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WILLIAM CLEERE, MASTER JOINER

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The work of the craftsmen who constructed and embellished the buildings of late-seventeenth century Britain is still less well-known than that of the architects who designed them. This article describes and assesses the work of one of the most important of these craftsmen, who was also responsible for the design of one of the major houses of the period.

William Cleere¹ is known to architectural historians as the designer of Stowe House, Buckinghamshire and as the joiner who made the Great Model for St Paul's Cathedral.² Since Cleere is not known to have designed any other buildings, Howard Colvin has given an appropriately brief summary of his architectural career and a short synopsis of his career as a joiner, in the fourth edition of his *Biographical Dictionary*.³ Geoffrey Beard's detailed studies of craftsmen contain a basic assessment of Cleere's known joinery career,⁴ but further research has revealed that his career as joiner is unusually well documented and that a significant number of his more important works still survive, making him a worthwhile subject for study in his own right and giving the opportunity to explore in some detail the rarely studied role that joiners played in the creation of late-seventeenth century interiors.

The City of London Company of Joiners and Ceilers was incorporated in 1375 and re-incorporated as the Company of Joiners, Ceilers and Carvers in 1571. Those who qualified as masters of this company fell into two distinct divisions: carvers, who were exclusively responsible for the decorative carving so fashionable at this time, and joiners who were

responsible for all the remaining interior woodwork. In the seventeenth century the joiners clashed with the Carpenter's Company over the boundaries of their individual responsibility for woodwork, and agreements drawn up in attempts to settle these disputes show that the joiners were basically responsible for all the internal woodwork – panelling, doors, doorcases, windows, shutters, chimneypieces, pulpits, screens, pews and even gates, furniture – tables, desks, presses [book cupboards] on occasion – whilst carpenters were basically responsible for the structural woodwork.⁵ This clear demarcation probably only applied in the City of London, as will be seen; the work of a country joiner might be very different.⁶ The joiner's trade generally went through a period of expansion in the late-seventeenth century due to increased demand and the freeing up of legal working restrictions within the City of London as a consequence of the Great Fire.⁷

William Cleere was fortunate that the beginning of his career coincided with the up-turn in building in the 1650s, after the upheavals of the Civil War had ceased. This was followed by a further increase in building resulting first from the Restoration and then the Great Fire of London, and the consequent enormous rebuilding programme in the capital. There was also an unprecedented amount of royal building being undertaken at this time. Cleere was also fortunate that he lived in an era in which panelling, or wainscot – as oak panelling was referred to in contemporary building accounts – was fashionable, providing employment for a large number of joiners.

FAMILY AND CAREER

Cleere's career can be traced in some detail, but his private life is far less well documented. He was the son of John Cleere, a husbandman or farmer, of Uphusband (now Hurstbourne Tarrant) in Hampshire.⁸ William was born around 1633.⁹ He had three brothers, Robert, Richard and John, and a sister, Mary; the former two were also employed as woodworkers. Robert, a joiner, who was probably the eldest, died in 1661,¹⁰ and Richard, who specialised as a carver, died in 1681. William married at least twice; his first wife was named Mary (possibly Marey Rider)¹¹ by whom he had a son, John, and a daughter, Anne, all of whom are mentioned in his brother Richard's will dated 1681.¹² William's son John was apprenticed to his father, and worked with him on St Paul's Cathedral in the late 1670s.¹³ William Cleere's second wife, Anne (probably Ann Connell)¹⁴ who outlived him, is mentioned as receiving posthumous payments for William's work at East Hatley, Cambridgeshire, and St Paul's Cathedral. By her he had one further child, Mary, who is mentioned in his will dated 1690.¹⁵ His daughter, by his first wife, Anne is also referred to in this will, as Anne Edwards, but his son, John, is not mentioned, so presumably he had died in the intervening years. William Cleere died in his late fifties in December 1690.

William Cleere was apprenticed to the joiner Richard Lane on 24 April 1647, he gained his freedom of the Company of Joiners, Ceilers and Carvers on 27 June 1654, and he was admitted as a Liveryman in 1668.¹⁶ So far no information has come to light concerning the first eight years of his career after qualifying as a master joiner, but he presumably worked hard to establish his undoubted reputation, for his earliest recorded work was for the most important architect of the day, John Webb. In his will Cleere bequeathed the lease on his home and premises in Long Acre, in the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields, to his wife Anne.¹⁷ According to the surviving rate books for this parish, William Cleere

paid rates on a property on the north side of Long Acre between at least 1672 and his death in 1690.¹⁸ According to Richard Cleere's will, he also occupied part of the same premises, so this was presumably the site of their combined workshop and wood store.

SYON HOUSE, MIDDLESEX – 1662–64

The earliest mention of William Cleere's work as a joiner comes in 1662 when he was paid for work at Syon House, Middlesex. Royalist troops had besieged Syon in 1643 and after its capitulation they caused serious damage to the house owned by one of

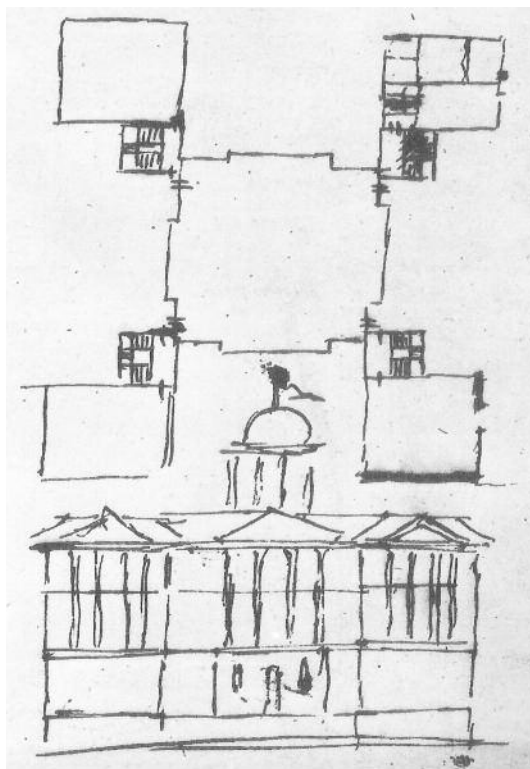


Fig. 1. John Webb. A sketch and plan for the proposed remodelling of the Queen's House, Greenwich; William Cleere made a model of these proposed alterations in 1667.

Royal Institute of British Architects Drawings Collection.

the leading Parliamentary aristocrats. Some repairs were carried out soon afterwards but eventually Algernon Percy, tenth Earl of Northumberland, employed John Webb to largely rebuild the house between 1657 and 1660, though the internal decoration was not completed until 1664. The accounts for this rebuilding work record William Cleere as the joiner and Richard Cleere as the carver for most of these interior fittings. They also record that William was paid £324. 4s. 9d. on 28 February 1662 and a further £25. 14s. 10d. on 27 January 1663 making a total of £349. 19s. 7d.¹⁹

William and Richard Cleere fitted out all seven of the main rooms at Syon created at this time by Webb.²⁰ Unfortunately no drawings for these interiors have so far been identified, but from the decorative details recorded in the accounts it seems that they would have been similar to Webb's surviving interiors at Wilton House, Wiltshire.²¹ All the rooms were swept away in the eighteenth century when Robert Adam remodelled the house for the first Duke of Northumberland from 1760.

A MODEL OF THE QUEEN'S HOUSE, GREENWICH PALACE – 1667

William Cleere sent in his bill in October 1667 for 'sixty-one days work' in making 'a large model for the additions to the Queen's buildings', for Charles II and Catherine of Braganza.²² These additions, designed by John Webb, were for four pavilions to be added at each of the corners of Inigo Jones's Queen's House. A simpler scheme had originally been designed and begun in May 1663, but little work was carried out. In May 1667 'the ground was set out for all four pavilions' and this model was presumably commissioned as part of the revival of this scheme, but little progress was made and the scheme was abandoned in 1670. Plans and a single sketch by Webb survive (Fig. 1), showing the proposed addition of a dome and porticoes.²³ Presumably this

was not the first architectural model that William Cleere had made, for it is unlikely that such an important commission would have been entrusted to an inexperienced craftsman. It is therefore especially unfortunate that this large model no longer exists.

THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE, OXFORD – 1668–69

The next chronological mention of the work of William Cleere comes at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, built to the designs of Christopher Wren between 1664 and 1669. This building was paid for by Gilbert Sheldon, Warden of All Souls College and later Archbishop of Canterbury. John Evelyn records a visit with Wren to the site in his Diary for October 25th 1664: 'Thence to the new Theater.... The foundation being but newly laied & the whole, Design'd, by that incomparable genius, & my worthy friend Dr Chr. Wren, who showed me the Model, not distaining my advise in some particulars.'²⁴ This model may well have been made by William Cleere, but unfortunately the surviving accounts make no mention of it.

The Theatre cost a total of £12,000. The foundations were complete by 1664 and 'the outside being in a manner completely finished' by 1667. The Oxford craftsmen employed on the main structure included Thomas Robinson and William Bird (masons), Richard Frogley (carpenter) and Robert Michin (joiner). It is clear from the accounts that William Cleere and his brother Richard were brought in as 'ye London Joyners' to provide the elaborate wainscot and the carved woodwork in the interior (Fig. 2). They and their servants or craftsmen made frequent journeys down to Oxford, for most of their work was done in the London workshop and sent to Oxford by John Bossom's barge.²⁵

On 24 April 1669 the accounts record that the joiners were well ahead with the complex seating arrangements. William Cleere was paid a total of



Fig. 2. The interior of the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford. Joinery by William Cleere, carving by Richard Cleere, 1668-69. *Geoffrey Tyack*.

£1,347. 3s. 2d. for his joinery work,²⁶ and Richard Cleere was paid a total of £288s. 15s. 9d for all the fine carved work which decorates the joinery of the theatre. All this joinery work is recorded as being made of oak, and painted in 'stone colour' and 'cedar colour' by the Oxford painter, Richard Hawkins.²⁷ The ceiling with its allegorical painting by Robert

Streeter was erected by yet another specifically employed local joiner, John Wilkins, in 1668.

