = 00
At the fallowing the Ground for Sawy	03 = 00 = 00
At ten starks of Wood	01 = 15 = 00
At a saddle & addres with other things forgotten and not setts	00 = 15 = 00
At a parcell of Apples	00 = 15 = 00

Edward Brookes

308 = 04 = 11

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

Book 11.

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

5th July 1698

and by us
John Duttonger
John Smith

R. Ashworth

Whereas ~~William~~ ^{William} Beaver late of the parish of
Sulhamstead Bailliffes in the said County of Berks
husbandman is lately gone from Sulhamstead
Bailliffes aforesaid to him joint aforesaid having
with him his wife and one Child Intending
to settle at Shinfield aforesaid for better better
provision of employment & there they are
to testify unto all whom it may concern
That we John Jennings and John Rogers
Church wardens of the said parish and with
Church of Sulhamstead Bailliffes aforesaid
and Francis Underwood and Richard
Bagley overseers of the Poor of the said
parish of Sulhamstead Bailliffes aforesaid
do hereby own and acknowledge the
said ~~William~~ ^{William} Beaver to be an Inhabitant
in our said parish of Sulhamstead Bailliffes
and to be there last legally settled And do
hereby for our selves and our Successors
promise to receive him both againe
with his family whensoever he shall be
returned to be Dated under our hand
and Seals the 23rd day of July 1698

Sealed and deliv'd with his word (William) In testimony
in the presence of

John Duttonger
John Smith

John Jennings
Francis Underwood
Richard Bagley

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