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WILLIAM TAYLOR: NEW DISCOVERIES

BRIDGET CLARKE

William Taylor's entry in the *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* lists the country houses which he designed, chiefly in Somerset and Shropshire, but does not mention what I believe are two of his greatest works, both sadly destroyed in the nineteenth century, Chipley in Somerset and Escot in Devon.¹ Because Robert Hooke's diary on Monday 5 February 1677 records 'Sir Walter Yonge's draught—drew the draught fair' and on 6 February 'at home all the morning about Sir Walter Yonge's draught',² it has been assumed that the 'capital mansion' Yonge built at Escot in Devon was to Hooke's design.³ But, hidden in the family papers of Yonge's best friend and political ally, Edward Clarke of Chipley, is proof not only that William Taylor, surveyor and carpenter, was the architect responsible for Escot, but that Escot itself was a later version of the innovative house that Taylor built for Clarke at Chipley.⁴ Edward Clarke's papers, read in conjunction with the correspondence of John Locke, also reveal that most of Taylor's patrons were friends, sometimes related to each other, that most were London merchants of country gentry origin, with similarly Exclusionist political objectives, and that most had friendship with the famous Whig philosopher in common.

William, son of William and Alice Taylor, was baptised at St Dunstan's, Stepney on 5 December 1632.⁵ The elder William was a carpenter who became Master of the London Carpenters' Company in 1658. The younger William was made free of the Carpenters' Company by patrimony on 29 Jan 1651.⁶ He had two brothers, Augustine, christened at St Brides Fleet Street on 21 May 1643

and apprenticed to carpenter Frederick Meadowes in February 1660, and Isaac, also apprenticed the same year.⁷ William junior lived in Hogg Lane, in the parish of St Thomas the Apostle, when in September 1656 he took on an apprentice. He refused to join the Livery of the Company in 1668.⁸ From 1670 he was employed as a carpenter on the rebuilding of St Dionis Backchurch⁹ (which was designed by Robert Hooke), Wren's accounts recording payment of £540 to William Taylour.¹⁰

He was first recorded as an architect in 1688–70, when he was paid by the Pewterers' Company for a 'draught' for the rebuilding of their hall in Lime Street.¹¹ In 1671–2 he was paid for surveying by Sir Robert Clayton in connection with a new house in Old Jewry.¹² Clayton's house was built with a banqueting hall wainscotted with cedar and adorned with paintings of giants and gods by Robert Streeter,¹³ Serjeant Painter in the King's Works, and famous for painting the ceiling of the Sheldonian Theatre.¹⁴ Clayton was the wealthiest citizen in London, at the start of a glittering civic career. He had inherited a thriving business in Cornhill from his scrivener uncle, and developed it into Clayton and Morris, a firm which combined the functions of land agent, broker and banker. He served as Alderman (1670–1683 and 1689 until his death), Master of the Drapers Company (1689), Lord Mayor (1679), member of the Royal Africa Company and Treasurer of the Hudson Bay Company (1678). Through his wife he was owner of a plantation in Bermuda. He purchased Brownsea island with its copperas works and also an iron works in Ireland.¹⁵ In 1673 he joined the

Country party, becoming an MP and associate of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, a member of Charles II's Cabal and a man determined to exclude the Roman Catholic Duke of York from inheriting the Crown. Taylor remained on Clayton's payroll, doing industrial work for him at Brownsea Island in the 1670s and writing to him after a visit to the west country in 1673-4.¹⁶

It is possible that this visit was connected with alterations to Nynehead Court, Somerset, for the city merchant John Sandford, as Taylor was to design and build Chipley, in Nynehead parish, five years later. Nynehead Court (Fig.1) has the date 1675 on a doorway, but it was not completely rebuilt; earlier walls were utilised, though the broad upright windows and hipped roof were new.

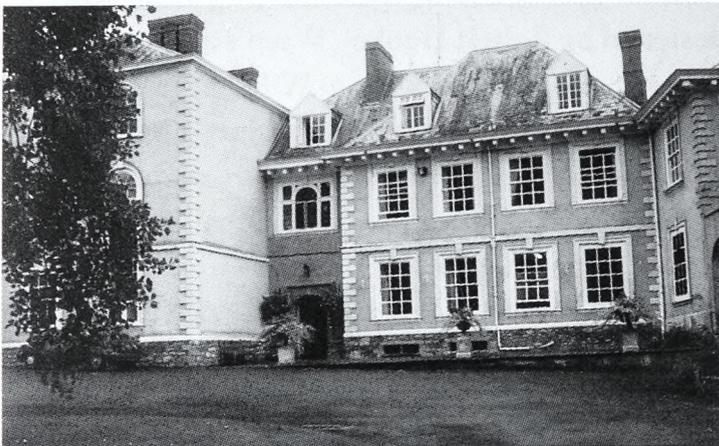


Figure 1. Nynehead Court, Somerset in 1996.

Bridget Clarke.