Almost all the joinery and carving carried out by William and Richard Cleere survives, though the rostrum staircases were altered by T G Jackson in 1906 and the columns supporting the gallery were reinforced with steel in 1936. The complete survival

of the interior fittings and decoration gives a magnificent example of the combination of the joiner's and carver's skills, backed by the unseen structure which supports it: the work of the carpenters. Though Richard Cleere's fine carving receives most attention, the background panels, seats and columns provide the functional fittings which supply the setting to show off this carving. The Sheldonian Theatre marks the beginning of a life long association between Christopher Wren and William Cleere, and is another instance of the brothers, Richard and William Cleere, working together in partnership.



Fig. 3. A detail of the panelling made by William Cleere in the Chancellor's Court Room at the Divinity School, Oxford, 1669-70. *Geoffrey Tyack, by kind permission of the Bodleian Libraries.*

BADMINTON HOUSE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE - 1668

The second country house where William Cleere is recorded as having worked is Badminton House, Gloucestershire. On 20 November 1668 'Mr Cleere, joyner' was paid £50 by the third Marquis of Worcester, later first Duke of Beaufort, according to his surviving accounts at Child's Bank.²⁸ The very confused and complex history of the remodelling of this house between 1664 and 1691, and the various subsequent rebuilding campaigns, make it impossible to identify Cleere's work, but it is most likely that he was involved in the rooms in the new east range, which was then altered and heightened in c.1730.²⁹

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL, OXFORD - 1669-70

Payments are recorded to William Cleere of £147 and £60 in the accounts of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University for 1669 and 1670 for joiner's work carried out at the Divinity School as part of Wren's additions. There are also payments 'to his brother the carver' Richard Cleere.³⁰ The payments to William Cleere probably relate, at least in part, to the surviving panelling and seating in the Chancellor's Court Room (Fig. 3), next to the Convocation House to the west of the Divinity School itself.³¹

BROMLEY COLLEGE, KENT - 1670-72

A bequest in the will of John Warner, Bishop of Rochester, who died 14 October 1666, provided for the building of a college to accommodate twenty clergy widows. Difficulties in finding a site were only resolved in 1670, when the Bromley site was purchased. Building work appears to have been complete by 3 September 1672, when the final accounts were drawn up, showing that the

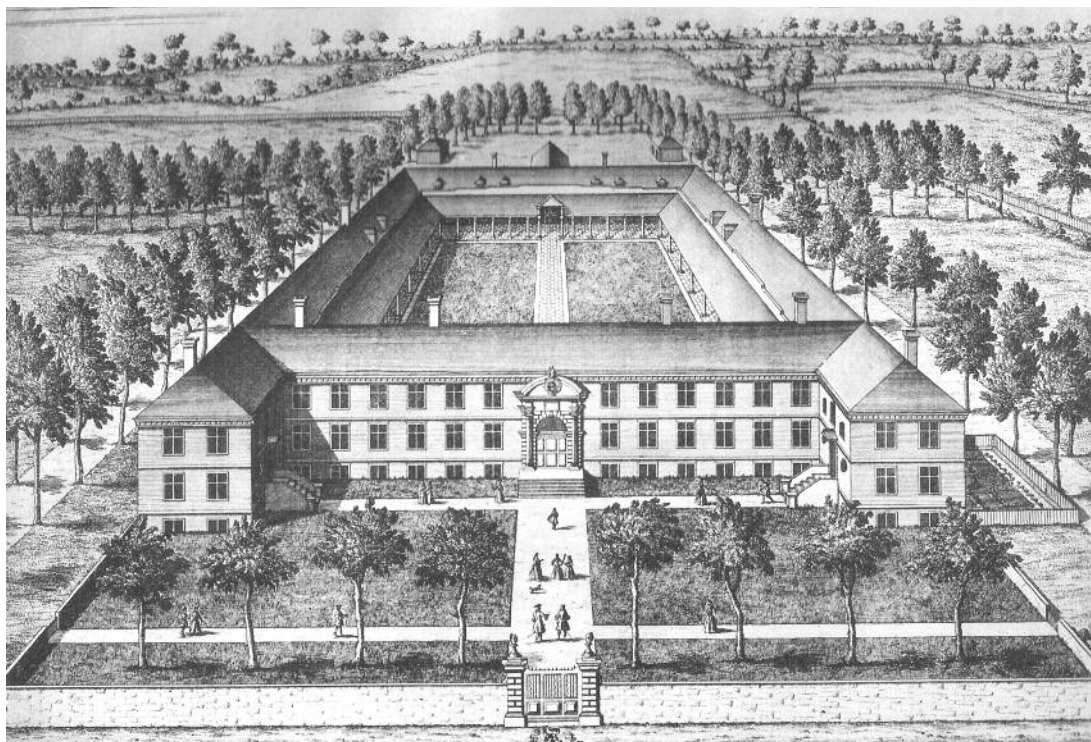


Fig. 4. Bromley College Kent, 1720. Designed and built by Captain Richard Ryder 1670–72, with joinery by Richard Cleere. Engraving by *Thomas Badeslade and John Harris*.

quadrangular building cost well over £7,000.³² The original appearance is known from Thomas Badeslade and John Harris's engraving published in 1720 (Fig. 4). Captain Richard Ryder, Master Carpenter at the Office of Works (1668–83), was the designer of the quadrangular building.³³ He is described in the accounts as 'the surveyor' and he was paid £230 'for his care and paines in surveying ye work & workmen'. These craftsmen included Joshua Marshall, Master Mason at the Office of Works (1673–78), John Bidle (bricklayer), John Bath and Henry Staples (carpenters), John Ashworth and Edward Gillet (smiths), Robert Annis (plumber) and Richard Browne (glazier).

As at the Sheldonian Theatre, William Cleere was brought in to carry out only the finest joinery work in 'ye Chapel' and 'ye Trustees Roome'. The

accounts detail his work in the chapel for which he was paid £101. 2s. 2d. It includes payments for 'wainscott against ye walls', 'wainscott to enclose pewes', 'wainscot cornice', 'wainscott benches', 'wainscott desk board', 'deale kneeling board', 'the Chapell Gate of Wainscott' and 'ye Reading Deske', though it was the carpenters who made the 'boarding under the pewes' and the 'Curbe for ye pewes to stand on'. No illustration of the interior of this chapel is known, though a pamphlet of 1836 confirms that it had 'walls lined halfway up with panelling'; it was probably very similar to the surviving contemporary chapel at Morden College, Blackheath.³⁴

For the trustees' room, housed in the eastern projection, and now subsumed within the present chaplain's house, William Cleere provided 'Deale



Fig. 5. The 'frontis peece' or pediment over the door to the Chaplain's House at Bromley College, Kent constructed by William Cleere, 1670-72. *Pete Smith*.

wainscott' with 'Architrave, frees and cornice'. He made two internal 'doores of deale' with 'Architecrave round doores' and two 'outer doore[s] and case of wainscot: one for this projection and 'another for ye Ministers house' in the west projection and 'two frontis peeces over ye outer doors'. These 'frontis peeces' were in fact pedimented hoods (Fig. 5), which the carpenters put up and which still survive today. The only interior work to survive is the 'chimney piece with Architrave frees and cornice'. Cleere also made 'one paire of wainscot Gates to ye House' and 'ye outer Gates next ye high waye'. This is the only recorded instance of Cleere making gates, and these prominent sets of wooden gates can be clearly seen in Badeslade's engraving. Again, all the less important gates were made by the carpenters. For this work Cleere received £84. 18s. 6d., making a total for all his work here at Bromley of £186. os. 8d. Of this, £4 was paid for carriage, suggesting once again that some of the work was carried out in Cleere's workshop in Long Acre and then transported to the site.

There is no other joiner mentioned in these accounts. The carpenters, Bath and Staples, were responsible not only for the standard carpentry work such as the joists, floorboards and roof structure, but also for the exterior cornice, the windows, many of the humbler doors and doorcases, and for all the more modest internal joinery – elements more usually made by the joiner – showing how variable the areas of responsibility were between carpenters and joiners, especially outside the City of London.

The almshouses were enlarged by the addition of a second quadrangle in 1792-1805 by Thomas Hardwick, and the original chapel was demolished in 1862 and rebuilt in the Gothic Revival style by Waring and Blake in 1864. The interiors of the accommodation within the college were remodelled between 1975 and 1977, resulting in the loss of any original internal joinery, apart from two of the staircases with turned balusters made by Bath and Staples.³⁵

THIRTY-TWO CITY CHURCHES – 1669-90

According to the official accounts for the rebuilding of the City Churches, William Cleere worked as joiner on thirty-two, or probably thirty-three, of them.³⁶ This was far more than any other joiner; the next most frequent joiner cited in the accounts was Thomas Whiting, who worked on three churches. This does not mean that Cleere was responsible for the often elaborate joinery within all thirty-two of these churches. He was only paid small sums for much of this work; from £4 to £69 per church. This is because the official accounts only cover the building of the basic structure of the churches, the majority of the joinery – all the most important fittings – being paid for by the individual vestries. For example, at St Mary-le-Bow, William Cleere was paid £20 in 1673 'for 2 paire of Large outside dores with Compass heads 2½ in thick Mitred at per paire £10' and then a little later he was paid £4. 3s. 4d. 'for a

pare of dores 4 f[t] 2 in wide 8 f[t] high going into the Vestry at 2s 6d.⁷ He was also paid a further £10. 7. 9. 'for 69 f[t] ½ wainscot in 2 pair of dores. ffor 4 pair of large Side hinges with Squares. ffor Ballcony Bolts. ffor Box lock at. ffor a latch lock with brass knobs on both Sides at.' In total he was paid £999 for the work he carried out on the churches, or an average of £31 per church. Still, this small scale, but consistent, work must have provided Cleere with regular employment and a steady income over a twenty-year period.

At only three of the City Churches is William Cleere known to have been employed by the vestry to carry out the more elaborate and complex joinery work, though it is possible that he also worked at others, such as St Sepulchre's Holborn and Swithin's, Cannon Street.³⁷

ST MARY-LE-BOW – 1670–75

At St Mary-le-Bow, Cleere received an extra £300 for unspecified work, on top of the official joinery. Unfortunately the vestry accounts for this church contain no further details concerning the joinery, though the relatively large sum paid to Cleere makes it clear that he was responsible for the majority of the joinery commissioned by the parish. Pre-war photographs show that a pilastered reredos or altarpiece and an elaborate pulpit (cut down) had survived, though the pews had been replaced. The surviving internal fittings were destroyed by incendiary bombing in May 1941 and replaced by new fittings designed by Laurence King in 1956–64.

