

Murder at Mallacks

(Murder Mystery in Eighteenth Century Woodbury)

By
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In the eighteenth century, the parish of Woodbury consisted of the villages of Woodbury Town, Exton, Ebford, and Woodbury Salterton and a number of hamlets. There were four manors, the largest by far being the Manor of Woodbury, of which John Rolle was the lord, owning estates throughout the parish. The other manors were Salterton and Grindel, Nutwell, and the Rectory Manor. The Rectory Manor, whose lords were the Vicars Choral of the Cathedral, held estates in Woodbury and Salterton, whilst the Manor of Nutwell owned land in Nutwell, Ebford and Exton. The parish was large, with numerous farms ranging from 10 to 300 acres, and consequently a great number of yeoman farmers and husbandmen. There were two working mills, two tanneries, several alehouses and a malthouse; there were bakers, blacksmiths, butchers, carpenters, cordwainers, soap boilers, tallow chandlers, woolcombers and all the other trades which would make a village self-sufficient; there were also clothiers, fullers, mercers, merchants, shipwrights and surgeons. Woodbury was not a quiet little backwater but a bustling, thriving community.

An examination of leases of tenements in Woodbury amongst the Rolle Papers disclosed several, dating from 1727 onwards, in which appeared the words:

‘formerly in the possession of Nathaniel Langley, yeoman of Woodbury, convicted of murder in 1726/27 at the Assizes in Exeter.’¹

Not the most usual phrase to find in an indenture! But what made this so intriguing was the fact that Langley had been a pillar of Woodbury society, having been elected churchwarden fifteen times since 1706, as well as holding other parish offices throughout this period.² His name appeared frequently on a variety of documents,³ he was the farmer of the parish tithes, having leased the Sheafe, for £270 per annum, from the Vicars Choral since 1704;⁴ he was named as one of seven supporters of Sir William Courtenay of and for Woodbury Parish in the Devon County Poll Book of 1712;⁵ he was also on the list of freeholders liable for jury service as well as being High Constable for East Budleigh Hundred.⁶ So who could he have murdered and what were the circumstances?

From the indexes of the Rolle papers there appeared to be nothing to show what had turned Langley into a murderer. The Quarter Sessions papers listed Nathaniel Langley and William Hall of Woodbury, in the Gaol Kalendar of Easter 1726/27, as having being found guilty of robbery and murder and sentenced to death; the two men appeared on the gaol list every quarter up till Easter 1727/28 with the comment 'to remain according to their former comittment'.⁷ The Western Assize records at the Public Record Office merely confirmed that they had been found guilty of murder.⁸ Since the two men did not appear again in the gaol lists it seemed that they had been either hanged or released. A Nathaniel Langley appeared in the Woodbury Parish Register of burials for 27 May 1734, but this entry did not confirm whether this was the Langley on trial or his nephew of the same name.⁹

Fortunately *Brice's Weekly Journal*, published in Exeter, existed for the period of Langley's trial and, in the edition of 25 November 1726, reported the preliminary examination of the defendants with the following introduction:

'As none in the black catalogue of crimes bears such an odious frightful aspect as the execrable one of MURDER, so none is so generally detested by the visible hand of Providence, or follow'd by so sure, so quick and tremendous vengeance... Two men, viz. Mr Nathaniel Lang and one Hall, being on Saturday last (Nov 19th 1726) committed to prison, charg'd with a murder done years since, by one who owns himself an accessory, pretending to be urg'd thereto solely by the goads of Conscience.'



Brice then described Lang as a man who

'by his concerns and employments was making something of a figure in the world . . . people who pretend best to know him are divided in their opinions concerning his guilt or innocence.'