Chipley was inherited by Edward Clarke through his step-mother Elizabeth Lottisham after his father's death in 1679. Clarke had been born in 1650 and was educated at Taunton School, Wadham College, Oxford, and the Inner Temple. He was a lawyer, and MP for Taunton from 1690 until his death in 1710. He was Auditor to Queen Mary from her accession in 1690 until her death in 1694 and a Commissioner of Excise from 1694 to 1701.¹⁷ In 1675 he married Mary Jepp, an heiress who had spent her childhood with her grandmother Elizabeth Baber at her grandmother's home, Sutton Court, Chew Magna, Somerset, a house once owned and improved by Bess of Hardwick.¹⁸ They

lived in Hatton Garden, the fashionable new residential quarter of London. Through Mary he met John Locke, a childhood friend of her uncle, John Strachey of Sutton Court,¹⁹ and who was secretary and medical adviser to the Earl of Shaftesbury.²⁰ Locke became one of Edward and Mary's closest friends, basing his 'Thoughts on Education' on the upbringing of their children,²¹ and Edward became a Shaftesbury supporter, eventually acting as Shaftesbury's trustee after his flight to Holland in James II's reign.²²

Meanwhile, in 1678 Taylor was working for Sir John Banks, another great city merchant and client of Clayton and Morris²³, on improvements to his country house, The Friars, Aylesford, Kent, where £4,500 was spent on modernisation and the addition of apartments and a ballroom, all the new work being carried out in brick.²⁴ Although Banks was not an Exclusionist, being allied politically with men like the wealthy 'wild western Tory' Sir William Portman in Somerset, he consulted Shaftesbury in 1677 about a possible tutor for his son Caleb on a two-year Grand Tour of Europe and appointed John Locke to the post.²⁵

It might have been Locke who introduced Taylor to Clarke, or was it Sandford (living in the City in Basinghall Street next to Blackwell Hall after the Fire,²⁶ and knowing Clayton and Banks as fellow merchants), who perhaps had already chosen Taylor for alterations at Nynehead? At all events, when Clarke determined to build a country house at Chipley in 1679 it was to Taylor he turned. In January 1681 he drew up articles of agreement with 'William Taylor of ye Parish of St Thomas Apostle London Carpenter' by which Taylor was to perform 'All and singular ye Carpenters, Ruffe-Masons, Free-masons, Briklayers and Plaisterers Worke,' and 'hew, saw, double-frame and lay or rayse all ye floores and summers in ye second third and fowerth storyes in ye sd intended message or mansion house'. Clarke was to pay Taylor 'fifty pounds at ye laying of ye foundation of ye sd house, and fifty pounds more when ye sd house shall be

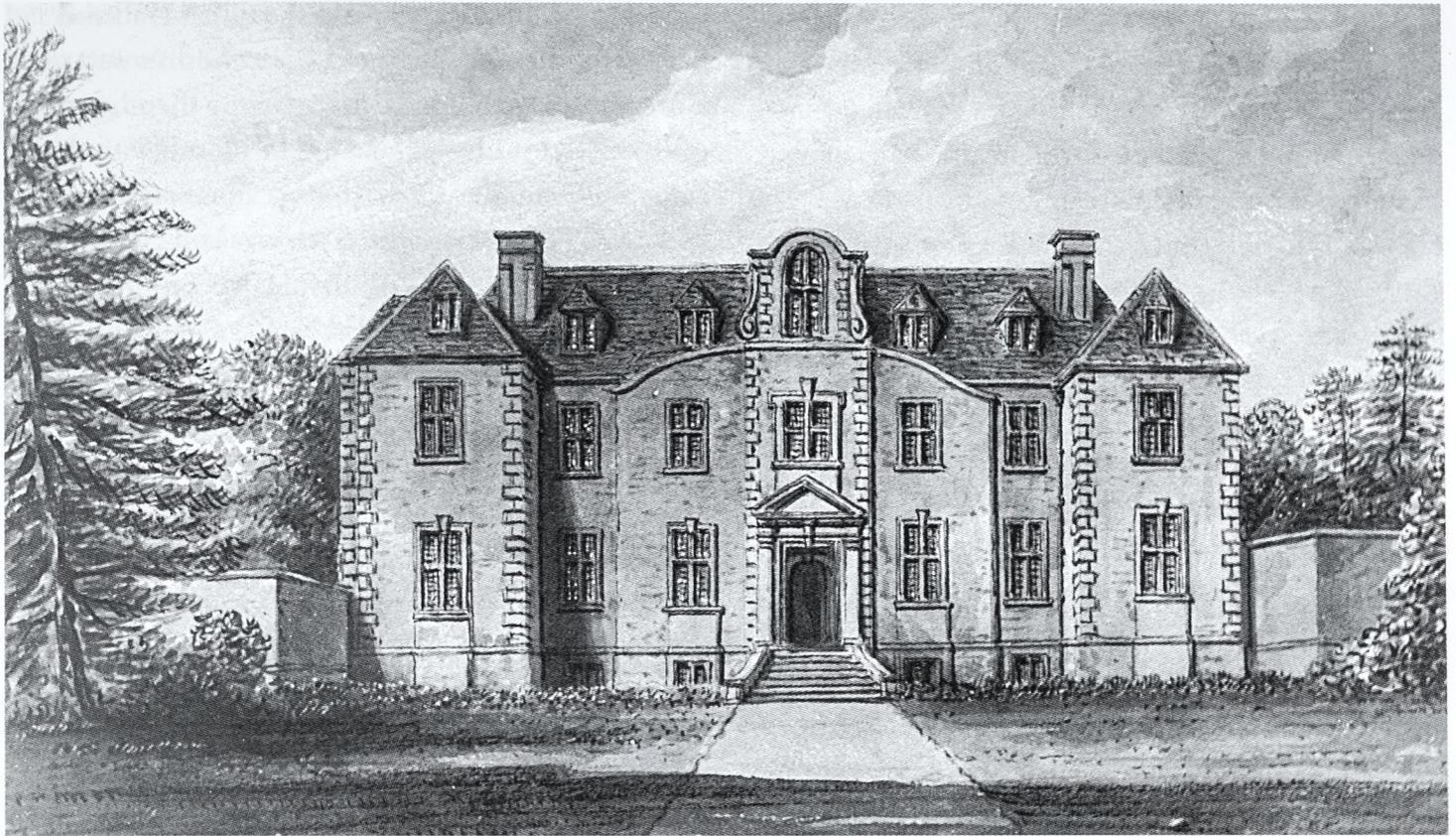


Figure 2. John Buckler, Chipley, Somerset, 1887. *Somerset Local Studies Library*.