ST MICHAEL CORNHILL – 1669–72

The Vestry Minutes for St Michael Cornhill record that on 20 December 1671 William Cleere was paid £100 for making the pews, and 30 April 1672 he was paid a further £100 for unspecified work.³⁸ These

minutes give no further clue as to what this latter payment was for, nor do they mention any other joiners employed here, so it seems likely that Cleere was responsible for most of the remaining joinery. Unfortunately all this joinery was replaced by new joinery, made by William Gibb Rogers, as part of Sir Gilbert Scott's restoration of 1858–60.

ST MARY ALDERMANBURY – 1671–75

St Mary Aldermanbury is the one example of a City church where William Cleere's responsibility for work on the fittings can be clearly identified. Interestingly in the Vestry Minutes of this church there is a record of the joiners having to undergo competitive tendering:

'13 May 1673 A committee for the concerns of the Church having received an Estimate from three person concerning the Joiner's Work in the Church viz. Mr Cleare, Mr Harris and Mr Sanderson and being put to the vote Mr Cleare, having 5, for the others 3, declared to be the person employed in making the Pews, and the Articles to be drawn for the performance according to St Michael's Cornhill.'³⁹

Then the following year Cleere was employed to carry out further work: '23 March 1673/4. Agreed with Mr Cleere for the Altarpiece at the East End according to the model now produced, to be done in good substantial wainscot and in workmanlike manor.' The model referred to as 'now produced' may possibly have been made by William Cleere, suggesting that he may also have been responsible for the design of the altarpiece. Pre-war photographs show it to have been of a relatively standard design, easily within the capabilities of an experienced joiner such as Cleere.

Later on in these accounts there is evidence that Cleere was allowed to choose the measurer of his own work: '22 June 1674. Agreed that Mr Sanderson ... and such others ... that have the skill, join with such as Mr Cleare shall appoint to measure the

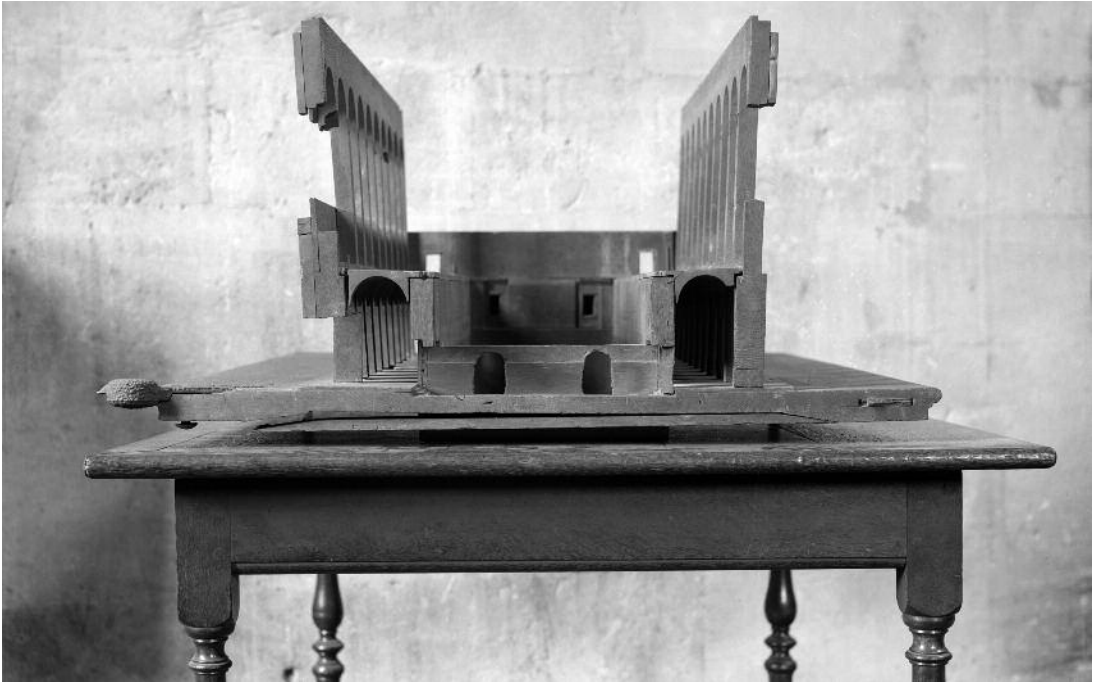


Fig. 6. The un-restored fragment of the choir of the First Model of St Paul's Cathedral, constructed by William Cleere, 1669-71. The fragmentary condition of this model clearly illustrates its internal structure and method of construction. The table it stands on may be the one made by William Cleere for the Surveyor. © *National Monuments Record*, CC 65/336.

Joiner's Work of the Church according to the Contract.' The man eventually selected to measure his work, Mr Beale, is also mentioned in the accounts.

Another entry from the same minutes illustrates a perennial problem faced by all contemporary craftsmen, that of the late payment of bills, a problem exacerbated for joiners who also provided their own materials: '2 March 1673/4 Reported that William Cleere, the Joyner for the Church, was in great straights [*sic.*] for £100 in payment for his work by reason of the money advanced on the Coal Money did not come in as was expected.' This problem was solved by three parishioners who came forward and lent the £100 which was then paid to Cleere. Further difficulties with the payment of the Coal Money resulted in Cleere pressing for payment again in September.⁴⁰

Finally in the Church Warden's Accounts for

1674 there are two payments, to 'Mr Cleare for the Pulpit £50' and to 'Mr Cleare in full of his note of £433. 17s. 10d. abated the remainder and paid by the Committee's Orders, £426. os. od.' Then on 19 April 1675 Cleere was 'to be paid £16. in full of all dues and demands for Joiner's Work done in the Church.'⁴¹

These accounts specify that William Cleere was responsible for making the pulpit, the altarpiece and pews, and the fact that he was paid a total of over £750 means that must have been responsible for all the internal joinery. The interior was destroyed by a fire-bomb in December 1940, but Cleere's original fittings had been already replaced in the nineteenth century. The stone shell of the church was dismantled in 1965 and re-erected at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, USA.

THE FIRST MODEL OF ST PAUL'S
CATHEDRAL – 1669–71

William Cleere's association with the building of St Paul's Cathedral began with the construction of the First Model, made between 1669 and 1671. A payment to Cleere of £50 is recorded in the accounts for October to December 1669, when he was paid 'for making the New Model of the Church in Wainscot, in part'.⁴² Then, in the accounts for March to April 1670/1, appears a further payment 'To Wm Clare. In full of £200. 15s. od. for making a Model of the Church in Wainscott'.⁴³ This is the model (Fig. 6), made to Wren's design, which Robert Hooke recorded seeing in his Diary in November 1672: 'Saw model of St Paul's approved by the King'.⁴⁴ The return of this model from Whitehall is recorded in the accounts, where one final payment relating to it occurs in June 1672: 'To Wm Clare, Joyner. For Mending and Removing the Model from Whitehall to St Paul's...£1. For 4 porters to carry the same & place it in the Office in C[on]vocation]. H[ou]se. Y[ea]r...10s.'

Only a single drawing associated with the model is known, and for many years the model itself was believed to have been lost, though in 1936 the Surveyor of the Fabric, Godfrey Allen, discovered a substantial fragment of it in the Cathedral archives. The surviving section of the model is of the eastern end, with an unusual raised basement, and ten round-headed windows which would have lit the choir and auditory, and, below, a series of ten external round arches which would have formed loggias. This model was superseded almost immediately upon its completion, as funds from the Coal Tax were made available for a completely new Cathedral.⁴⁵

The close contact which the construction of this complex model involved between the joiner, William Cleere, and the architect, Christopher Wren, is exemplified by two further payments in the accounts for January – March 1669/70:

'To Dr Chr. Wren. H. M. Surveyor General ... for his directions, and towards drawing & designing

a new draught of the whole Church for the Joyners to make a Model in Wainscott, & for attendance in giving directions to the Artificers during the time of executing the same. 100 guinea pieces in gold.'⁴⁶

This suggests that Christopher Wren and William Cleere had long and detailed discussions about how to reproduce in wood the grandeur and architectural complexity of Wren's design ideas. Cleere was obviously a well-respected model-maker to be entrusted with the construction of such an important design. This was to be the beginning of an association between William Cleere and St Paul's Cathedral which would continue for the remainder of his life.

The broad range of work expected of a joiner is exemplified in these accounts by a series of payments for furniture and other items. One payment survives to Cleere in the accounts for January to March 1671/2 for a 'Wainscott Table for Mr Surveyor's Chamber with 3 drawers & locks £1. 5. 0.'⁴⁷ It was presumably at this desk that Wren worked out many of his designs for the Cathedral, and from which sketches for the many drawings needed to complete this vast building were issued. It is the earliest record of Cleere making furniture, though two further instances come in the accounts for April to September 1673: 'To Wm Clare, Joiner, contd. Two Tables & 4 Trussels to draw upon, 16s. A Box with lock & hinges for Designs, &, 12s, make 4 Boards & past[e] paper on them 8s. In all. £1. 16. 0.' It was probably on these four trestle tables that Wren's various assistants drew out the large scale drawings from his sketches. There are also payments for a cupboard: 'To same. A Press with 2 locks & 2 pr hinges wherein to lay and lock up the Commission New Building the Church, Book of Subscriptions, Books of Accounts, and Papers concerning former Repairs of the Church ... £2. 0. 0.'⁴⁸



Fig. 7. The drum of the dome of Great Model of St Paul's Cathedral, constructed by William Cleere and a team of 13 joiners, with carved capitals by Richard Cleere, 1673-74. © NMR, CC 65/294.

THE GREAT MODEL - 1673-74

In 1673 William Cleere was entrusted with the construction of the largest and the greatest architectural model ever made in England, the Great Model of St Paul's Cathedral.⁴⁹ It was constructed of oak and pear wood, and measures 20 ft. 11 in. in length, 13 ft. 1 in. in width and 13 ft. in height, and is constructed to a scale of 1:24.⁵⁰ Cleere was one of fourteen joiners involved in its construction,⁵¹ and he was paid at the same rate – 3 shillings per day – as the twelve other master joiners involved in the project. But Cleere's

undoubted leadership of this project can be seen in three specific ways: first, his name always appears first in the list of joiners itemised in these accounts; second, he was paid for a greater number of days than any other joiner; and third, he was also paid for providing the materials.

