

THE PACKERS OF PAINSWICK
A Clothier Family

If you visit Painswick church you can see on the south side of the tower two memorials to the Packer family, and if you go through the churchyard towards the north-east gate you can see six of the famous eighteenth-century tombs of the same family; a family engaged in the cloth-making industry for which this area was at that period of considerable importance. The earliest recording of the name Packer which I have been able to find is in 1381 on the Lay Subsidy Roll - Johannes Paccare (Mercer)(1). In 1487 a property named Packers is mentioned in Spoonbed tithing (2). The first record of the Packer family in Painswick church registers is of the marriage of a Richard Packer in 1591 to Sybbel Badham (3) and in 1608 in John Smith's "Men in Armour", Richard Packer is recorded as a yeoman, unable in body.

In 1625 a Richard Packer bought the mill, now known today as King's Mill, but in those days usually known as the Lower Mill, from William Kynne. It was recorded as a corn mill(5). It was given to his son Thomas on his marriage to Sarah Loveday in 1634(6). Thomas was working it as a cloth mill in 1671 and this is the first evidence that the Packer family was engaged in the cloth trade.

Thomas, who died in 1678(7) had a son Daniel, who married Mary Clissold in 1678(8) when he was described as a clothier, and a son Richard, who married Elizabeth Clissold in 1671(9) and occupied the mill in 1677(10). He lived to the remarkable age for those days of 80 years and died in 1719(11). In his will(12) he left his mills to his son Daniel. Two of his sons Richard and Thomas had predeceased him,(13) but two more sons John and William and his daughter Sarah are mentioned in his will, and four grandchildren, John, Daniel, Richard and Elizabeth, whose father Thomas died in 1705(14).

The Daniel Packer to whom his father Richard left his mills was born in 1673 and died in 1739(15). A document dated 1730 (16) describes a piece of land conveyed to Daniel Packer formerly part of Gides Farm. As Gydes Farm today is still so named and is by King's Mill, this piece of land was probably the steep bank at the side of Watkins Pitch and would have been a very suitable site for tenters. The mill is described in the deed as a fulling mill.

Daniel died in 1739 and in his will dated 14 February 1738 (17) he is described as a gentleman. To his only surviving brother William, he left the house and garden where he was living in Painswick which was copyhold of the manor of Painswick. His nephew John Packer was to be "entitled to Cap Mill now enjoyed by his mother, Mary". This Mary was the widow of Daniel's brother John who had died in 1733(18). Her two other sons Richard and Daniel were left money in the will.

Ann, Daniel Packer's widow, was left an annuity and household goods including silver, brass, pewter and furniture. Surplus household furniture was left to the children of John Packer, the son of his brother, Thomas, and silver was left to his neices Mary and Elizabeth, daughters of his brother John. To his niece Mary, the daughter of his brother William he left a chest of drawers. This Mary was the Mary Packer who later married her cousin Daniel (of the letters) and I cannot help wondering what kind of remarkable chest of drawers she inherited from her uncle!

This Daniel Packer also left a case of instruments and Salmon's Chirurgery in two volumes to Mr. James Tippetts, so he may have been a surgeon. The executors of his will were his wife and his brother, William Packer. William Packer was born in 1687(19) occupied Rockmill in 1738 when it was described as a fulling mill(20). This mill was on the Painswick stream just by the A46 about a mile north of Stroud. The mill house is still there, but the mill itself has been demolished. William is also said to have held Damsell's Mill 1740-45(21). This mill still exists and the water wheel is still to be seen there, but the building has been converted into a dwelling

It is likely that as William Packer inherited his brother's dwelling house in Painswick, it was the present Hazelbury House in New Street where a piece of window glass was found with the name "Molly Packer 1743" scratched on it. This piece of glass is preserved now in the cottage next door to Hazelbury House, named "Packers" which was formerly a barn (22). William's only daughter was Mary (Molly) who was born in 1723, but it is difficult to be certain about such an identification as the church burial records show that thirteen Mary Packers died and were buried in Painswick between 1700 and 1793.