covered in and finished as aforesd'. The first payment was completed on 17 February 1681 ('recd then by ye handes of my wife £4 of Mr Clarke and ten pounds more I recd of him in January last in all ye summa of fifty pounds being ye first summa payable to mee by ye Articles I say recd £50 by mee Will Taylor.')

²⁷

Locke told Mary Clarke, 'I have never seen a house that I have like better and that in all respects I have thought so prudently built and suited to all purposes.'²⁸ It was a double-pile house, 100 ft. long on the north and south sides, and 96 ft. on east and west, both elegant and convenient (Fig. 2). It had a basement, ground floor and first floor, plus four 'dormar buildings'²⁹ (possibly either the rooms in the roof or the closet blocks at the corner), and four stacks of chimneys. It was built of brick, faced with white ashlar.³⁰ There was a 'great muddilan cornish like that of St Brides steepell.'³¹ The main front had a 'great frontispiece according to the dorick order, with such carving as the order allows',³² and there were frontispieces to the garden front and stable

yard; these enabled the house to be used from all sides, as did the central hall.³³ There is an apparent discrepancy between the description of the great frontispiece and the only illustration of Chipley. The drawing may show either the west or east door case, which only cost £15 and £13, rather than the 'great doore case to the South front' which cost £25. Although Edward's wife was always worried about how much he was spending, there is no evidence in the letters that any of the proposed designs were abandoned. There were 28 windows with 300 lights, 11 ft. high on the ground floor and 10 ft. on the second, plus 16 'Lutheran' (lucarne) windows. The main floor had 12 doors and door cases with mouldings at 8s a piece and 4 door cases with pairs of doors at 40s a piece. On the upper floor there were 20 doors and cases with mouldings at 8s a piece. On the third floor the truss to hang up the floors and carry the roof cost £10.

1680 was unusually early for a brick-built house in Somerset; Clifton Taylor cites Ven House, Milborne Port of 1698 as the first brick house of

considerable size,³⁴ but Edward Clarke's contract with John Kingston, brickmaker of Taunton, was signed in September 1680, Kingston covenanting to begin digging the earth a fortnight after Michaelmas, to start moulding in the spring and firing in May. He was paid 6*d* per thousand bricks for turning the earth, 3*s* per thousand for moulding and 18*d* when a thousand were burnt. By January fifty shillings had been paid for turning the earth for 100,000 thousand bricks and in February another 50,000 had been contracted for.³⁵

Clarke wrote various reminders to himself:

Memo: to send to him Saturday next to begin and digg
ye earth according to ye Agreemt,

Memo: the sand must bee brought in a little before
ye moulding of ye brick,

Memo: I must make ye frame myselfe and must stand to
ye losse of melting my brick if it runns,

Memo: there must bee about 150 sacks of coale a little
before ye Clamm is to bee kindled'.³⁶

The whole estate was involved in the building, which had to be fitted in round the usual tasks of ploughing, reaping and haymaking. Edward was responsible for bringing all the necessary materials at his own cost to the building site, so a saw pit was dug and a lime kiln built in February; 42 hogsheads of lime were paid for on 19 March. The wages book shows payments to Charles Granger for sawing 1,800 elm boards and William Hall receiving 17*d* for 1,000 lasts 3 foot long and 20*d* for 1,000 4 foot long, and by July 200,000 lasts had been made. In March 10,000 'tyle stones' arrived costing £12 plus 30*s* for carriage, and in July 'ragg stones' were brought by 3 horses for 3*s* 6*d* and a second lime kiln was built.³⁷

On 23 April 1681 Clarke and Taylor together took the 'mesures of ye building from ye foundation up to ye first floore'.³⁸ Although there are no plans or pictures of the interior it is possible to deduce what rooms there were from the measures, from the 'Carpenters proposalls' and from descriptions in the Clarke correspondence. Inside the house was a Great Hall, of which Mary Clarke wrote to Edward on 17 June 1696, 'I love best to be wheare the children are night and day and if they was all at home I

beleve I must make my bed in the Great Hall and have soe many little beds as I have children sett up all around; who could be more happy then I, especially when I thinke you would be pleasd with the sight also;' and in August 1696, 'came 2 soldiers into the Great Hall wheare the cloth was laid'.³⁹ The hall was floored with stone. William Clarke wrote to Edward on 15 April 1681 'Ed Needs promiseth me that hee will lay your Hall etc with polished stone cheaper and better than English.'⁴⁰ It was 45 ft. long by 32 ft. wide and had two great windows with an architrave moulding a foot high. The Great Staircase of 'Wallnut Tree Wood' had 34 steps with fashionable rails and bannisters (costing £25) and there were 3 great pairs of back stairs and a little back stairs. All floors were of double framing 14 inches deep, except the cellar floors which were single framing. The four trusses that hung up the floor over the Hall cost 50*s* a truss. There was a Little Hall, of which Clarke wrote on 9 February 1698, when I and my wife are in the country we eat the same with the servants – we use the Little hall'. The Little Hall had a room 'within' it.⁴¹ Clarke had a study,⁴² and there was also a drawing room.⁴³ On the first floor overlooking the hall was a gallery, of which Mary Clarke wrote: 'my bottle and glass set in the gallery window by my chamber where I walke and drinke the Bath waters and fancy that the gallery is the bath gallery that looks into the Hall which I fancy to be the Cross Bath.'⁴⁴ On the floor above was a nursery, and elsewhere there was an apartment reserved for Locke, to whom Mary Clarke wrote in 1685, 'You will oblige us in making use of the apartment that you made choyce of in our house and is ever since reserved a purpose for you. And I am sure you can take no better a way to keep Mr Clarke's vapors from returning than to let him see that his building proves any ways serviceable to one that he has so great a vaw for as yourself.'⁴⁵