His work began in 1673, for, in the accounts for April to September that year he was paid £42 2s 6d 'for a Table and Frame for the intended new Model of the Church to stand upon.' In a letter, dated Sept. 22 1673, written by John Tillson, Clerk of Works, to the Dean of St Paul's, he stated that 'Dr Wren &

Mr Woodroof have been the week last past in ye Convocation house, drawing the Lines of ye Designe of the church upon ye Table there, for ye Joyner's Directions for making ye new Modell.⁵² Work on the model presumably began soon after this date, for on 13 December Cleere received his first payment, 'In part Joyner's work & materials in & about ye New Model...£20. 0. 0.'. Between December 1673 and September 1674 he received a total of £439. 8s. 0d. in varied payments 'for materials and Joiners work' connected with the Great Model. William Cleere and his colleagues were responsible for making the basic wooden structure and his brother Richard Cleere, carver, was paid over £500 for carving all the decorative elements, including over 350 miniature capitals.⁵³ The Great Model today is largely of polished wood (Figs. 7–8), but fragments of the original paint are still visible. The accounts show that originally it was plastered, painted and gilded by John Grove and Robert Streeter to look as realistic as possible.⁵⁴

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF
ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL –
1675–84 AND 1686–90**

It is perhaps unexpected that a joiner, whose work is so often concerned with the internal decoration of buildings, should be associated with the early stages of the construction of St Paul's Cathedral, but William Cleere's name recurs in the accounts for the fifteen years from 1675 to his death in 1690. For the first nine years, from November 1675 until September 1684, Cleere was not paid for direct work, but for the work of others. These fourteen other joiners – Stephen Holt, William Edwards, Richard Langdale, Mr Richards, Mr Livermore, Roger Bridgewater, Abe Gilbert, Abe Watson, Nat Hartley, T. Lane, John Bradbury, J. Bavin and Francis Heyman – and even on rare occasions John Cleere, presumably William's son, are named in the accounts.⁵⁵ Sometimes only a

single joiner was employed, most often Mr Richards, but on other occasions two, or, on rare occasions, four joiners were employed at the same time.

The signatures for these payments are recorded in a bewildering variety of spellings of William Cleere's surname; Cleer, Clere, Clear, Cler and sometimes WC. Often there is no signature at all, but the consistency of the payments show that throughout he was the recipient. One payment includes the statement, after the names of four of the other joiners, '4 employed by WC at 2s. 6d. p[er] day'.⁵⁶ Cleere received payments amounting to a total of £426. 8. 3. for this work. So here he seems to have acted as a contractor employing joiners. Most often this was for 'making and mending moulds and models for the masons', though sometimes for making and mending 'Templets, Levells, Rules and Squares', and occasionally for other items. For example, in April 1676 they were paid 'for a Triangle for Mr Surveyor', in July the same year for 'a platboard 6 foot sq. for Mr Surveyor to draw upon', in March 1680/1 for 'planeing & glewing boards for the Mason to draw upon' and in June and July 1681 for 'making a Modell for ye Archatrave, Freeze & Corish'. Whilst between September 1682 and September 1684 the work also included 'fframeing of Wainscot' and 'hanging the dores' in the North-west Vestry, plus making 'Dorecases & dores for the presses ... and fixing up the dorecases' in the same room.⁵⁷

In 1684 these payments for joiner's work come to an end, and when they resume in 1686 William Cleere was paid alongside other joiners for the same regular work, largely mending and making moulds and models for the masons. In this latter period Cleere worked for 3s. per day, rather than the 2s. 6d. paid to all other joiners. He worked for an average of 5 days in every month until December 1690 when the accounts record 'WC 3s. 2 days only. Receipt by Annie Cleare Executrix'.⁵⁸ He was paid a total of £40. 6s. over the four years prior to his death. Like his work for the City Churches, this work provided Cleere with a regular income, as well as the time and opportunity to take on other work.



Fig. 8. The interior of the crossing of the Great Model of St Paul's Cathedral, constructed by William Cleere and a team of 13 joiners, with carved capitals by Richard Cleere, plastering by John Grove and gilding and painting by Robert Streeter, 1673-74. © *NMR*, DD 65/49.

Making and mending mason's moulds might seem somewhat mundane work, but its importance can be gauged by the fact that Cleere was paid at the higher rate of 3s. per day, and that on his death the work was taken over by Charles Hopson, later Sir Charles, Master Joiner at the Office of Works from 1706 and Master of the Company of Joiners and Ceilers in 1708.⁵⁹ The absolute accuracy of these moulds, or timber patterns, was essential if the final stones cut in the workshop were to fit together perfectly on the scaffold. The templates were cut from thin wooden boards from life-size drawings of the mouldings required, and were used by the 'stone cutters to guide them in dressing, carving and finishing the stone elements'.⁶⁰ Since hundreds of the same profiles in stone were needed on a building of this scale these templates had frequently to be mended and replaced.

This is the only documented example of William Cleere acting as a contractor, though the joiners whom he employed were probably members of his peripatetic workforce. 'Richard Langdale' is the only name which also appears amongst those who worked alongside him on the Great Model.

WHITEHALL PALACE, THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S LODGINGS - 1671

As part of the piecemeal alterations carried out at Whitehall Palace for Charles II between the Restoration and the large scale rebuilding in the 1680s, a contract was agreed with Cleere, dated 24 June 1671, for wainscot and chimneypieces in the Lord Chamberlain's lodgings. These lodgings, remodelled for the newly appointed Chamberlain, Henry Jermyn, first Earl of St Albans, were situated 'at the end of the Matted gallery', and they were presumably designed by Wren, who was appointed Surveyor to the Office of Works in 1669. William Cleere's joinery work in these lodgings included the great bedchamber, alcove, closet, dining room and four garrets.⁶¹

A MODEL OF THE PEDESTAL FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF CHARLES I AT CHARING CROSS - 1675

William Cleere, joiner, sent in an account in April 1678 for a wooden model for the stone pedestal for the equestrian statue of Charles I cast in bronze by Hubert Le Sueur. This statue had been commissioned by the first Earl of Portland for his garden at Roehampton, but was never set up. It was miraculously saved from destruction during the Civil War, and in 1675 it was sold by the fourth Earl to Charles II. In May 1675 Robert Streeter was paid £2 10s for making '2 designs on paper' for this pedestal. These two designs survive at All Souls College, Oxford,⁶² though neither correspond with the pedestal as executed.⁶³ A single drawing by Wren, also at All Souls, shows a version of the pedestal similar to the final design, so presumably it was his design which was finally chosen.⁶⁴

The foundations for the base for the statue's erection at Charing Cross were opened in July 1675, so presumably Cleere's model had been made before this date. The pedestal was built by Joshua Marshall, who received in addition £100 for 'carving the Relieves of the pedestal'.⁶⁵ For some unknown reason the pedestal was not finally completed until March 1678, when the 'carriage stones and rubbish' were finally moved away. The pedestal itself was removed in the nineteenth century, though its appearance is recorded in a number of views including an engraving of c.1720 (Fig. 9) and the famous painting by Canaletto of Northumberland House in 1753.⁶⁶

THE JOINERS' HALL, LONDON - 1676

The Hall of the Company of Joiners, Ceilers and Carvers, was destroyed in the Great Fire, and the ruins were surveyed by 'Mr [Peter] Mills, the City surveyor' in 1667.⁶⁷ Rebuilding appears to have begun in around 1670, and in the Annals of the

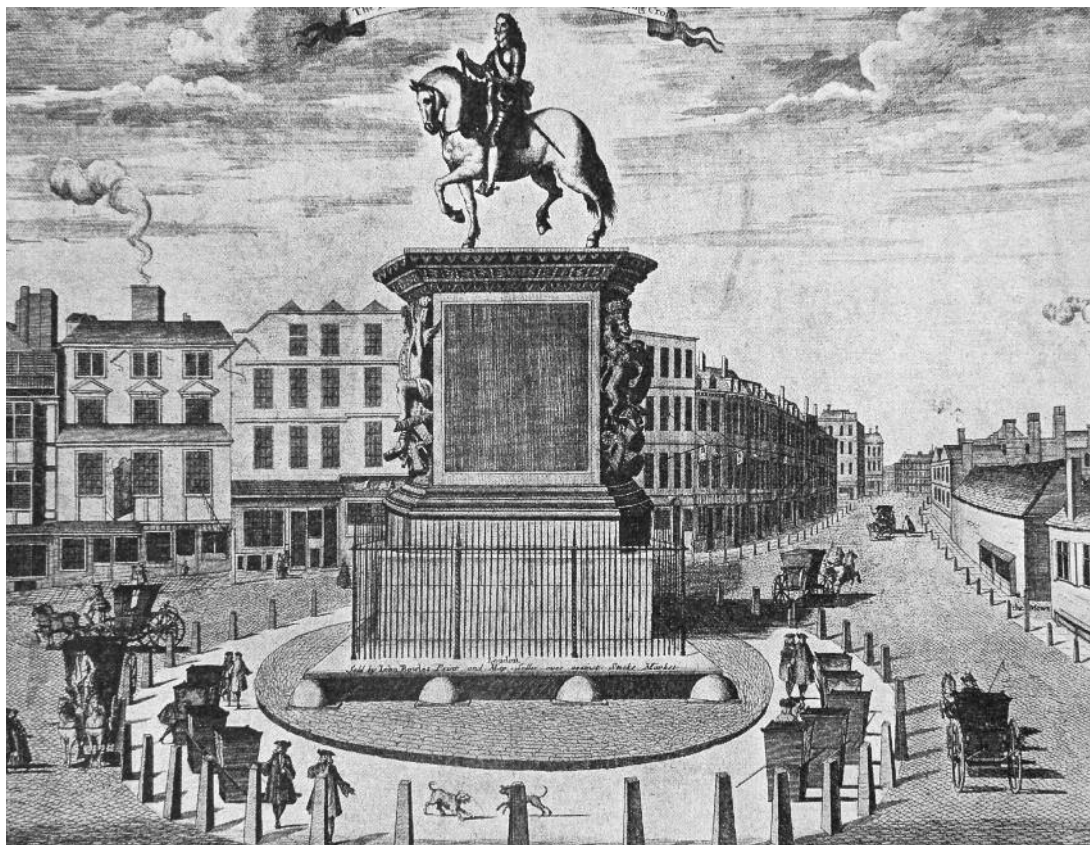


Fig. 9. Charing Cross c.1720. The Equestrian Statue of Charles I by Hubert le Sueur, erected here in 1675. William Cleere produced a model for the new plinth designed by Christopher Wren.