William Packer died in 1754(23) and a year later in 1755 his daughter Mary married her cousin Daniel Packer, the son of John and Mary Packer and a nephew of the Daniel Packer who died in 1739(24). By her marriage settlement,(25) Mary is shown to have had a fortune of £8,000 of which £4,000 was given to Daniel and the other £4,000 settled in trust for Mary and her children. One of the trustees in this settlement was Henry Loveday, a member of another noted family in Painswick. It is likely that Daniel and Mary lived at Hazelbury House as a fire insurance wall plaque was found there, which was dated 1757 and insured "Daniel Packer in the Parish of Painswick in the County of Gloucester". This wall plaque is now in the next-door cottage named "Packers"(26).

In 1759 there was recorded a list of persons paying "a pound rate" in Painswick and Mr. Daniel Packer paid £2, and for Cross Keys £1 and for King's £1 and for Keens £3, and for Mrs. George Smith's £6(27). It is probable that this was Daniel Packer mentioned above, but it is difficult to be certain as it seems that there were two other Daniel Packers alive at this time.

In the same list is Mr. John Packer - £16 and Mrs. Packer £8. It is likely that the Mr. John Packer was Daniel's older brother who worked the Lower Mill (Ming's Mill).

We know more about Daniel Packer 1715-1769 and his wife Mary, who was also his cousin, than any other members of the Packer family, as two books of their letters have survived and are preserved at the Record Office. The first book of letters (28) commences 3 September 1760 and continues to 7 March 1761. They are written to Sir Samuel Fludyer, a Blackwell Hall factor, in London and are business letters concerning supplies of cloth sent and bills. Daniel seems to have made a variety of cloths; Worcesters, Livery Whites, Blacks, Scarlets and Blues (29). Some cloth, such as Livery Whites were sent to London before being dyed, but much was dyed by his own men. He mentions that his dyers have had difficulty with green cloth ordered and that "Dyer Pegler says a pink mixture cannot be matched but if the friend must have it they will do their best" (30). The wet weather was a cause of trouble, for it made it very difficult to dry cloths on the tenters. He mentions in November that he could not send Liverys as he could not get them dry.(31).

It would appear that the cloth trade was thriving in the area in 1760 for he writes "The spinning of Liverys is much the same as it was last year but 'twill not be in my power to get it better so long as the superfine makers can give such wages they takes a great many of our best hands from us"(32).

The second book of Daniel's letters (33) covers the period from January 1768 to September 1769, but letters by his wife Mary continue to 1791. Most of the letters by Daniel in this period are addressed to Mr. Thos. Misenor, factor in London, but a number are also addressed to Messrs. Marsh and Hudson, and Sir Samuel Fludyer. It appears that 1768 was a year of depression in the local cloth trade. In January, Daniel complains that India House will oblige him to quit the trade (34). In May he says he has had so many losses in cloths of late that he thought of declining the order and mentions a parcel of Worcesters ordered in 1765 which he still has unsold(35), and he thinks he will be a great loser by keeping on his workpeople this year, although he has never made better cloth(36). In June he refuses to sell cloths on the terms mentioned and says that if he cannot find better terms he must part with all his spinners although he does not know what they will do, for they will not find employment elsewhere (37). In August he complains that trade is not worth following: "what our poor will do this winter I cannot tell for my infirmities will prevent my keeping them employed as I did last year." (38) In another letter, with reference to poor prices he says that "We shall have fewer clothiers another year. I hear there was one sent to Gloster Jail Thursday last, and last Tuesday Sam. Haines (Bro. to Mr. Daniel Haines) shot himself through the Head; he was deeply in Debt for Wooll."(39) This tragedy, related by Daniel is connected in local legend to Painswick with Haines Green, which is on the left side of the lane leading from Painswick to Edge about one hundred yards up hill, after crossing Washbrook. In the same letter Daniel mentions selling cloth to an inland clothier as well as that he sending to the London factors.

In October he apologises for the delay in sending whites because of the tempestuous weather (40) and during the same month he complains of the delays in payment for cloths (41) and more complaints are made in December about money which has been owing for 13 months (42). In November Daniel apologises for not sending all the cloths ordered as he had some stolen from his tenters (43).