As much as the back stairs it is the high service basement that shows Chipley's modernity, for it had a 'workemens' hall for the servants, 'kitchin', scullery, 'pastery', larder, 'greate sellar', 'strong

beere sellar', '2 beer sellars', buttery, butlers room, 'sellar stayre case', 'labratory', 'mylke house' and 'little room'. To reduce smells the kitchen was vaulted.⁴⁶ The chimneys had to be of convenient width 'without any tymber neare ye funells of them and in suche manner as they may carry ye smoake cleare without any annoyance.'⁴⁷

Chipley was well supplied with water; the 'drayne' which brought water in was '163 ft. long wch being taken on both sides together with ye covering, and reduced all into a wall of 5 foote high and 1 ft. 6 inches thick, containes as tis computed by Mr Taylor, 815 foote'⁴⁸ and a modern invention, one of Sir Samuel Morland's forcing pumps, was used.⁴⁹ Mr Taylor had been paid on 5 March for arranging drainage.⁵⁰

As with most building work, it all took longer than expected. Edward wrote to Mary on 7 June 1681:

My deare, [I had] noe time to give you any accompt of my affayres touching my building, nor can I now give you soe good a one as I could wish, for indeed ye workemen have gone on but verie slowly by reason of mine and Mr Taylors absence soe long, but what they have done is extreemly well, and Mr Taylor promises to retrieve the time that is lost, and finish according to his contract, wch I heartily wish hee may bee able to perform, the dry season hath helped mee much in ye bringing in of my materialls, and I hope that in two months time I shall have in all upon ye place, so that I am now well assured they will not stay for anything on my part.⁵¹

By the summer of 1683 Locke visited Chipley and was able to stay in the new house, which with its gardens was of great interest in the neighbourhood. Mrs Burgess, housekeeper to the Clarke's neighbour Mrs Bluett at Holcombe Court, wrote to Mary Clarke on 16 March 1684: 'Mrs Bluet has oft deluded me with hopes of showing yt we may see all the roomes the house is very takeing but the walks and gardens set me a longing'.⁵²

Undated papers in Taylor's writing show some of the costs of the building:

First storey	£ 175 13 4
The second storey	£268 18 0
Third storey	£268 18 0
The roof the flat the chimneys the 4 dormar buldings and ye rest of ye works	£250 00 0
The plastrar	£100 00 0
The laying the flours	£40 00 0
My own time	£150 00 0
	<u>£1253 09 4</u> ⁵³

Taylor's work at Chipley may have resulted in more commissions in Somerset, as he worked for Sir William Portman, MP for Taunton in 1685 and 1688, at Orchard Portman, and for Sir Halswell Tynte at Halswell,⁵⁴ and it may also have been another means of his introduction to patrons in Shropshire. The first was through Viscount Weymouth, for whom he worked at Longleat in 1682. Lord Weymouth owned the living of Minsterley in Shropshire, where Taylor seems to have designed a new church in 1688–89.⁵⁵ But in 1684 Taylor visited Aldenham Park in Shropshire, home of Sir Edward Acton,⁵⁶ who was another connection of Edward Clarke's, for Acton married Mary Walter, an heiress and a cousin of Mary Clarke, and the two families were on visiting terms.⁵⁷

Hooke's draught for Sir Walter Yonge of Colyton and Mohun Ottery in 1677 was either unused, or not intended for Escot. For Yonge only bought Escot in 1680,⁵⁸ and articles of agreement for building it were not dated until 1 August 1684. They appear to be in Clarke's hand, and describe Taylor unambiguously as 'Surveyor', as well as by his more formal title of carpenter. Taylor agreed for £200 to

contrive designe and draw out in paper one capital mansion house wth such convenient barns stables brewhouses and all other offices and out-houses gardens corts and yards whatsoever thereunto belonging as the sd Sr Walter Yonge shall desire or appoynt at Escott aforsed, and allsoe shall and will after ye sd mansion house with all ye offices out-houses gardens corts and other appurtenances shall bee soe contrived designed drawn out settled and agreed upon by and

with the approbation and consent of ye sd Sr Walter Yonge from time to time during ye space of two yeares next ensuing the date hereof diligently and carefully survey overlooke and attend ye building up and finishing of ye said mansion house and every part thereof together with all ye offices outhouses and other the appurtenances, and to ye best of his skill and judgmt with ye approbation of the sd Sr Walter Yonge shall and will contrive designe and sett out all and every part of ye sd intended buildings as well for ye bricklayer and freemason as for ye carpenter and joyners herein mentioned, and shall and will direct order and appoynt all ye dimentions of every part of ye sd buildings and how and in what manner and after what scantling all ye tymber worke of ye sd buildings shall be cutt out framed sett together and raysed.