Company for 1674–75 payments are recorded relating to the Hall's decoration: 'Paid Mr [Thomas] Whiteing, Joyner, £18. 2. 6. Paid Mr [William] Emmet for carving £10. Mr [Richard] Clear for carving £10'. And in the following year further payments: 'Paid Deputy [Henry] Phillips for carving £7. 14. 0. Paid Mr [Richard] Clear for carving £15'. These payments for carving must relate to William's brother, Richard Cleere, since he was elected Master of the Joiners, Ceilers and Carvers' Company the following year, and it would seem likely that he would be working on his company's prestigious new Hall. In the Annals for the year 1676–77 there are

further payments which almost certainly relate to William Cleere: 'Paid the plasterer £38. Wainscots cost £23. 18. 7. Mr [Richard] Clear for carving £7. 10. 0. Mr [William] Clear for the Hall £20. Mr [William] Clear paid for laying the hall floor £12. 10. 0. Ditto £20. Another item for carving the Hall £30.'⁶⁸

Since Richard Cleere was the carver it would seem probable that the other 'Mr Clear', who carried out the more mundane job of laying the Hall floor, was probably William Cleere. He was presumably also responsible for the 'Wainscots' referred to. The fact that William and Richard had

worked together on so many other jobs tends to confirm this suggestion. The Joiners' Hall was situated on Tennis Court Lane, was damaged by fire in 1696, repaired and then burnt again in 1811; the ruins were then demolished and replaced by warehouses.

STOWE HOUSE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE – 1676

In the Stowe papers in the Huntington Library, California, a draft contract, dated 1676, survives between John Heynes, carpenter, of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Thomas Miller, bricklayer of London, and Sir Richard Temple, Bt., for the building of a new house at Stowe.⁶⁹ The contract records that it was to be built 'according to the attached design by William Cleere, gent., surveyor to Sir Richard and following the model provided', although this last requirement has been crossed out.⁷⁰ The deletion of the reference to a model suggests that Cleere proposed making a model but that Sir Richard Temple was content with the drawings provided. This document goes on to describe the house in detail. It mentions the balustrade around the roof but not the cupola recorded by Celia Fiennes, which was added in 1688.⁷¹ This draft agreement details the form of the main structure of the staircase, which would have been the responsibility of the carpenter Heynes, but it makes no mention of any joinery work; presumably there was a separate contract with a joiner which has been lost. The contract also specifies that William Cleere was to approve all the workmanship, so he was presumably a regular presence on site.⁷²

If, as has been suggested, the surviving drawing of the north front (Fig. 10) is one of the drawings submitted with this contract then it may well be the only known drawing by William Cleere.⁷³ The topographical view of the south front of c.1680 shows that both the main façades of this house were

almost identical, the only difference being the arrangement and number of dormer windows; eight on the south front and twelve on the north.⁷⁴ Internally the hall is the only other room specifically mentioned in the contract; its all-round gallery recorded by Celia Fiennes, suggests that it was inspired by the hall at the Queen's House, a building Cleere must have known since he made the model for its proposed additions.⁷⁵ Only the north front of Cleere's original house survives, partially hidden by later cement render and by the portico added by Vanbrugh. The interiors and the south front were entirely rebuilt in a series of campaigns during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

THE QUEEN'S CHAPEL, ST JAMES'S PALACE – 1682–84

The Queen's Chapel at St James's Palace was designed by Inigo Jones and built between 1623 and 1626 for Queen Henrietta Maria. During the Commonwealth the original fittings were removed and the room was converted into a library by Edward Carter, Surveyor of the Office of Works. At the Restoration it was reinstated as a Roman Catholic chapel and refitted for Charles II's Queen, Catherine of Braganza, with a domed addition to the east and an oratory for the serving priests. In 1682–84 further alterations were made by Wren as part of a remodelling of the palace, and William Cleere was paid the relatively small sum of £24. 17s. 4d. for minor alterations in the 'Queen's Tribune next the Chapell';⁷⁶ John Turner was the leading joiner employed.⁷⁷ Further minor alterations were made to the chapel in 1685–87 for James II's Queen, Mary of Modena.⁷⁸

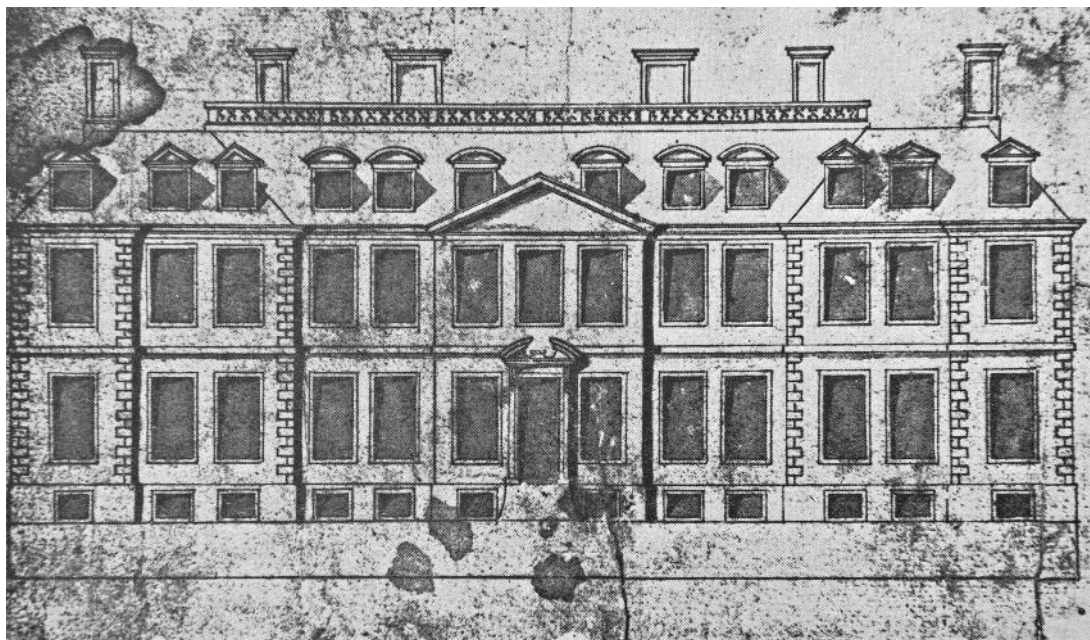


Fig. 10. William Cleere (attrib.). Probably 'the attached design by William Cleere, gent., surveyor to Sir Richard' Temple for the north front of Stowe House, Buckinghamshire, 1676. *The Wormsley Library*. © *Country Life*.

EAST HATLEY HOUSE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE – 1683

At East Hatley in Cambridgeshire William Cleere was paid for carrying out wainscoting for Sir George Downing at 8s.6d. a yard from 1683. William's wife Anne was paid £366. 17s. 5¾d. after his death in 1690, suggesting that he was responsible for a lavish suite of panelled rooms.⁷⁹ Unfortunately the house no longer survives, and no contemporary views of it are known. The property was purchased from Robert and Edmund Castell in 1661 by Downing, and the old house was altered in the years before his death in 1684.⁸⁰ It was demolished in 1712 and the materials reused at nearby Gamlingay Park, rebuilt by Sir George Downing, 3rd Bt., 1712–13. Much of Cleere's wainscot was probably re-used here, though unfortunately the house was itself demolished in 1776.⁸¹

THE QUEEN'S APARTMENT, WHITEHALL PALACE – 1685–87

William Cleere was one of seven joiners employed on Wren's major remodelling of the Queen's Apartment at Whitehall Palace between 1685 and 1687. In April 1686 he was paid £102. 8s. 6d. for making 'the frames and sashes of 5 large compass windows in the great Chapell fronting the Privy Garden' and 'the frames and sashes for 13 sash windows ... in the Privy Gallery'.⁸² In July he was paid a further £177. 19s. 5d. for '170 yds deal wainscott. Mitred with an astragal and straining frames' and '2 large arches with Imposts and Impost Mold and Molds in the Spandrills each 14ft high 7ft 6 wide' in the 'Lobby of the Council Chamber' and '202 yds of right wainscott with large moulds & panels raised ... 2 wainscott doores 1½ in thick ... 120 ft of Cornice 13 inch deep', in the Council

Chamber itself. The carving which decorated the panelling in these rooms was carried out by William Emmett. These payments also include ‘41 ft of stone Moulding 6 in deep’ an unusual item for a joiner.⁸³ In November 1686 ‘William Cleere, joyner’ was paid £267. os. 10½d. for ‘Presses’ for ‘Work done in ye Council Chamber’ and wainscot in the ‘with drawing Room next the great Stairs’ and ‘in the little Stairs, Passage, and rooms underneath’ and ‘in ye Rooms over the Council Chamber’.⁸⁴

This remodelling was carried out by Wren for Mary of Modena. It comprised a new Catholic chapel and a suite of rooms for the Queen, overlooking the Privy Garden, and a new Council Chamber for the King, the whole attached by a stair to Jones’s Banqueting House.⁸⁵ The external appearance of these buildings is known from Leonard Knyff’s birds-eye view of the palace of c.1696,⁸⁶ and the southern façade of the council chamber is known from Wren’s surviving design drawing, but nothing is known of the interiors. For though these buildings escaped a fire of 1691, they were eventually consumed by another fire which destroyed a large section of the Palace in 1698. William Cleere earned nearly £550 for all of this work at Whitehall, one of his more lucrative commissions and certainly one of his most prestigious.

