

THE POULETT MANORIAL SURVEYS 1658 – 1753

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSCRIPTS



**HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP
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THE POULETT SURVEYS

Two of Halberton's central manors, Halberton Boys and Halberton Deane, were owned by the Poulett (or Paulet) family from Somerset.

Poulett ownership of **Halberton Boys manor** dated back to the marriage of Thomas Poulett of Street to Margaret Burton, daughter and heiress of Henry de Burton and Alice (daughter of John Boys of Halberton, MP and Sheriff) around 1400. It appears that the Pouletts may at one time have occupied the main property (on the site of Halberton Court) as attested by Sir William Pole [1561-1635] in his Description of the County of Devon, 1791 edition: 'The Powlets have had their dwellinge house heere but discontinued of late yeeres, & nowe in lease unto the wief of Humfry Weare, Esq. late feodary of this county of Devon...' Humfry Weare, MP was the father of Colonel John Were, the Parliamentarian soldier who lived at Halberton Court during the time of the Civil War. Colonel Were's family (widow and daughters) are shown in the surveys to have occupied Halberton Court (The Mansion House) and other parcels of land up to and including 1700. John Were Junior of Silverton, related to the Halberton Weres, is also listed. Members of the Poulett family and their relatives, such as the Smyths of Ashton Court, Bristol feature in the surveys as tenants of a few holdings.

The manor of Halberton Deane or Abbot originally belonged to St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol from whom the Pouletts took a lease. Following the Reformation it was owned by the Dean and Chapter in Bristol and the Pouletts continued as leaseholders until the early nineteenth century. By the 16th century the Pouletts had settled in Hinton St George, Somerset after Sir William married a local heiress. Arguably the best known Poulett is Sir Amyas who was appointed keeper of Mary, Queen of Scots from 1585 until her execution in 1587.

The three manorial surveys (1658, 1696 and 1700) of land in Halberton are just a few of many such surveys of tenancies of the wider Poulett estate held in the Somerset Heritage Centre. These surveys of land held of the lord of the manor detail the tenants, type of tenancy, the holding, rent and yearly value. The age of tenants is sometimes entered after their name. The surveys are obviously working documents in that the individual tenants are shown crossed out and new names inserted as people died.

All 3 surveys are held at the Somerset Heritage Centre (SHC) in Taunton, ref: DD\PT/H452/46.

The manorial survey of 1753 was carried out by John Donne, Manorial Steward for Earl Poulett from 1729 to 1764. Much shorter than the other surveys, it contains proposals for new leases or lives to be added for property held of Lord Poulett. It details a brief description of the premises, rent, heriot, value, intended purchaser, and sum offered. Columns for 'Property' and 'Tenure' have been inserted for ease of analysis as these details were included in the first column of the original text. Like in the other surveys, the tenancies were copyhold. This document is held at the SHC in Taunton, ref DD\MR/109.

Poulett Manorial Surveys 1658 - 1753

Transcription: The text has been transcribed with original spellings and crossings out intact. Abbreviations are interpreted with square brackets [thus] unless obvious. The 1696 Survey of the Manor of Halberton Boyse has an extra column marked 'Comments' as this was the most expedient way of showing the annotations written in the text alongside the appropriate entries. A glossary below details Latin and other terms used in the text. The three surveys until 1700 feature some script in 'Secretary Hand', a style of writing developed from the Tudor age which uses many abbreviations. Because of this, it can be challenging and difficult to decipher. Where the interpretation is in doubt a question mark has been used [?]. Additional notes have been inserted on occasion using square brackets to add information.

The surveys give the size of the plots of land in acreages. Values of rents are quoted in pounds, shillings and pence (£.s.d.). A pound was worth 20 shillings, with each shilling comprising 12 pence.

Bibliography:

Transcription including Secretary Hand:

N. W. Alcock, Old Title Deeds, a guide for local and family historians (Phillimore, Chichester, 1986)

www.rycote.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/Palaeography-Guide-alphabet

John Booker, Devon deciphered, Interpreting Manuscript Sources, 1300-1750 (Friends of Devon Archives, Exeter, 2017). Available from Devon Heritage Centre (DHC).

University of Nottingham – excellent site for research students giving detailed information about transcribing old deeds with examples:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/manorial/supporting.aspx>

For further information on manorial records:

Manorial Records, Devon Archives & Local Studies Service Information Leaflet, South West Heritage Trust, available from Devon Heritage Centre (DHC)

and for examples see:

www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk/what-is-a-manor-and-what-are-manorial-records.

Halberton manors:

Rev. Oswald J Reichel, The Hundred of Halberton in Early Times, The Devonshire Association, 1929

Poulett family:

Anton Bancock, The Inside Story of the Smyths of Ashton Court, Bristol, 1980

A Somerset Gentleman & Landowner: Thomas Smyth of Ashton Court, Long Ashton 1609-1642, in Adrian J. Webb & Andrew F. Butcher ed., Writing the History of Somerset, 2018

Colin G. Winn, The Pouletts of Hinton St George, 1976

Colonel John Were:

Douglas Rice, 'Renegado' John Were, truly a Hero (Lower Hazel Books, Tiverton, 2019)

'The Apologie, Relation and Petition of Col John Were', Devon & Cornwall Notes and Queries, Vol 4 Jan 1906 – Oct 1907, pp 153 – 174

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Glossary:

als.	alias
cont	containing
ejus	Latin for his/her
fil	Latin, filius sometimes expressed as fils - son, or filia - daughter
fine	sum of money paid for granting of lease or admission to copyhold
frat	Latin, brother
Gent	Gentleman
Heriot	fine paid to the landowner on the death of a tenant
Jn/Jnr/Junr	Junior
In Jure	Latin, in law or sworn
mort	dead
moyetey	moity – half of a property
Pearch	perch, a land measurement – 40 to the acre
r	rood [4 roods made up an acre]
Sen/Snr/Senr	Senior
sic	Latin, thus
ux[or]	Latin, wife
viz[t]	Latin, videlicet - namely
voc	Latin, called