Taylor also agreed to measure the tradesmen's work and

see that ye Sr Walter Yonge bee not anyways over reckoned abused or imposed upon therein, and allsoe shall and will fully and absolutely compleat and finish with ye approbation and to ye satisfaction of ye sd Sr Walter Yonge all the draughts of what ever works shall remaine at ye end of ye sd two yeares unperformed so as ye same may bee to and with ye satisfaction of ye sd Sr W Y carryed on and well finished without ye further attendance of ye sd Wm Taylor.⁵⁹

The tradesmen 'herein mentioned' were James Butterfeild,⁶⁰ carpenter of London, Robert Nutting, bricklayer of London, James Lees, freemason of Langford Budville, Somerset, and John Barber and James Taylor of Devon, joiners, and

if any part or parts of ye severall sorts of worke herein mentioned or to bee hereafter directed to bee done by each of ye sd partyes respectively shall appeare and bee adjudged by ye sd Wm Taylor being indifferently chosen by all ye sd partyes to bee cobled or not well and substantially done according to ye true intent and meaneing of these presents the same shall be by each of ye sd partyes mended and sett right at his and their own propper costs and charges without putting ye sd Sr Walter Yonge his heyres execors or Adms to any further charge or trouble touching the same,

and if

any differences shall arise between any of ye sd workemen towards one another, or between the sd Sr Walter Yonge and any or either of them touching ye carrying up and finishing of ye sd building or any part thereof, that such differences of what nature of kind whatsoever they shall happen to bee shall bee fully and absolutely settled and determined by ye arbitration of ye sd Wm Taylor hee being by all the sd partyes chosen as a person indifferent to settle and determine the same.

Chipley was used as a pattern for some of the work. For instance, the carpenter was to be paid

two shillings for every yard of plaine-worke and two shillings and six pence for every yard of worke with moulding, both sorts to bee like that in Mr Clarke's house at Chipley, and the cornish if made like that in his house to bee allsoe measured into ye same at those prises, and all to bee measured strait and not girt over any of ye mouldings, and allsoe shall and will well and substantially frame make and hang all ye doore of ye sd house, whether playne or with mouldings and carefully sett all ye locks katches and bolts on ye same at ye same rates before mentioned but in measureing to bee allowed worke and halfe for each doore, and allsoe shall and will hansomely and substantially make and sett up all ye chimney peices that shall be in wood and all the architreves about ye doores and all cornishes (if any otherwise than at Mr Clarke's) and all other ye joyners worke in and about ye sd building in such forme and manner and according to such draughts as ye sd Wm Taylor with ye approbation and good liking of ye sd Sr Walter Yonge shall direct draw or appoynt.

Escot was burned down in 1808⁶¹ but the plan and elevation in *Vitruvius Britannicus*⁶² (Figs. 3 & 4) and a description in 1793 by the Devon historian Polwhele⁶³ allow its interior to be more easily understood than Chipley's. It was slightly smaller, 90 ft. by 80 ft. It had the same number of storeys and was of brick with stone dressings, but its frontispiece was grander and it had sash windows, a very up-to-date feature.⁶⁴ James Butterfield agreed to 'hew saw frame and sett up and make ready for

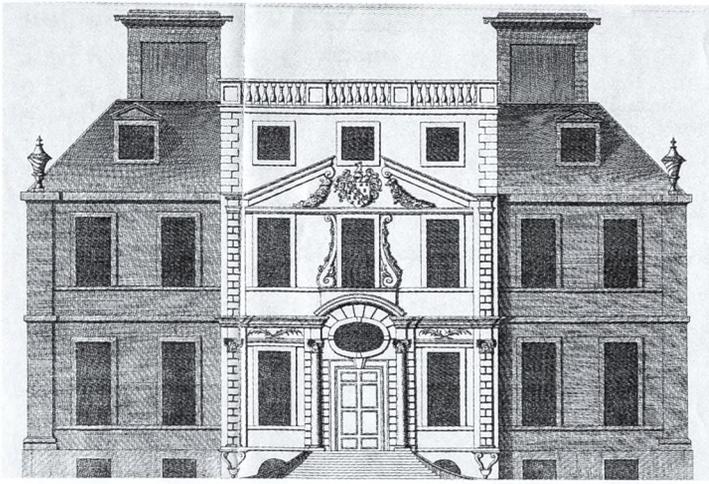


Figure 3. Escot House, Devonshire, elevation.
Vitruvius Britannicus.

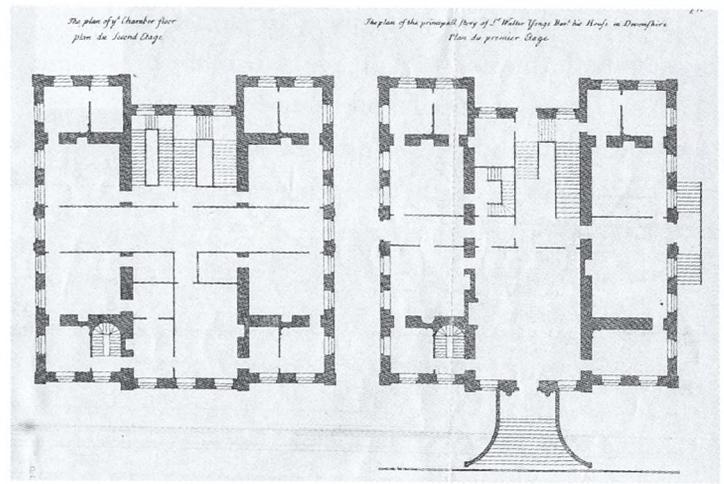


Figure 4. Escot House, Devonshire, plan of ground and first floors. *Vitruvius Britannicus*.

