

THE BUILDING OF OLD FRAMPTON COURT

About 1651 John Clifford built a house which stood on the site now occupied by Frampton Court. A picture of this house painted in 1696 shows a modest brick-built structure.⁽¹⁾ There is a central entrance porch extending to the height of two storeys, with one room on each side on the ground and first floors lit by large windows. The attic is lit by three window gables. The two bay windows on the ground floor, and the three oval attic windows are unusual for this period and give the house an almost Victorian appearance. Bay windows about this period usually extended to the height of two storeys.

This little account book contains entries covering a period of twenty months from November 1650 to July 1652.⁽²⁾ At first sight it appeared to be a complete record of the building of this house. Since there was very little domestic building between 1649 and 1660 it promised to be interesting.⁽³⁾

An analysis of the entries, however, showed that most of them were of payments for unspecified work, and work on the farm. Although quantities of bricks, tiles and timber were bought there is no mention of glass. Stonecutters were paid for work "about the parlour chimney" yet there is no record of stone being quarried, bought or carried. Nevertheless, one can follow the progress of the building and get an insight into the activities of the people of the neighbourhood.

Thirty-five men, mentioned by name, and two women and several children were paid for various services, ranging from carrying bricks, tiles, timber, etc., to supplying beer and provisions, and working in the moat.

In November and December, 1650, John Clifford purchased some young fruit trees and employed a man to set them. T. Mann and J. Cowles spent thirty days fencing the orchard, for which they were paid £1. 7s. 4d. A stile was made and hedging and ditching was done. John Elliotts was paid 2/- for his "advice about the building"; £20 was paid for timber; and £4, on account, for bricks. In January there was payment of 2/6 to the mason and 2/- to the carpenter "in earnest".

Lime, sand and bricks were obtained in March and April; scaffold poles were made, and the tiler was paid 1/-. At the same time seed barley and white peas were bought and sown.

In May, window-bars and three ladders were made; lime and timber obtained; and quantities of various kinds of nails purchased - large last, lesser last, large stone, lesser stone, etc. It was, apparently, cheaper to buy nails in bulk. Twelve-penny nails were bought at elevenpence, eight-penny ones at sevenpence and so on. They were purveyed by a "naylewoman" - possibly an itinerant. The stonecutter was busy during this month and the barley was rolled.

More lime, sand and bricks were bought in June and the kitchen roof was "reared". The latter was a cause for celebration, for 19/3 was spent on beer and provisions for this occasion. The following month there was a bigger celebration on the occasion of the houserearing. A trumpeter received 2/- for his services then, £3. 17s. 6d. was spent on provisions, and three barrels of malt were brewed.

In the same month, July, £12 was paid for 16,000 tiles. These were obtained from the Forest of Dean and brought by water at a cost of £2. 11s. Od. It is not clear whether all the tiles used in the building came from the Forest as there is mention of Cornish tiles. These may, however, have been a particular variety of tile. A "Barnstable oven" was bought at this time. This was a baked-clay, dome-shaped oven, which was used to line a brick oven. Until quite recently they were made at Barnstable and Truro where they had been in constant production since the Middle Ages.

Work on the house continued steadily through August and September. The stairs were made into the brewhouse and chamber, and mantles made in the parlour, hall and chamber. The cellars and buttery were cleaned. Timber, tiles, boards, lime, hair, and bricks were obtained. Seed barley and wheat were also bought.

The next three months saw much activity. A pump was made (£2. 6s. 8d. including materials), the house was coloured (Thomas and John Smith, 13 days work, £1. 3s. Od. plus 6/- for redding), and a road made about the "porchcourt". Pear, apple, plum and cherry trees were bought, the garden was dug and a hedge set. £2 was paid for ironwork and 8/- for a table for the study. During this time, the campaign against the Scots culminated in the Battle of Worcester, and ripples from this reached Frampton. On September 6th, John Clifford made a payment of 2/8 to Mary Becket for quartering two foot-soldiers for one night, and in November paid 1/6 for "conveying the Scott's prisoners to Bristoll". He also contributed 5/7½ towards the Militia and 5/7½ towards raising horses.

Throughout the ensuing five months work on the building continued concurrently with work on the farm. The cellar was paved and flags were laid. Panelling (£1), thirty-one yards of wainscot (£1. 11s. Od.) and various household appurtenances were purchased. In June, 1652, nine men and one woman were very busy working in the moat - cleaning it, presumably. It is interesting to note that in this one instance the woman received the man's rate for the job - one shilling a day. The final entries are for hair, (24 bushels, 11/-) for making plaster.

It is not possible to draw any conclusions from this little book, as many of the entries are vague, and it is not always clear whether a payment was made solely for the commodity or if the cost of carriage and/or labour was included. Of the many payments made for unspecified work, some are to Thomas Longden who made the bedstead and the study table, so it is possible

that these sums were for other pieces of furniture. Thomas and John Smith did much work on the house, but also received payments for so many days' work that was not specified. It may have been work on the house but one cannot be sure, so it is impossible to calculate precisely what the building cost. However, here is an analysis of the entries which shows the cost of some of the materials and some of the labour. The total expenditure was £298. 17s. 2d.

Bricks	£18. 18s. 0d.	plus £2. 1s. 0d. for carriage. (54,000)
Hair	£2. 18s. 9d.	(121 bushels)
Lime	£20. 10s. 4d.	including carriage. (approx 277 barrels)
Nails	£ 7. 18s. 2d.	(41,809)
Sand	£ 2. 4s. 0d.	carriage only.
Tiles	£17. 3s. 5d.	including carriage. (16,620)
Timber	£52. 3s. 10d.	
Masons)	£ 2. 18s. 2d.	
Stonecutters)		
Sawyers	£ 9. 13s. 5d.	
Carpenters	£ 1. 1s. 0d.	
Work on garden	£ 1. 10s. 8d.	
Work on moat	£ 2. 11s. 0d.	
Fittings and labour on house (Pump, oven, etc.)	£20. 9s. 8½d.	
Unspecified work	£61. 5s. 5d.	
Farm (Stock, seeds, fruit trees, etc.)	£45. 15s. 1d.	

The remainder was spent on miscellaneous items such as contributions to the poor, provisions, etc.

Rates of pay were as follows:

Beating molehills	7d. per day.
Hedging and ditching	10d. per day.
Killing moles	2d. per mole.
Felling a tree	6d.
Sowing wheat	5/6d. per acre.
Colouring the house	1/4d. per day.
Stonework on chimney	2/- per day.
Haymaking (woman)	6d. per day.

Some of the prices may be of general interest. Lead cost 1½d. a

pound (279 lbs were used for guttering) - and the solder for it cost a shilling a pound. A bedstead cost 10/-, a basket 6d. and a wain rope 7/6.

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References

- Glos. R.O., D149/Z1 Watercolour of Old Frampton Court, 1696.
Glos. R.O., D149/A2 Account book of John Clifford for building
Old Frampton Court, 1650-52.
M. W. Barley, The English Farmhouse and Cottage (1961)