It is interesting to note that a letter could take ten days to travel from London to Painswick, as in a letter to Fludyer & Co. Daniel writes, "Your favour of the 7 inst. did not come to hand until the 17th.(44) In January 1769 he is still complaining about Worcs. being sold for £11 when worth £29. 10s. He also refers in the same letter to the "Turkey Gentlemen" (Levant Company) and the Co. (East India Company) to whom a considerable amount of his cloth was sold.(45)

By February Daniel was so ill that he wrote to Fludyer & Co. saying the he was obliged to quit business (46) and in answer to a letter from them he writes the next month recommending Mr. Thos. Bayliss to take his place in supplying them with cloths.(47) The following month he writes that Mr. Bayliss has agreed to take any orders sent and adds "I have left my mill".(48) His last letter was written on 14 September 1769 and he died in November aged 54.(49) During his last year a few letters were written by his wife Mary when Daniel was too ill to write and one is of particular interest about a pipe of oil. Mary says Daniel paid £42 per ton for it and it seemed so good he reserved it for fine yarn, but it had proved to be not so good, as it had caused more "Rows" (lumps) than was normal in 'fine 5 hds' (50) (type of cloth). The oil used for high quality cloth at this period was usually olive oil imported from Italy. Oil seed rape was grown in the Painswick area for the cloth trade but was not used for high quality cloths.

Daniel Packer left two wills; one dated 15 April 1768 (51) and the other dated 6 July 1768 (52). The reason for this was that his brother John died and was buried on 2 June 1768 (53). His nephew John, son of brother John had died in April (54) and the church registers record another John Packer who died in March 1768 so three John Packers died in Painswick in less than three months! In his will Daniel Packer left a property called Keens to his nephew Richard Packer, son of his brother John of the Lower Mill (Kings Mill), woolstapler, who with his widow Mary were named as executors. Tithes of corn, grain and hay from lands and estate in Sheepscombe were to be paid to Mary Packer for life and after her death to his son William. Money was left in trust for his three children; £3,000 for William at age 21 and £2,000 each for his daughters Mary and Catherine at age 21. Three children only are mentioned in the will but it is probable that he had a son Daniel born in 1756, a year after his marriage, who died in his 10th year in 1766 (55). After Daniel's death his widow Mary continued to keep copies of her letters which mostly concerned investments in Government stocks, but they also contain interesting information about family matters. She refers to her nephew Richard as a mealman as well as a woolstapler (56) so it would seem that Lower Mill (Kings) was

being used at that time as a corn mill as well as for wool storage. A few days later she is writing to Marsh & Hudson to apologise for an error, saying that her nephew Richard is on the point of marriage and that she hopes when it is consummated he will be more assiduous.(57) Richard married Susannah Baylis in 1770(58) at St. Michael's, Glos. Mary's son William, who was born in 1757 seems to have suffered very much. She writes that she has returned from Weymouth with him and that he is much better(59), but only eleven days later she says she is setting out for Weymouth again as he son has trouble in his right shoulder which is useless, but the cause is not known(60). A year later her son has been to Southampton to bathe in the sea, but his arm was no better.(61) In 1774 William had again been to Southampton but was no better, but Mary says that in a fortnight he is going on trial as an apprentice to Mr. Whitaker, a clothier in Wiltshire(62). At the same time Mary records the death of her nephew Richard who died of consumption aged 28 on 22 March 1774 saying he was, "the only relation I had capable of serving me in any shape." In September 1774, Mary returned from Trowbridge where William had been apprenticed to Mr. Whitaker for 5 years and although he could use his arm better, he would always be deformed.(63) Three years later it is recorded by Mary that William had been ill for five weeks and had been to Bath to see a doctor who advised salt water baths(64) but within three months William had lost the use of his legs and had to be kept at home(65). In April of the following year 1778 William was in the same state(66) and he died in less than a year. The exact date I have been unable to determine as in the church registers one William Packer was buried September 30 1778 and another William Packer 26 February 1779 and I have found no evidence to determine which one was the son of Daniel and Mary.(67)

William's sister Catherine died aged 14 in 1779(68) so Mary was left with only one daughter. This daughter, named Mary, like her mother, married Nathaniel Winchcombe in 1782 (69). Ten years later he changed his name to Clifford, leaving Henry Clifford of Frampton his heir,(70) so Daniel and Mary Packer are ancestors of the well-known Clifford family of Frampton-on-Severn.