THORESBY HALL, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE – 1686

There is a record of two small payments made to a ‘Mr Cleere, surveyor’ for unspecified work done at Thoresby Hall in 1686.⁸⁷ The architectural development of this house in the later seventeenth century is complex and as yet still unresolved, and it is therefore difficult to know what exactly ‘Mr Cleere’ was paid for. Nor is it certain that this person can be identified as William Cleere, though since William was described in the contract for his work at Stowe as ‘surveyor to Sir Richard’ Temple it seems

probable. The work was associated with the major rebuilding which is known to have taken place here between 1685 and 1687, and the small amounts paid suggests that Cleere was employed to check the work of other craftsmen or for design work.⁸⁸

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA – 1687

William Cleere was paid £240 in December 1687 for the joinery in ‘the Councill Chamber and Passage by it’ at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.⁸⁹ The Hospital was designed by Wren and built between 1682 and 1692. Cleere was one of eleven joiners who worked here, the most important of whom was Charles Hopson, who was paid £14,513 for his work.⁹⁰ Cleere was brought in to provide the panelling in the most prestigious room in the building after the chapel.⁹¹ Not only do the accounts detail his joinery work here, but the room itself survives along with its original woodwork. It was redecorated in 1778 by Robert Adam; the panelling was painted and the chimneypiece replaced. The panelling has since been stripped and what survives is a fine example of Cleere’s handiwork. William Emmett and William Morgan made the carving, and Emmett was paid £30 for the elaborate limewood carving ‘over the chimney’.⁹² John Vile was the smith and Thomas Hill made the lost white marble chimney piece. John Grove was paid £74. 5s. for the elaborate plaster ceiling, and the panelling was varnished by Robert Streeter.

The Council Chamber occupies approximately half of the ground floor of the south-east pavilion at the end of east wing (Figs. 11–12). It was part of a suite of rooms including an entrance hall, the passage mentioned above, the chamber itself, a closet and a withdrawing chamber, though it is not clear whether Cleere was responsible for the joinery in the whole suite. The Council Chamber is a finely proportioned room, measuring 40 by 30 ft., and though it occupies two floors, it has a false ceiling which is only 21 ft.

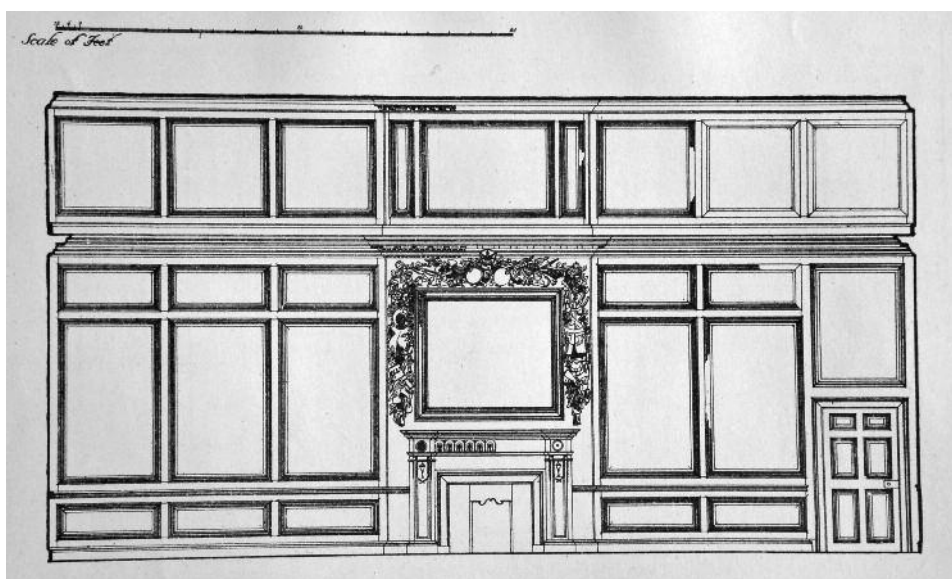


Fig. 11. The Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The Council Chamber. Measured drawing by T O Thirtle showing the panelling on the east wall by William Cleere, 1687. © *The Survey of London*.

high. It has full-height panelling and a cornice above the main windows, and an attic above corresponding with the reduced first floor windows. There is a low dado rail with small panels below, then large panels with another tier of small panels above the windows and main doorway, then the cornice and a further tier of panels above that. This pattern is interrupted by the two smaller doors which have large panel overdoors, with decorative carving, added by William Emmett. This suite of rooms forms the best-preserved example of this type of interior panelling, of which William Cleere produced a number of important examples.

WINDSOR CASTLE - 1688

The last known instance of William Cleere's employment comes in 1688, when he was paid for joinery work at Windsor Castle. This work was part of the additions created for Mary of Modena to the designs of Wren, who succeeded Hugh May here in

1685. These additions comprised a circular banqueting room and a bathing room sited on the roof. Cleere was paid for the parquet flooring and panelled walls, which were decorated with 'flower potts', 'small figures' and decorations 'in Imitation of Marble' by Antonio Verrio. The adjacent bathing room contained a bathing cistern with a wainscot border round it, which was probably also made by Cleere. These fragile rooftop rooms have not survived the various re-buildings of the castle.⁹³

ROBERT AND RICHARD CLEERE

William Cleere's eldest brother Robert, who was also a joiner, died in 1661. Robert's only recorded works were with his brother Richard at Northumberland House, c.1655-59, and at Syon House.⁹⁴ Robert's name does not appear in the Percy accounts after 1660, because he died the following year, so presumably William, whose name first appears in the Syon accounts in 1662, took over from Robert.

Richard Cleere has been referred to as ‘probably the leading craftsman in wood before the rise of Grinling Gibbons’.⁹⁵ He worked with his brothers at Northumberland House, Syon House, the Sheldonian Theatre, the Joiners’ Hall and on the Great Model of St Paul’s Cathedral, and he is also recorded as working on a number of independent building projects. He may well have worked with Peter Mills at Thorpe Hall, near Peterborough, in 1654–56,⁹⁶ and he certainly worked with him on the Triumphal Arches erected for Charles II’s coronation in 1661,⁹⁷ and at Cobham Hall in 1663–65.⁹⁸ He worked with Sir Roger Pratt at Coleshill in 1662⁹⁹ and Clarendon House in 1664–67,¹⁰⁰ and with Edward Jerman on the Royal Exchange in 1668–69.¹⁰¹ He was paid for carving at Christ’s Hospital in 1669 and 1679, for the Guildhall in 1671,¹⁰² and for the Mercers’ Hall in 1680. He was also paid for carving at St Olave Jewry in 1670 and 1679,¹⁰³ and was working at St Swithin’s,

Cannon Street and at St Bartholomew by the Exchange when he died in 1682.¹⁰⁴

William and Richard Cleere worked in partnership on a number of building projects in the 1660s and 70s, and it is possible that William was responsible for the joinery on some of the other buildings where Richard is known to have worked, but where full building accounts do not survive. William may, for example, have been the joiner at Coleshill House, where detailed building accounts do not survive, but where Richard is documented as having worked.

CONCLUSION

This assessment of William Cleere’s career shows that he was a prominent and well-respected member of the joiner’s profession. He was responsible for important commissions for the Office of Works and a number of significant private and public works. He worked for some of the most significant architects of the period, including John Webb and Christopher Wren, and his best surviving works, at the Sheldonian Theatre and at Chelsea Hospital, attest to the high quality of workmanship of which he was capable, as does the most famous example of his model-making skills, the Great Model.

The catalogue of Cleere’s known works (see Appendix) comprises 23 projects, if his work on 32 of the City Churches is included as a single item, or 54 if they are itemised individually. Of these 23 projects, seventeen are for joinery work of various types, four for models and two for surveying or design work. Most of these projects provided Cleere with work for a few weeks or months, though his work on the City Churches and at St Paul’s Cathedral lasted for many years. Between 1662 and 1690 – a 28-year period – over a total of eighteen projects for which we have figures Cleere was paid a total of £6,901. 1s. od. A rough estimate of the payments for the remaining projects itemised here



Fig. 12. A detail of the panelling made by William Cleere in the Council Chamber of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, 1687. *Pete Smith.*

would increase this figure to a turnover of more than £8,000. This was a very substantial sum of money in the late seventeenth century, though it should be seen in perspective; Charles Hopson, for example, was paid £14,513 for his joinery work at Chelsea Hospital alone, between March 1685/6 and December 1702.¹⁰⁵ Without a knowledge of all Cleere's works, and without any comparable statistics concerning the work of other contemporary joiners, the figure is of limited use today, though it is to be hoped that detailed studies of other joiners will provide a usable context for the future.

William Cleere's career graphically illustrates the breadth of woodwork which could be carried out by a joiner, and it highlights the vital part which the joiner's skill contributed to the design and decoration of building work in the late seventeenth century, not simply in the scale of the commissions he undertook, from palaces, churches and a cathedral to private work on at least three, maybe four, country houses, but also in the range of works that this involved. His work ranged from the laying of floorboards, 'making moulds for the stone masons', producing drawing boards, tables, desks and presses for other craftsmen, to prestigious models or suites of panelled rooms in palaces and country houses or the fittings for churches such as St Mary-le-Bow. His work at Whitehall Palace records his production of large-scale sliding sash windows between 1685 and 1687, showing that he was conversant with the latest technological developments then occurring within the Office of Works.¹⁰⁶ The records of his work show he worked within rooms of all types and sizes from council chambers to attics and from bathing rooms to galleries. The only significant room type missing from this list is the staircase hall.

This study has allowed some insights into the working methods of the joinery profession. At St Mary Aldermanbury we have evidence of Cleere tendering for work in competition with other joiners; since there is no other evidence of this practice we cannot know how common it was at the time.

The evidence from his work at the Sheldonian and Bromley College shows that, here at least, much of the woodwork was created in his workshop in Long Acre and then shipped to the building site, where he supervised its erection. Though there are no other specific references to this method of working, it seems likely that this was common practice. The evidence provided of Cleere employing other joiners at St Paul's Cathedral suggests that he had an extensive workshop employing itinerant joiners for specific pieces of work, and this is confirmed by the reference to his 'Self and Servants from London' in the Sheldonian accounts. It is obvious from some of his large-scale works that he cannot have produced all the woodwork himself. It is also interesting to note that he took on relatively run-of-the-mill work for both the City Churches and at St Paul's Cathedral, though this is perhaps understandable in a profession where jobs were sporadic and of relatively short duration. This work provided Cleere with a steady and reliable income, in an age when it could take a considerable time for bills to be settled.