weights all such and soe many shas-wyndows [*sic*] well groved in ye whole wod on ye back-sydes.⁶⁵ The Hall was 40 ft. by 27 ft. and the principal staircase 36 ft. by 24 ft., forming the centre part of the house. The drawing room was 30 ft. by 22 ft., the eating room 28 ft. by 22 ft. and the principal bedroom 22 ft. by 20 ft. and the dressing room 22 ft. by 16 ft.. There was the same service basement, with a large kitchen under the entrance hall and a small back stairs straight up to the attics, bypassing the private apartments. There was a long gallery on the first floor opening onto the great staircase and communicating with the three apartments off it. The ground floor was 16 ft. high and the first floor 14 ft.. An important feature of Escot was its library, for Yonge had a collection of books enhanced by purchases which Locke made for him on the continent. The attics were divided into sixteen rooms of different sizes with a cupola in the centre and a gallery communicating with all the rooms.⁶⁷

As an Exclusionist Yonge had entertained Charles II's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth at Colyton during Monmouth's quasi-Royal progress through the West country in 1680. But after his arrest early in 1685 with Edward Clarke and other erstwhile supporters,⁶⁷ Yonge was safely at Tunbridge when Monmouth's rebellion started and 'very cool' towards him. By now Protestants were looking to William and Mary in Holland for relief

from James II's Catholicism. Shaftesbury (who died in 1683) and Locke had both fled to Holland.⁶⁸ Perhaps, too, Yonge could not bear to imperil his chances of living in his new house.

Letters to Locke chart the progress of the new building, which was even slower than Chipley. On 29 September 1686 Yonge's sister, Isabella Duke, wrote

I have seen Escott, which looks very well without, but there is very little done within, not one Chamber finish'd or fit to receive my Brother, I am afraid 'twill give him much pain, before he finds any pleasure there yet.⁶⁹

Three months later Yonge was writing to Locke about

business and building and planting and accounts and a thousand other torments . . . two months hence I must return to the builders to give them orders for the summers work, and particularly about the gardens and library (your province) wherein I would not willingly make a step without your advice.⁷⁰

At the end of January 1687 he wrote:

I assure you I was not in jeast when I told you in my last I depended on your coming over in the spring, to set my Library in order, I dare hardly resolve to set up the wainscot and much less the books without your advice, therefore pray doe not dissappoint me, but

since I am like to be condemned to summer in this country let me not want the pleasure of the best roome in my house, as I shall think that when you have helpt to furnish it, and are so kind to fill up one of the chairs designed for it . . . [In] the spring when [Edward Clarke] returns to his House, and I to my building, in which durty work (however ill you think of it) I am too farr engaged not to goe on a little farther, especially since Mr Taylor is leaving our country after this summer, and I would willingly get beyond the need of an Architect before he gets out of my reach.⁷¹

Taylor had stayed longer than the two years from August 1684, but the house was by no means finished. Expenses were mounting ('there is no end of charge in building')⁷² and Yonge asked Locke not to spend too much on books for his library. He had asked Locke's friend Benjamin Furly to buy him paving bricks, but 'if they were bought I would desire him to put them off (though at some loss) rather than be necessitated to pave my stables at so great a charge, since our ordinary pebbles will doe well enough'. Yonge borrowed one of Edward's servants, Isaac Heath, to do some painting; Mary wrote to her husband 'he thought you would be willing to give him leave to go some times when he had best lesure to Sr Walter's'.

Yonge spent the summer of 1687 in London, telling Locke 'I must own I shall never think my selfe well settled in the row'⁷³ till you are with me and think your selfe at home there'⁷⁴. Although in July he wrote that he proposed 'to hasten to Escott to quicken the builders and take their accounts that we may shutt up before winter',⁷⁵ he perhaps could not face the chaos, for in September he apologised for saying that he

should soon return to the ungratefull noise of saws and hammers etc . . . I am so perfectly caried away with this idle rambling humour, that though I have left the Town, I know not when I shall see Escott, and seeme to have forgot that I have building or any other concern there that calls for my presence . . . I shall consider with Mr Clark what to doe about the library and perhaps send you a draught of the roome for your advice in the disposition of it but I rather think I shall make

use of another roome this winter and defer the furnishing of that till the next summer, when for my part I can not but fancy you will be so kind to give us a visit.⁷⁶

Things had hardly improved next year: 'whatever the affaire is that has so taken you up, I should not easily forgive its keeping any thing from me that would have made me laugh (which is a matter of no small moment to a builder)'.⁷⁷ There was obviously still much to be done.

I have returned to Escott, as errant a Batchellour as I have been in these seaven years, and I think should be as idle a one could I as easily get rid of the builders as the matchmakers . . . as fast as I finish one thing I see others as necessary to be done, so that there is no greater argument for matrimony then that I may have a help meet to draw me out of the mortar . . . and desire [Mr Furley] to send me halfe a dozen more of the lesser sort of the Iron backs he sent me last year, which I have now measured and find to be about 18 inches wide and 2 foot 2 inches high; I have six roomes more to be finished where I designe to use them, and advise on how to cleanse and colour those iron back so as they may look well now in the summer when we make no fires as they doe in Holland.⁷⁸

Escot was still unfinished in February 1692, when Yonge wrote to Clarke

I desire you will by J Barber send me word wch day I may hope to see you, that I may get ye Joyner to meet you to advise abt my great staircase, and if you please to give an intimation to my carpenter I doubt not but he will be so kind to meet you . . . if you please to bring with you a note of ye prices of ye colours and other things I had from you, with what boards you had from me, we may also adjust that account with Isaaks help.