He gave some attempt at a fair assessment of Langley but the adverse

stories surrounding the man, whether true or not are much more memorable. Brice attended the hanging of condemned men and took down their last words, which he sold as broadsheets. He quoted the words of one Isaac Wakely, a carrier who was sentenced to death for stealing his master's moidores [gold coins]:¹⁰

'that he bitterly exclaimed of one Mr L . . . g as the prime cause of his ruin . . . and when I took down the confession from Wakely's own mouth he used this prophetic expression, *And if he comes not to some untimely end, . . . I'll be hang'd!*'

Brice stated that some of Langley's nearest neighbours, 'people in office, . . . give him the vilest of characters'. Many of his servants, he wrote, were known as 'profligate and abandon'd wretches' who had been punished by the courts and whom men of integrity would be ashamed to employ. Brice then turned to the evidence of John Shears, at this stage apparently the only witness to the events, which are described as follows:

'that he had been a servant to Mr Nathaniel Lang (or Langley) commonly called the Proctor, and imployed by him too frequently to many wicked purposes in quality of Catchpole.'

Shears then described how under Lang's direction he had caused the ruin of the widow Goodman of Honiton Clist. He claimed to be of far better stock than Lang and of 'unsullied reputation' until he had become Lang's employee. Shears also claimed to have been unjustly accused by Lang of sheep stealing, which was proved to be false. With indications of a very burdened conscience he then gave his version of events, naming the victim as Mr 'Daniell Palmer:

'that about four years since one Mr Palmer, then of Broad Clist and well known . . . being embarrass'd by debt, took with him what money he had in house, and other his most valuable moveables, and came to Mr Lang's, with whom he had contracted an acquaintance, for shelter and assistance . . . He had not long been there e'er he was decoy'd into a barn, by Mr Lang and one of his men (Hall), and that he (Shears), with another fellow named Roberts, lately transported for felony, having been drinking a bottle of brandy

together, too plainly beheld, thro' holes or crevices in the door, the tragic scene performed in the following manner, viz. Lang, suddenly assailing the poor man, with some blunt weapon or other, then leaping with his knees on his breast and ribs, (being an heavy corpulent man) strove to break his bulk. The other saying he believed he was not fully dispatched laid on several more weighty blows with a piece of board, and wrung his neck. Then they observ'd 'em to take out of his pockets a purse of money which he conjectur'd to contain a considerable sum, a paper of silver spoons and other things . . . [Shears and Roberts were] both made to drink damnation to their souls if directly or indirectly they ever reveal'd the same, and making other horrid imprecations to the like purpose, they had ten shillings apiece given 'em to carry away the murder'd body and fling it into a neighbouring lake or river that so it might pass in the world that he was drown'd.'

Shears ended his evidence with the admission that:

'he bore many twinges of a cauterized conscience for above three years which of late increased upon him with such redoubling fury he had not been able to take any true repose nor close his eyes in peace.'

Eventually a friend advised him to unburden himself to the minister of the parish, Mr Langdon, as a consequence of which Langley and Hall were examined and committed by the Justices Beavis and Tanner.

Most people reading this report would certainly have been very ill disposed towards Langley, unless they had been friends or neighbours who saw a different side of him. This was shown from a letter which was published in the following week's edition of the newspaper, from 'a cordial friend' to his 'much respected friend Mr Andrew Brice', in which the writer admonished Brice

'not to be perpetually prefacing your news with an air of preaching . . . there are a great many of your constant readers fancy you've meddled too much in Mr Lang's cause. Men ought not to be pre possessed in such matters, nor are we to prejudge him at our bar, who is to be accounted innocent till legally convicted. His accuser

is too well known to be readily credited and upon such sort of evidence you'd hardly hang a dog. The reputation of the supposed criminal has been established among men of value for a series of 30 years . . .'

Brice asked his readers how he had meddled in Mr Lang's cause:

'Did I pretend to direct the legislature in the case? Did I prompt the evidence against him? Had I anything to say about him before the Justices had seen cause to commit him? I did no more than . . . give my readers an account of the matters of fact, as they occurred to observation. Which if I continued not perpetually to do, the huge bulk of my paying customers would soon dwindle ...'

Three weeks later, on 23 December 1726, Brice printed another anonymous letter, which urged him to become an advocate of the innocent:

'Some of your readers were surprised at the novelty of your attempt in proclaiming this man a murderer by your numerous journals which fly night and day over three populous counties, Exon, Devon and Cornwall, and where the ignorant, ill-natured and unwary readers, with the greatest temerity, condemn and execute this unhappy man . . . in their own imagination . . . The counsel for the defence shall offer evidence as shall destroy the credibility of accusers, either by urging his general character, or arguments drawn from his strict observance of the Sabbath; his honest industry and success in his affairs, whereby he has attained to a considerable estate; his signal charity in maintaining in his family five or six helpless orphans, showing himself to be a father to the fatherless and husband to the widow.'