The bias towards Cleere's work on major public buildings in this study has undoubtedly been swayed by the survival and study of official records. He must have worked on many other projects during the first eight years of his career, and probably on many more non-official building projects and country houses in later life, though the fragmentary nature of the survival of such building accounts mean that his work has gone either unrecorded or unnoticed. Whilst studying the official records of joiner's work on major projects it becomes obvious that many joiners were used on each project; individual joiners and their workers were often given specific rooms or areas of responsibility. Obviously the joinery on a large-scale project was all done over a relatively short period – after the main structure and roofing had been completed – and no one joiner appears to have had a large enough workshop to deal with the many different types of joinery needed for work on this scale.

The least-known area of William Cleere's career

is that of his practice as an architect. This study has thrown up no new information on this topic, except the possible design of the altarpiece for St Mary Aldermanbury. The small payments for work as a surveyor at Thoresby Hall might refer to design work, though the complex history of this house's design and construction make it impossible to tell. But it should be remembered that Cleere was described as 'Sir Richard Temple's surveyor' at Stowe, where further evidence proves that he was the designer of this important new house.

This study of William Cleere is intended to bring into clearer focus the important and much neglected profession of joiner, and to promote further study and original research into the role of the joiner, especially in this period, when his contribution to the visual impact of the late-seventeenth century interior was so important and universal. The careers of the men like Cleere, who created these fine panelled interiors with which we are so familiar, deserve to be better known.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper began life as lecture given at a study week-end at Stowe House, organised by Dr Nicola Smith and myself for the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, on 22–24 November 2002. This paper is particularly indebted to the work of The Wren Society, to Sir Howard Colvin and his co-authors of *The History of the King's Works*, Vol. V, to Geoffrey Beard's various books and articles on craftsmen, and to Richard Hewlings' Index of Craftsmen. I would like to thank Sally Jeffery, Kerry Downes, Patricia Smith, Roger White, Anthony Geraghty, Hentie Louw, Jeremy Wood and Gordon Higgott for their assistance. I would also like to thank Geoffrey Beard, who read and commented on an early version of the text.

Appendix: Recorded payments to William Cleere

1. Syon House; John Webb – 1662–64	£349. 19s. 7d.
2. Queen's House, Greenwich Palace; John Webb – 1667 (61 days at 2s. 6d. per day)	£7. 12s. 6d.
3. Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford; Wren – 1668–69	£1,347. 3s. 2d.
4. Badminton House, Gloucestershire – 1668	£50. 0s. 0d.
5. The Divinity School, Oxford; Wren – 1669–70	£207. 0s. 0d.
6. Bromley College, Kent – Captain Richard Ryder; 1670–72	£186. 0s. 8d.
7. The 32 City Churches – Wren and others; 1669–90	£999. 0s. 0d.
8. St Michael Cornhill; 1669–72	£200. 0s. 0d.
9. St Mary-le-Bow; 1670–75	£300. 0s. 0d.
10. St Mary Aldermanbury; 1671–75	£764. 0s. 0d.
11. St Paul's Cathedral, the First Model – Wren; 1669–71	£263. 16s. 0d.
12. St Paul's Cathedral, the Great Model – Wren; 1673–74	£501. 10s. 6d.
13. St Paul's Cathedral – Wren; 1675–84 and 86–90 – £426. 8. 3.	£467. 2s. 3d.
14. Whitehall Palace – Wren; 1671 – (no figures)	
15. Model of the pedestal for the equestrian statue of Charles I by Le Seur – Wren; 1675 – (no figures)	
16. The Joiner's Hall; 1676	£76. 8s. 7d.
17. Stowe House, Buckinghamshire; 1676 – (no figures)	
18. Queen's Chapel, St James' Palace – Wren; 1682–84	£24. 17s. 4d.
19. East Hatley, Cambridgeshire; 1683	£366. 17s. 6d.
20. Whitehall Palace – Wren; 1685–87	£547. 8s. 11d.
21. Thoresby Hall, Nottinghamshire; 1686 – (no figures)	
22. The Royal Hospital for Seamen, Chelsea – Wren; 1687	£240. 0s. 0d.
23. Windsor Castle – Wren; 1688 – (no figures)	

Total of recorded monies paid to William Cleere £6,901. 1s. 0d.

NOTES

- 1 The spellings CLEERE, CLEARE, CLEER, CLEAR, CLERE, CLARE and even CLER are all used in the documents sighted in this article. I have chosen to use the one form, CLEERE, throughout; except when quoting sources directly.
- 2 George Clarke and Michael Gibbon, 'Addenda to Stowe', *Architectural History*, 21 (1978), p. 93.
- 3 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (New Haven and London, 2008), p. 256. Under the name William CLEARE.
- 4 Geoffrey Beard, *Georgian Craftsmen and their Work* (London, 1966), p. 175; Geoffrey Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660–1800* (Edinburgh, 1981), p. 251; Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert (eds.), *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660–1840* (Furniture History Society, 1986), p. 12.
- 5 Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration*; p. 251; Jasper Ridley, *A History of the Carpenters' Company* (London, 1995), pp. 61–2.
- 6 Christopher Gilbert, *English Vernacular Furniture 1750–1900* (New Haven and London, 1991), pp. 15–24.
- 7 H.J. Louw, 'Demarcation Disputes between the English Carpenters and Joiners from the Sixteenth Century to the Eighteenth Century', *Construction History*, 5 (1989), pp. 3–20.
- 8 Guildhall Library, MS 8052/1. Hurstbourne Tarrant was known as Uphusband before the 19th century: *Victoria County History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, IV (1911), p. 319.
- 9 Howard Colvin suggests that since William Cleere completed his apprenticeship in June 1654, then he was presumably in his early twenties at the time: Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
- 10 Robert Cleere, 4 January 1662: National Archives (hereafter NA), Prob. 11/307.
- 11 Marey Rider married a William Cleere on 2 May, 1669 in St Bartholomew-the-Less Church, London. It is possible that this Mary Rider was the daughter of Captain Richard Ryder: Guildhall Library, St Bartholomew-the-Less, Marriages, Batch No. 151081.
- 12 Richard Cleare, 2 September 1681: NA, Prob. 11/367.
- 13 'September 1677 . . . John Clear': *Wren Society*, XIII, p. 94.; 'October 1678 . . . J.C', *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 14 Ann Connell married a William Cleere, widower, on 12 July, 1686 in St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, London; Westminster Archives (hereafter WA), St Martin-in-the-Fields, Marriages 1551–1968, Batch No. 1457.
- 15 William Clare, 1 December 1691: NA, Prob. 11/402.
- 16 Guildhall Library, MS 8052/1 and MS 8051/1.
- 17 NA, Prob. 11/402.
- 18 WA, Rate Books, 1554, f.1120; 1560, f.1165.
- 19 Petworth House Archives, 5943, 5755. I am grateful to Jeremy Wood who shared his transcriptions of these accounts from the Petworth Archives.
- 20 The Bedchambers and Closets of the Earl and Countess were the most important and richly decorated rooms in the house. These rooms were given new floors and ceilings in 1662/3; both Closets were given 'Cases of Cedar' made by William Cleere which needed '32 Reveede [reeded] colomes'. Richard Cleere carved 'two stringes of Tulippes and a peece of flooledge', '18 foot of Lace', and '4 Ionicle Capitalles, 4 doricke Capitalles, and 4 Compostata Capitalles' for the Earl's Closet, and similar work was carried out in the Countess's Closet. The Earl's Bedchamber was decorated with '2 stringes of ffuite and a peece of flooledge'; Jeremy Wood, 'The Architectural Patronage of Algernon Percy, 10th Earl of Northumberland', in John Bold and Edward Chaney (eds.), *English Architecture, Public and Private, Essays for Kerry Downes* (London, 1993), pp. 55–80.
- 21 John Bold, *Wilton House and English Palladianism, Some Wiltshire Houses* (Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, hereafter RCHME, 1988), pp. 25–93.
- 22 NA, Work 5/10; Howard Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, V (London, 1976), p. 146.
- 23 George Chettle, *The Queen's House Greenwich* (Survey of London, XIV, 1937), pls. 20–21; John Bold, *John Webb, Architectural Theory and Practice in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1989), p. 127, fig. 7; John Harris, *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Inigo Jones & John Webb* (London, 1972), p. 25, figs. 165–68; John Bold, *Greenwich, An Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seaman and the Queen's House* (New Haven and London, 2000), p. 79.
- 24 Guy de la Bédoyère (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn* (Suffolk, 1995), p. 139. Diary, iii, 358.
- 25 'Nov. 29, 1667. Charge of Mr. Cleere and his servants and other worke at the Theater from London £6'. Oct. 1, 1668. Recd. for use of Wm. Cleere £15