By now Taylor was nearly completing the hipped roofs and deep bracketed eaves of the North-west wing at Aldenham Park for the Actons (Figs. 5 & 6). Although unable to make a positive attribution, Gervase Jackson-Stops noted that 'the beautifully carved architrave and brackets . . . suggest that Sir Edward's architect may have been a competent carpenter'.⁷⁹ Lady Acton had written to Mary Clarke in March 1690:



Figure 5. Aldenham Park, Shropshire, roof and eaves cornice. *Country Life*.

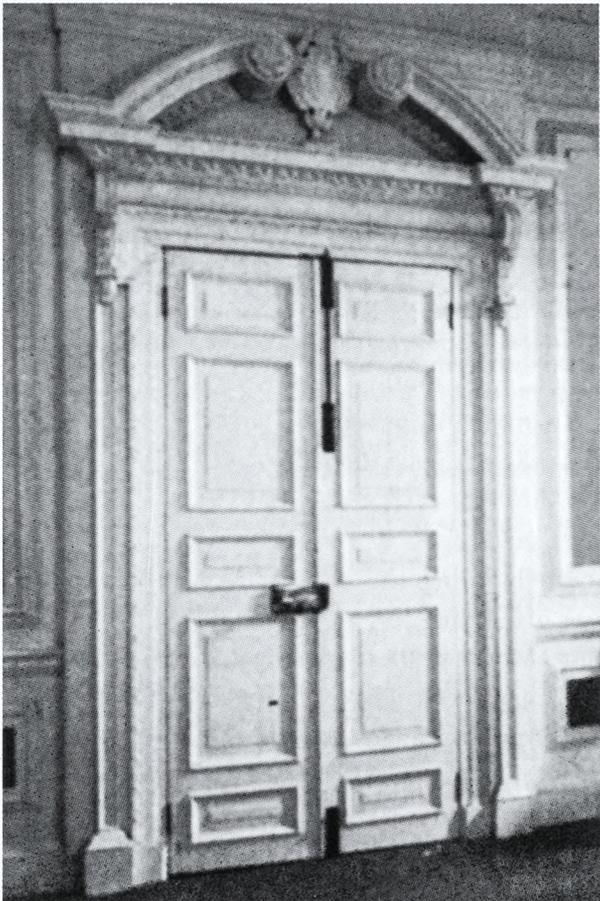


Figure 6. Aldenham Park, Shropshire, the State Room. *Country Life*.

we have now puld down the owld hows and have confind ouer selves whill it is bilding I never was in so much dirt and dust in all my life I should be quite wery of it al redy but Sr Edward now will stay in the contry and tak som part with me.

Even though a cartouche with four cherub heads and wings at the corner saying ‘Sir Edward Acton Barronett built this house in ye yeare of our Lord 1691’ exists on the north west front,⁸⁰ it must have been put there in hope, for on 18 December 1691 Lady Acton wrote ‘Our hows gos on but slowly since Sir Edward is forst to be so much at London.’ I have found no record Taylor’s death,⁸¹ but on 4 April 1699 when Edward Clarke found defects in the cornices and windows at Chipley he told his steward John Spreat that he was ‘strongly inclyned to consult Mr John Watson ye architect touching all the defects in my house.’⁸² This must have been John Watson (d.1707), who worked at Melbury House, Dorset, where his portrait is preserved,⁸³ and it suggests that Taylor may have died.