A Nathaniel Winchcombe is recorded as holding Hazle Mill and New Mills on the Slad Brook and surrendering them to Thos. Baylis in 1798,(71) which is interesting because the Baylis family also had connections with the Packers. Daniel, as already stated had recommended a Mr. Thos. Baylis to take over his cloth trade in 1769 and Mary wrote a letter to him later that year,(72) and Richard, Daniel's nephew, had married Susannah Baylis. In Mary Packer's letters, in addition to financial matters and family troubles there are a few other items of interest. One of these is the presents she sent to London to Misenor; a couple of hams,(73) a hare (74) a flitch of bacon(75) Double Berkeley cheeses(76) a 10lb salmon(77) and several other similar items. Sometimes they were sent by Niblett's Waggon and(78) sometimes by the Gloucester coach(79); Manning's Waggon(80) and Ballards Waggon(81) are also mentioned but there is no reference to the Stroudwater coach. It would be interesting to find out by which route these waggons made the journey to London.

One other item of interest in Mary's letters is her statement to Mr. Burford that she has sent two halves of two bank notes to him, value £100 each, and that by the next post she will send the remaining halves! - an unusual safety precaution. Mary's last recorded letter was written in 1791 and she herself died in 1793(83). With her death her branch of the Packer family died out in Painswick, as her only remaining daughter Mary, as before mentioned had married and left the district. In her will Mary(84) left the main part of her considerable fortune to her daughter Mary Winchcombe for life with reversion to her grandchildren, to whom she also left money and jewelry. A ring with the motto "Daniel Packer" is specially mentioned to be given to her grandson Henry Clifford Winchcombe. £100 was left to Gloucester Infirmary and £10 for the establishment and support of a Sunday School in Painswick. Small bequests were made to servants, Sarah Spring, Margaret Crump, Mary Evans and James Birt.

After Mary Packer's death, the only remaining relatives other than the Winchcombe family who can be traced are the widow of Richard Packer (d.1774) Susannah and her two children John and Sophia. Sophia who was born in 1770 married the Rev. James Parsons at Worcester in 1793(85) and John Packer is mentioned in a bond of 1795(86) to pay £500 to his mother Susannah Baylis, the wife of the Rev. Joseph Baylis of the city of Gloucester, so it seems that Susannah, Richard's widow must have re-married and left Painswick for Gloucester and no doubt her son John Packer, the last male descendent of the clothiers mentioned in the family records, went with her.

One other family connection of the Packers which is of interest is the marriage of Richard's sister Sarah to Abraham Rudhall, the son of the Abraham Rudhall who in 1731 recast the five bells in the church tower in honour of the Coronation of George II, (87) which still form part of the twelve bells which were ringing Grandsire Triples in honour of the new vicar this year. The mills which the Packer family held for so long passed into other hands within a few years of the deaths of Daniel and his brother John. Cap Mill was leased to William Knight, the younger by Ann, John's widow and his son Richard in 1772, when it was described as having a dwelling house, stables, outhouses, dye-house, 2 stocks, 1 gig-mill, mill-loft and 2 meadows(88). This William Knight's father lived at Byfield in Bisley Street and married Hester Wick of Wick St. House whose monument can be seen in Painswick Church(89). At the back of Byfield is an old building described as a wool Barn(90) and near the back door is an area, now filled with concrete which was used for wool washing(91).

Lower Mill (Kings) was in the hands of Richard Packer who died in 1774 leaving it to his widow Susannah. It is not clear who was running the mill directly after Richard's death but in 1787 it was advertised to be let as a corn mill, together with wool-lofts and "a good dwelling house (convenient for a genteel family)". It was occupied then by a Mr. Edward James, but application was to be made to

Mr. Edward Palling of Sheephouse or Rev. Joseph Baylis,
Gloucester.(91)

The Rev. Joseph Baylis of Gloucester was the husband of Susannah, so it seems that although the Packer family had given up any direct involvement in cloth making, their descendants still retained a financial interest in the mill. Several members of the Baylis family are recorded as clothiers well into the 19th century, but the name Packer does not appear again in the cloth trade in Painswick.