- (£10 for work at the Theater and £5 for Journey of Self and Servants from London per Edward Langdale); Jany. 28, 1668/9. Carriage of 6 load Joyners' Timber work from London £6'. *Wren Society*, XIX, p. 95, quoting Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. 898, f. 177v.
- 26 The following items are characteristic of his contribution: 'wainscoting 12 doors at 14s. a piece' and two pair of 'double wainscoting dores' at £10 on the staircases; 180 ft. capital moulding at 18d. a foot and panelling in the passage, little staircase, rooms and lobbies; about 30yds. Bollection work at 10s. a yard in the front gallery with 'wainscot, dore cases 6 pedestalls to ye columns, 12 pilasters with their pedestals at 60s, a piece, 2 balconyes at £6 10s a piece'. Among his charges for the 'ovall gallerye' occur: '103 yds. Bollection work, £5 1. 10; 74 yds. Modelling Cornish £74; for ye upper cornish & carving £200. For 22 collumns at £3 a piece £66. For 2 procters seates & 2 dore cases £70'. He did the wainscoting in the Vice-Chancellor's gallery and the pit at a cost of £96 and £79 16s. respectively: *Victoria County History of Oxfordshire*, III (1954), p. 51.
- 27 He was paid £235 3s. 1d. for painting the columns and pilasters which were 'done like rance with a high varnish' in imitation of a Flemish marble. The '17 flambeaux were don over with copper, ye flames gilded' and the Royal arms were painted stone colour in oil, 'done 8 times ore'. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 28 Geoffrey Beard, *Georgian Craftsmen*, p. 175.
- 29 Andor Gomme, 'Badminton Revisited', *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), p. 163–182.
- 30 Beard and Gilbert (eds.), *Furniture Makers*, p. 177.
- 31 There are two stone doorways, attributed to Christopher Wren, one Gothic (the north doorway to the Divinity School inserted in 1669), and the other Classical (the doorway into the Convocation House dated 1670), which presumably formed part of these same alterations. Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Oxfordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp. 257–9; Howard Colvin, *The Sheldonian Theatre and the Divinity School* (Oxford, 1981), *passim*.
- 32 Walsingham Abbey (Norfolk) Muniments, Parcel 3, *A Booke of ye Artificers Bills for the Building of ye College at Bromley, Kent... (An Account of the Expense of the Building Bromley College from the first Floor upwards & for finishing the whole. The building up to the first floor is not included in this Book)*. Transcriptions of these accounts, made by Roger White, exist in the London Division files at English Heritage.
- 33 Richard Ryder, was employed at Syon House to make a model of the roof in 1656/7: Jeremy Wood, in Bold and Chaney, *op. cit.*, p. 77, n. 142.
- 34 Yvonne A Gough, *A Short History of Bromley & Sheppard's College* (Bromley College, 2004).
- 35 Roger White, 'The architects of Bromley College, Kent', *Architectural History*, 24 (1981), pp. 32–3; Roger White, 'Bromley College, Kent, I and II', *Country Life*, 12 and 19 November 1981, pp. 1640–42, 1810–12.
- 36 St Mary-le-Bow, 1668–80, St Michael Cornhill, 1669–72, St Benet Fink, 1670–75, St Dionis Backchurch, 1670–74, St Mary-at-Hill, 1670–74, St Mary Aldermanbury, 1671–75, St George Botolph Lane, 1671–76, St Bride Fleet Street, 1671–78, St Lawrence, 1671–80, St Mildred Poultry, 1671–74, St Nicholas Cole Abbey, 1672–78, St Stephen Coleman Street, 1674–77, St Magnus the Martyr, 1674–78, St Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange, 1675–83, St James Garlickhithe, 1676–84, St James Piccadilly, 1676–84, St Peter Cornhill, 1677–84, St Swithin London Stone, 1677–83, All Hallows-the-Great, 1677–84, St Benet Paul's Wharf, 1678–84, St Antholin Budge Row, 1678–84, St Mildred Bread Street, 1681–87, St Benet Gracechurch, 1681–87, St All Hallows Bread Street, 1681–84, Matthew Friday Street, 1682–85, St Margaret Lothbury, 1683–88, St Alban Wood Street, 1683–87, St Margaret Pattens, 1684–87, St Mary Somerset, 1685–88, St Michael Crooked Lane, 1685–88, St Michael Paternoster Royal, 1685–88, St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, 1685–88, All Hallows Lombard Street, 1686–88: Paul Jeffery, *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren* (London and Rio Grande, 1996), *passim*.
- 37 There is a payment in the Churchwarden's Accounts for St Sepulchre's Holborn, for 1676/7 to 'Mr Cleare for a Case for the Lord Mayor's sword, £4. 5. 0.' This may refer to William Cleere and since no other joiner is mentioned in these accounts, or in the Vestry Minutes, it is at least possible that Cleere was responsible for further joinery work here. At St Swithin's, Cannon Street, where 'Mr Davis and Mr Poultney' carried out most of the joinery, there is a single payment on 18 September 1682 to 'Cleere £20' which may also refer to William: *Wren Society*, XIX, p. 52.

- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 40 '14 September 1674. Mr Cleere pressing for payment of what is due him is given an Assignment of £150 out of £500 that is coming from the Chamber of London out of the Coal Money': *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 42 *Wren Society*, XVI, p. 193.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- 44 H.W. Robnson (ed.), *The Diary of Robert Hooke* (London, 1935), p. 12. This model was seen and described by Sir Roger Pratt in July 1673: R T Gunther (ed.), *The Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt* (London, 1928), p. 213.
- 45 Gordon Higgott, 'The Fabric to 1670', in Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, Andrew Saint (eds.), *St Paul's, The Cathedral Church of London 604–2004*, (New Haven and London, 2004), 186–89.
- 46 *Wren Society*, XVI, p. 194.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- 49 The only surviving English model which comes close to the Great Model in scale and importance is the model made in 1933 by John B. Thorp of Edwin Lutyens's design for the Liverpool Roman Catholic Cathedral. This model is 5.18 metres long, 3.66 meters wide and 3.35 metres high: LUTYENS, *The Work of the English Architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1896–1944)* (Arts Council, London, 1982), pp. 157–61.
- 50 Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, Andrew Saint (eds.), *St Paul's, The Cathedral Church of London 604–2004*, (New Haven and London, 2004), pp. 186–190, pls. 108–10.
- 51 The joiners recorded in the accounts were 'Wm Clare, E. Langdale, J. Johnson, Wm Fortescue, C. Hornby, Wm Coxhead, Wm Jackson, John Vidor, R. Langdale, Rob-Thos Quick & John Smedle, all at 3s, James Myles at 2s, & John Clere at 1s': *Wren Society*, XVI, p. 202.
- 52 *Wren Society*, XIII, p. 51.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 54 *Wren Society*, XVI, pp. 206–7.
- 55 *Wren Society*, XIII, pp. 73–182; XIV, pp. 4–79.
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 79, 84, 147, 149, 150, 167, 182.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp. 164–182.
- 58 *Wren Society*, XIV, p. 79.
- 59 Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration*, p. 265.
- 60 Guido Beltramini and Howard Burns, *PALLADIO* (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2009), Catalogue No. 153.
- 61 NA, Work 5/145, p. 61; 5/19 (Extraord.); Colvin, *King's Works*, V, p. 278.
- 62 Anthony Geraghty, *The Architectural Drawings of Sir Christopher Wren at All Souls College, Oxford: A Complete Catalogue* (Aldershot, 2007), 262, pls. 404–05.
- 63 Colvin assumed that the two drawings in All Souls were by Wren, but Anthony Geraghty's recent reassessment of these drawings has concluded that these two designs are by Robert Streeter. Geraghty, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
- 64 *Ibid.*, pl. 406.
- 65 PRO Work 5/25 (Extraord.) and 5/30 (Ord.); Colvin, *King's Works*, V, p. 284.
- 66 *The Survey of London*, XVI, pl. 85.
- 67 H L Phillips, *Annals of the Worshipful Company of Joiners of the City of London* (London, 1915), p. 40.
- 68 *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.
- 69 Heynes and Miller are not known to have worked anywhere else.
- 70 Michael Reed, 'Seventeenth-Century Stowe', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 44 (1980), p. 197.
- 71 Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), pp. 29–30.
- 72 Christopher Wren was consulted by Sir Richard Temple with regard to the gardens at Stowe, so it is possible, considering the close association between him and William Cleere, that it was Wren who recommended Cleere as the designer and surveyor of the house: Michael Gibbon, 'Stowe House, 1680–1779', *Apollo*, 97 (June, 1973), p. 552, n. 2. Letters from William Chaplyn, steward, to Sir Richard Temple, 1683 survive among the Stowe Papers at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
- 73 Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 198; L Whistler, 'Stowe in the Making: some original drawings', *Country Life* 122 (1957), pp. 68–71.
- 74 Illustrated in Peter Willis, *Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden* (Newcastle, 2002), pl. 112b. Both these drawings are included within the second volume of a grangerised copy of D. and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannica*, 8 vols (London, 1813 & 1836), now in the collection of the Wormsley Library.
- 75 Morris (ed.), p. 30.
- 76 Colvin, *King's Works*, V, p. 252.
- 77 David Baldwin, *The Chapel Royal, Ancient & Modern* (London, 1990), p. 134.
- 78 Simon Bradley, 'The Queen's Chapel in the Twentieth Century', *Architectural History*, 44

- (2001), pp. 293–302; Roderick O'Donnell, 'Classical Sanctuaries of Catholic London', in Frank Salmon (ed.), *The Persistence of the Classical* (London, 2008), pp. 12–15.
- 79 Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration*, p. 251.
- 80 *Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire*, VII (1982), pp. 44–45; RCHME, *Cambridgeshire*, I (1968), pp. 108, 110.
- 81 *VCH Cambridgeshire*, V (1973), p. 74.
- 82 *Wren Society*, VII, p. 106.
- 83 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 85 Colvin, *King's Works*, V, p. 289, fig. 23.
- 86 Illustrated in colour in Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace, The Official Illustrated History* (London, 2008), pl. 109.
- 87 Colvin, *Dictionary* (2008), p. 256.
- 88 *Ibid.*, p. 1011.
- 89 *Wren Society*, XIX, p. 77.
- 90 The other joiners were Roger Davis, John Gibson, Matthew Williams, John Heisenbuttell, Do & Edward Cannell, Richard Ryley, Abraham Harborough and John Smallwell: *Ibid.*, pp. 82–3.
- 91 The total bill for joiners work at the Royal Hospital amounted to over £21,500 out of a total building cost of £145,580. 0. 6¼.: *Ibid.*, pp. 82–4.
- 92 *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- 93 Colvin, *King's Works*, V, pp. 330–1.
- 94 Wood in Bold and Chaney *op. cit.* pp. 55–80.
- 95 Christopher Hussey, 'The Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, II', *Country Life*, 67 (24 May 1930), p. 750.
- 96 Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration*, p. 79, pl. 45.
- 97 This work is mistakenly catalogued as the work of 'William Cleare' in Beard and Gilbert (eds.), *Dictionary of Furniture Makers*, p. 177.
- 98 Howard Colvin, 'Peter Mills and Cobham Hall, Kent' in Howard Colvin and John Harris (eds.), *The Country Seat, Studies in the History of the British Country House presented to Sir John Summerson* (London, 1970), pp. 42–7.
- 99 H Avary Tipping, 'Coleshill House, Berkshire', *Country Life*, 29 July 1919, p. 116.
- 100 R T Gunther (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 157. The joiner was Thomas Kinward.
- 101 Helen Collins, *Edward Jerman 1605–1668* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 141.
- 102 Ingrid Roscoe, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660–1851* (New Haven and London, 2009), p. 280.
- 103 *Wren Society*, X, p. 50.
- 104 *Wren Society*, XIX, pp. 10, 56.
- 105 This includes the £426. 8s. 3d. paid to him as a contractor for work on St Paul's Cathedral and other payments for raw materials and travelling expenses.
- 106 Hentie Louw and Robert Crayford, 'A constructional history of the sash-window c.1670–c.1725', *Architectural History*, 41 (1998), pp. 99–100.