NOTES

- 1 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, New Haven & London, 1995, 968–9.
- 2 M.I. Batten, 'The Architecture of Robert Hooke', *The Walpole Society* xxv, 1936/7, 109.
- 3 Bridget Cherry, 'The Devon country house in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century', *Devon Archaeological Society*, XLVI, 1988, 107–112.
- 4 Taunton, Somerset Record Office, DD/SF [hereafter SRO].
- 5 IGI Index
- 6 Records of the Carpenters Company, on loan to the Manuscripts Section, Guildhall Library, London.
- 7 IGI Index; Records of the Carpenters Company, *cit.*.
- 8 *Idem.*
- 9 Paul Jeffery, *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren*, London and Rio Grande, 1996, 236
- 10 Lawrence Weaver, 'Sir Christopher Wren's Building Account of City Churches', *Archaeologia*, LXVI, Appendix 2, 1914–15.
- 11 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 968.
- 12 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 968.
- 13 Sir Walter Besant, *London The City*, London, 1910, 22.
- 14 Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537–1837*, I, London, 1962, 227.
- 15 J.R. Woodhead, *The Rulers of London 1660–1689*, London, 1965, 48.
- 16 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 968.
- 17 *Dictionary of National Biography* on CD-ROM for his schooldays, a letter from his sister on 10 June 1678 mentioning 'Wm Holliar of Taunton yt was at Taunton School with you' [SRO DD/SF 3086].
- 18 Sir Edward Strachey, 'Sutton Court', Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society Proceedings, MCCCLXVII.
- 19 Benjamin Rand, *The correspondence of John Locke and Edward Clarke*, Harvard, 1927, 5.
- 20 M. Cranston, *John Locke*, London, 1957, 104.
- 21 Rand, *op. cit.*, 18.
- 22 I am indebted to Dr Mark Knights who allowed me to read his unpublished 'Political Biography of Edward Clarke' for the forthcoming *History of Parliament*, 1690–1714.
- 23 D. C. Coleman, *Sir John Banks*, Oxford, 1963, 91.
- 24 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 1969; Arthur Oswald, *Country Houses of Kent*, London, 1933, 18–19; Maidstone, Kent Record Office, U. 234, A. 24, December 1678.
- 25 Coleman, *op. cit.*, 127.
- 26 Peter Mills and John Oliver, 'The survey of building sites in the City of London after the Great Fire,' reprinted by the *London Topographical Society*, II, 1964
- 27 SRO, DD/SF 3272. Clarke, ever scrupulous about financial matters, annotated this 'if Mr Taylor gave mee any rect for ye £10 that was pd him in Janry, if hee did it must be redelivered to him'.
- 28 De Beer, *op. cit.*, Locke to Mary Clarke, February 1685.
- 29 SRO, DD/SF, note in Taylor's handwriting.
- 30 The wages book mentions Langford quarry and Lovelinch quarry [SRO, DD/SF 3931.]
- 31 'St Brides steepell' in the articles of agreement, but 'Bow steepell' in a list of costs in Taylor's handwriting.
- 32 SRO, DD/SF 3272.
- 33 'The house is entered through a fine baronial hall in which were hung many pictures' [note by Peter Courtenay Clarke made in 1830 in possession of the author].
- 34 Alec Clifton Taylor, *The Pattern of English Building*, London, 1972, 220.
- 35 SRO, DD/SF 3960.
- 36 In fact it was the cost of coal that was the most expensive item in the whole process and it was not automatically used until 1700 [Clifton Taylor, *op. cit.*, 220.]
- 37 SRO, DD/SF 3931.
- 38 SRO, DD/SF, record of the measures of the building in Clarke's handwriting together with 'Carpenters proposals', accounts and memos in Taylor's hand.
- 39 SRO, DD/SF 3833, 17 June 1696 and August 1696.
- 40 SRO, DD/SF 3109, 15 April 1681.
- 41 SRO, DD/SF 3837, 9 February 1698.
- 42 SRO, DD/SF 3900, notes on repairs by John Spreat, steward at Chipley 1696.
- 43 SRO, DD/SF 4515, 18 August 1696.
- 44 SRO, DD/SF 3833, August 1696.
- 45 Rand, *op. cit.*, 122.
- 46 SRO, DD/SF 3272.
- 47 Measures of building, *cit.*
- 48 Measures of building, *cit.*
- 49 Sir Samuel Morland, Bt, 1625?–1695. Morland raised water by having an airtight cistern, where air had been expelled by a charge of gunpowder, the water below rising to fill the vacuum [*Dictionary of National Biography*, XIII, Oxford, 1894, 969].
- 50 SRO, DD/SF 3931.
- 51 SRO, DD/SF 284
- 52 SRO, DD/SF 3833
- 53 SRO, DD/SF

- 54 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 969.
 55 *Idem.*
 56 Sir Edward Acton, 3rd Bt, d. 28 Sept 1716, married Mary Walter 8 December 1674 [Burke's *Peerage and Baronetage*, London, 1967]. Mary Walter was a cousin of Mary Clarke's mother. [Will of Elizabeth Jepp, Somerset Wills.]
 57 SRO, DD/SF, 'A note of my expence in my journey to Shropshire'.
 58 Cherry. *op. cit.*, 108.
 59 SRO, DD/SF 1286.
 60 Butterfield, son of another James Butterfield of St Leonards Shoreditch, a strongwaterman, was apprenticed to William Taylor of Hogg Lane in 1668 [Records of the Carpenters Company, *cit.*].
 61 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 508.
 62 Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, London, 1715, plates 78-9.
 63 Reverend Richard Polwhele, *History of Devonshire in 3 volumes*, London, 1793, 271-272.
 64 A.P. Baggs, 'The Earliest Sash-Window in Britain?' *Georgian Group Journal*, VII, 1997, 168-171.
 65 SRO, DD/SF 1286.
 66 Polwhele, *loc. cit.*
 67 Polwhele *loc. cit.*
 68 Rand, *op. cit.*, 14-16
 69 De Beer, *op. cit.*, letter 857.
 70 *Ibid.*, letter 893.
 71 *Ibid.*, letter 902.
 72 *Ibid.*, letter 933.
 73 Chipley, Escot and Otterton were known as the Row, as they were built in a north-south line on the map. [*Dictionary and National Bibliography on CD-ROM*: entry for Sir Walter Yonge].
 74 De Beer, *op. cit.*, letter 939.
 75 *Ibid.*, letter 944.
 76 *Ibid.*, letter 960.
 78 *Ibid.*, letter 1014.
 78 *Ibid.*, letter 1052.
 79 Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'Aldenham Park, Salop', *Country Life*, CLXI, June 23 1977, 1736.
 80 *Idem.*
 81 The archivist of the Carpenters' Company is unaware of the date of his death. St Thomas the Apostle was destroyed in the Great Fire: 'the burials from 1680-1704 were probably entered with those of St Mary Aldermary; but, if otherwise, the volume containing them is hopelessly lost.' [*Harleian Society*, Registers, VI]. There is no record of Taylor's burial at St Mary Aldermary.
 82 SRO, DD/SF 186.
 83 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 1026

Bridget Clarke's transcripts of Edward Clarke's letters and paper are deposited in Somerset Local Studies Library, Taunton.

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