COLLEEN HAINE

APPENDIX THE PACKER FAMILY TREE

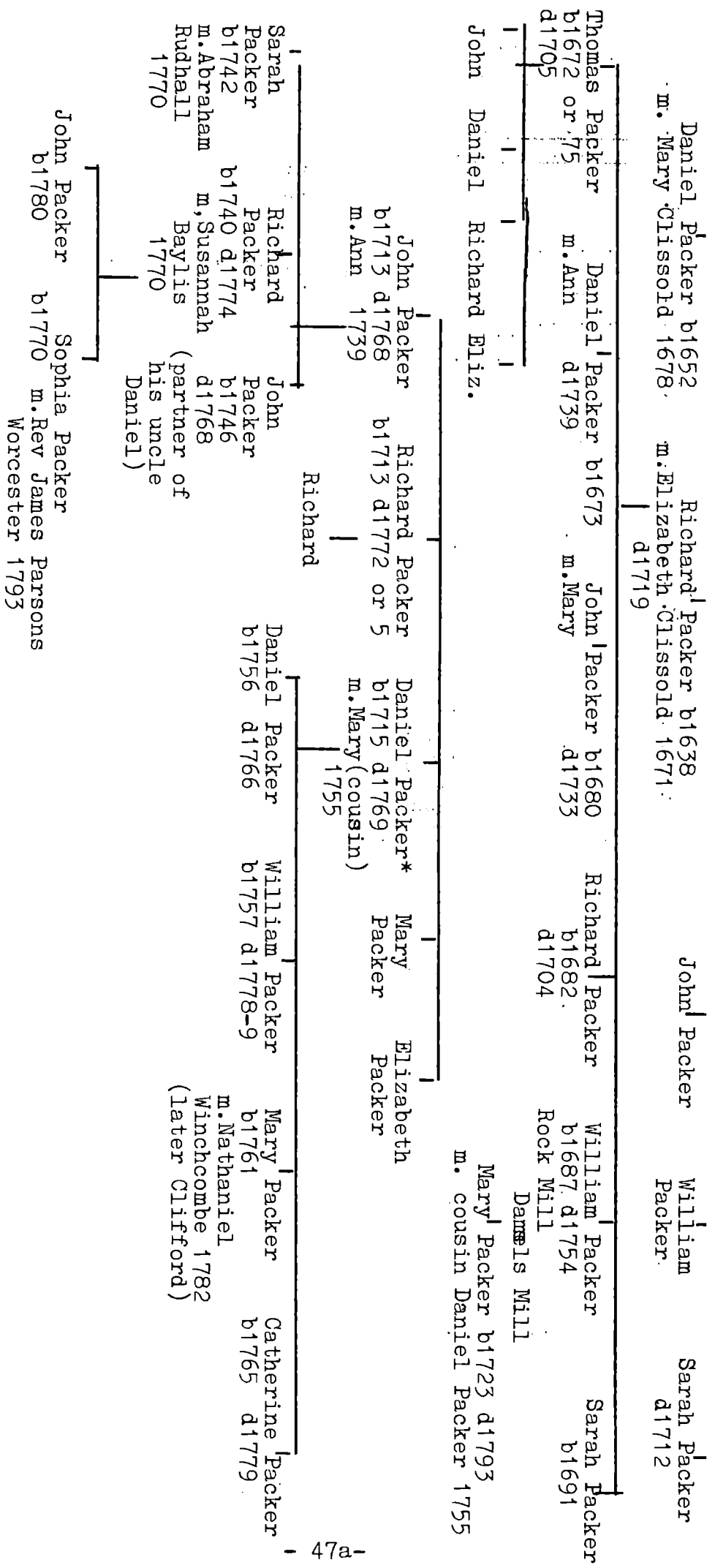
In drawing out the Packer family tree on the next page, I have used church registers, Bigland Vol.II, Gloucestershire Marriage Allegations and the Packer family documents in GRO.