This last is a reference to Langley becoming the guardian, in 1718, of his brother's three children (not five or six). Nathaniel, and his wife Mary, had no children of their own, their daughter Mary having died as a baby.¹²

A clue to Langley's background was provided by Brice, in that he was also known as Lang.¹³ His parents' marriage and the baptisms of Nathaniel and his three brothers appeared in the Woodbury Parish Register under the name Lang. This showed Langley to be 55 years of age at the time of his conviction.¹⁴

Though Brice published the evidence presented at the original hearing, he did not give any details of the court proceedings at the Assizes. The week after the trial, however, the following report appeared in his *Weekly Journal*:

'On Saturday last ended the Assizes at our Castle where six persons received sentence of death, the principal of whom were Mr Lang and his journeyman Hall, for the murder of Mr Palmer of Broadclyst. Who are or shall be reprieved we are yet to learn. Mr Lang's friends . . . give out that they are sure of obtaining not a reprieve alone, but even a Pardon! It has been told me, that this innocent gentleman has taken so rooted a pique at poor me, that in revenge he has vow'd I shall not have his dying speech . . . if he were to be hang'd tomorrow!

Brice continued to provide snippets of information. On 14 April 1727:

'The six malefactors under sentence of death here have obtained a reprieve; but for how long is (to us) unknown. It's said, for a week only.'

The next week, 21 April, the following appeared, in Brice's inimitable style:

'We have the melancholy intelligence from High Gaol, that the famous Cain the Second still continues in good health; his friends, they say, make it their boast that unless ammunition and provisions fail he'll maintain that important fortress as long as the well-furnished English possess Gibraltar; being (as is given out by eminent politicians) resolved to stick to him as close as any horse leach till they've put him in the happy state . . . of bidding the Sherriff and his guards defiance, to frustrate the

gaping people ... of an holiday, and baulk the executioner of his wages.'

A postscript followed:

'In a few days may be published *Heavitree in Mourning; or an elegy on the much-lamented life of Nathaniel Langley*; with the speech which should have been spoken to his kind neighbours and acquaintances who came to enjoy his company last Friday at the Gallows, but returned very discontented at the disappointment.'

Four months later, on 11 August, Brice reported:

'Langley remains in statu quo; of whom it's not impossible (as providence may bring it about) we may yet be able to give a more satisfactory account. Query: who is his truest friend? I, who would have him repent, be hang'd and so be sav'd; or, those who would have him sav'd, be pardoned and so be damned!'

The Rolle Papers disclosed evidence of Langley's affairs, after the guilty verdict, with an inventory of all his goods and estates, which were sold in 1727 by John Rolle (as was his right as the Lord of the Manor of Woodbury on the conviction of a felon); this included twelve estates (of which two were freehold), wheat growing in various fields, farm animals and equipment, as well as a large silver tankard which was sent to Bicton (John Rolle's private estate).¹⁵ This last item was listed in one of the ledgers of the Vicars Choral accounts of 1713: 'paid to Thomas Furlong for a silver tankard given to one Nathaniel Langley: £12.10s'¹⁶ In a meeting of the Vicars Choral at Kallendhay the Custos was advised 'to lay out £10 for a silver tankard to be presented to him [Langley] in consideration of the many good services that he had rendered their body thereon'.¹⁷ An expensive present to be given to a tenant and farmer of the tithes!

One estate (Lamb Park) that Langley had occupied, where presumably his wife lived whilst he was imprisoned, John Rolle was unable to confiscate, as it belonged to the Rectory Manor of the Vicars Choral.¹⁸ Here, in May 1734, Langley wrote his will, discovered amongst the Rolle papers, which proved that he had not been hanged but was the

Langley buried at the end of that month in Woodbury.¹⁹

Why was Langley not hanged? On 22 March 1728 the following small paragraph appeared in Brice's newspaper, without further comment:

'A pardon hath lately passed the seals for Mr Langley and his man Hall now under sentence of death in Exeter Jail who had the misfortune to be found guilty of wilful murders of one Mr Palmer.'