It does not show all the Packers recorded in the church registers, but only those known to have taken part in the cloth trade, who are also mentioned in the family documents. It has been very difficult to sort out exact relationships as so many names are the same. Thirteen Mary Packers were buried in Painswick between 1712 and 1793 and 3 John Packers died in less than three months in 1768 and 2 Richard Packers in less than 2 months in 1774.

There were many other Packers besides those I have shown, but it has not been possible to find out any information of interest about them. There was a Packer family still in Painswick in the 1930s, but whether it was descended from the clothiers I have not been able to discover.

SOURCES

1. Baddeley. A Cotteswold Manor, p.85
2. Ibid, p.119
3. Painswick church registers. Index Book O.P.Q. p.28
4. Smith, J. "Men & Armour in Gloucestershire"
5. G.R.O., D149/T1204
6. G.R.O., D1886
7. Painswick church registers
8. Glos. Marriage Allegations
9. Ibid
10. G.R.O., D149/T1204
11. Bigland, Vol II, p.310
12. G.R.O., D149/187
13. Painswick church registers
14. Ibid
15. Ibid and Bigland, Vol. II, p 310
16. G.R.O., D1886



This is part of the Packer Family Tree to show the relationship of those members mentioned in the

17. G.R.O., D149/F89
18. Painswick church registers
19. Ibid
20. Glos. Jnl., 24 Oct 1738
21. V.C.H. Glos., XI, p.72
22. Ex. inf. Miss Dangerfield of "Packers"
23. Painswick church registers
24. Ibid
25. G.R.O., D149/92
26. Ex. inf. Miss Dangerfield of "Packers"
27. Churchwardens accounts 1759
28. G.R.O., D149/F113
29. Ibid. 3/11/1760
30. Ibid. 13/12/1760
31. Ibid. 15/11/1760
32. Ibid. 6/12/1760
33. G.R.O., D149/F114
34. Ibid. 22/1/68
35. Ibid. 31/5/68
36. Ibid. 9/5/1768
37. Ibid. 20/6/1768
38. Ibid. 20/8/1768
39. Ibid. 28/8/1768
40. Ibid. 1/10/1768
41. Ibid. 22/10/1768
42. Ibid. 17/12/1768
43. Ibid. 19/11/1768
44. Ibid. 22/12/1768
45. Ibid. 28/1/1769
46. Ibid. 17/2/1769
47. Ibid. 18/3/1769
48. Ibid. 8/4/1769
49. Painswick church registers and Bigland, Vol II, p.310
50. G.R.O., D149/F114, 21/7/1768
51. G.R.O., D149/T1204
52. G.R.O., D149/F97
53. Painswick church registers
54. G.R.O., D149/F114, 18/1/1770
55. Painswick church registers
56. G.R.O., D149/F114, 18/1/1770
57. Ibid. 22/1/1770
58. Painswick church registers
59. G.R.O., D149/F114, 15/9/1772
60. Ibid. 26/9/1772
61. Ibid. 31/8/1773
62. Ibid. 4/4/1774
63. Ibid. 29/9/1774
64. Ibid. 24/4/1774
65. Ibid. 17/7/1777
66. Ibid. 13/4/1778
67. Painswick church registers
68. Ibid
69. Ibid
70. Baddeley, p.217
71. V.C.H., II p.77
72. G.R.O., D149/F114
73. Ibid. 1/1/1771
74. Ibid. 9/2/1772

75. Ibid. 4/11/1774
76. Ibid. 17/11/1775
77. Ibid. 19/4/1781
78. Ibid. 4/11/1774
79. Ibid. 12/11/1773
80. G.R.O., D149/1714, 6/5/1788
81. Ibid. 17/11/1775
82. Ibid. 9/6/1784
83. Painswick church registers
84. G.R.O., D149/F105
85. Ibid. D1886, Copy of Marriage Cert., 1793
86. Ibid. Bond, 1795
87. Baddeley, p.215,217
88. G.R.O., D1886, Indenture 1772
89. Baddeley, p.200
90. Ex. inf. from owner of property, and D. Verey
Gloucestershire, The Cotswolds (1970), p.362
91. Ibid
92. Glos. Journal, 3 Dec. 1787