Two weeks later, on 12 April, Brice had his last dig at Langley (now a free man):

'At our Assizes four persons received sentence of death, whereof two for most unnatural murder, but we dare not give a large account concerning them 'till we see 'em safe truss'd up lest the Regina Rerum procure a reprieve, and their reprieve bring on our own execution: as we are informed the famous *unhanged gentleman* threatens to attempt but as long as I can keep out of his barn . . .

So now Langley and Hall were free; but Brice did not publish the grounds for their pardon. The following three documents in the State Papers in the Public Record Office threw some light on developments:

'To the King's Most Excellent Majesty: The humble petition of Nathaniel Langley, farmer and William Hall, his servant, now under sentence of death Sheweth, that your petitioners were the last Lent Assizes at Exeter upon very insufficient evidence and against all probability found guilty of the murder by the Jury. That Mr Baron Hale who tryed the case directed to a contrary verdict, (but their prejudice was peremptory), and could not in conscience gratify it by awarding execution. Your petitioners wherefore most humbly implore Your Majesty's most gracious pardon, promising the remainder of their lives that be dedicated to Your Majesty's service and spent in such a manner as may render them objects not unworthy the compassion Your Majesty shall vouchsafe to show them. And your petitioners shall ever pray . . .'

Underneath was added:

'Whitehall Jan 15th 1727/8

His Majesty is graciously pleased to refer this petition to Mr Baron Hale to report how the facts appeared to him upon the Petitioners' trial and how far he conceives the petitioners fit objects of His Majesty's mercy whereupon His Majesty will disclose his future pleasure.'²⁰

The second document was a letter sent by Stephen Weston, Bishop of Exeter, to Sir Robert Walpole, a personal friend to whom he had been tutor at Eton, and who had been influential in his rise in the Church..



'Kensington 6 Jan 1727/8

'I had lately the honour of recommending charitable work to you, the saving two men's lives by the King's Mercy. And you had the goodness to enter into it and allow me to lay before you a state of the case. Nathaniel Langley, farmer and William Hall, his servant, were [at] the last Lent Assizes at Exeter upon very insufficient evidence and against the probability found guilty of a murder by the Jury. Mr Baron Hale who judged the case directed to a contrary verdict, but their prejudice was peremptory and he could not in conscience gratify it by awarding execution. So these wretched men lay under sentence in circumstances I have with long and great care examined this matter thoroughly. The judge, with whom I have several times conferred upon it, is clearly in my sentiments. So is my Lord Chancellor, who is not only informed by the judge, but has himself enquired further of the merits of the cause. I do not give you a narrative of particulars, but hope to know your pleasure in that and the whole business, in two or three days, when I intend to wait upon you.

I pray God increase your happiness and honour this year and for ever. Your most obliged and most obedient humble servant,

Stephen + Exon'²¹

The third document was a letter from Mr Baron Hale, the Assize Judge at Langley's trial, and began:

'In obedience to His Majesty's command signified to me by His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, one of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, upon the Petition hereunto annexed whereby I am directed to report how the fact appears to me upon the trial of Nathaniel Langley & William Hall and how far I conceive the said petitioners fit objects of His Majesty's mercy.'



The letter then gave a summary of the evidence for the prosecution and the defence and the judge's opinion of both it and the verdict. Daniel Palmer, he wrote, was an old, infirm man, carrying about £60 on his person, fleeing the bailiffs in Broadclyst. His naked body, which was found on the strand at Nutwell on 30 January 1721/22 by the master of a passing vessel, had a broken skull and other signs of violence which indicated that he had been murdered. According to Shears the murder had taken place in the barn at Mallacks Farm in the hamlet of Woodmanton—his evidence appeared to be much the same as at the original hearing. The minister to whom Shears confessed his part in the murder was not convinced by Shears's story and thought that he had brought the charge through malice. Two pieces of circumstantial evidence the judge rejected as trivial and impossible to be recalled after a five-year gap. Shears was shown to have made errors in his dating of the incident, as proved by reference to the almanac. Evidently his conscience was pricked only after Langley had had him thrown into gaol for non-payment of his small tithes (Shears swearing at the time that he would have his revenge).²² Character references for Langley were given which showed him to be a very honest and hardworking man. 'punctilious in business dealings with £200 per annum of his own and rented £600 a year in the country'. Judge Hale continued:

'Upon the evidence the jury found both prisoners guilty of the indictment. It may not be improper to observe that the prosecution was very violent against the prisoner Langley, and the country much set against him, and Council of eminence employed to manage the trial, a thing not very usual in private criminal causes

in the country, and not withstanding what had been said in his favour he was, I believe, what may be called a hard man, and had been rigorous in collecting, as a Proctor, the small tythes and duties for those by whom he was employed, and had thereby contracted a good many enemies. But the verdict, I supposed must be grounded upon the credit given to Shears' evidence . . . the only evidence against Hall came from Shears . . . It is scarce credible that Langley should have to throw into prison, for a very small debt, a person whom he had at anytime before entrusted with so dangerous a secret. And it is still more void of all probability and seemed to require a better evidence than Shears's to make it credible, that a person in Langley's circumstances in the world, should meditate and execute the murder of a harmless man without any cause or reason at all . . . Roberts had sometime before the trial been transported for a felony, and was a person, as I was told, of almost as bad a character as Shears. Shears was a cunning fellow and capable of framing his story and adapting it to the circumstances in which the body was found, but his concealing this matter for five years could not but make his evidence suspected; and his producing such a story after Langley had thrown him in gaol might be occasioned by other incitements than those of a troubled conscience, especially as he seemed to deliver his evidence more like a man who was triumphing in the destruction of his adversary than like one who was revealing such a sad truth out of any compunction of conscience. For these reasons I did not think fit to award immediate execution against the prisoners upon the single suspected testimony of Shears, but after sentence granted a reprieve under which they have remained in jail to this time, and as it seems to me extremely doubtful, notwithstanding his evidence, whether they may not both be entirely innocent of this fact, I do in all humility conceive they may be fit objects of His Majesty's Royal clemency.

dated: 2nd February 1727/8 signed: B. Hale Judge.²³

Langley and Hall had been in the High Gaol in Exeter from November 1726 until April 1728, which must have been a debilitating and miserable experience. There is one reference to Langley's treatment in prison, in a copy of a letter which had been sent to Mr Glanville, Keeper of the

Sheriff's Ward, from a Charles Lanyon who was languishing in the debtors gaol and who, complaining about the ill-treatment debtors received, stated that:

'Mr. Langley in High Gaol does not wear irons (as we do) but has the benefit of open air and, though a condemned criminal, by far more of the Christian part in all his treatment than we receive.'²⁴

Apart from the mention of Langley's treatment, which could have been a case of influential friends and money, this letter gives an interesting insight into the treatment of debtors in prison at this period.

Even though Langley received a pardon, apparently he did not have his property or possessions returned to him. The sale of his goods and chattels amounted to £2,368, out of which John Rolle paid £1,100 for legal charges and debts, which had arisen through Langley's inability, whilst in prison, to pay off the interest and capital sum on his various mortgages. A profit accrued to John Rolle of £1,268, which does not appear to have been paid back to Langley (nor was his tankard returned to him!). Rolle does appear to have had a slight twinge of conscience about Mary, Langley's wife, and paid her a small amount of a bond owed to her husband.²⁵

Nathaniel Langley spent his last days at his copyhold estate, Lamb Park, but even this property, which he left to his nephews in his will, was taken from his close friend and executor, Thomas Johans, who was forced to surrender it to Henry Rolle (son of John).²⁶ Rolle claimed it in his capacity of Lord of the Manor of East Budleigh which, he said, gave him precedence over the Lords of the Rectory Manor to whom it belonged.²⁷

This is really the end of the story, though there are several questions still unanswered. Firstly, why did Langley and his brothers change their name from Lang? Nathaniel was obviously known by both names: in a Court of Exchequer ruling in 1699 when he was giving evidence in a tithe case, he was known as Lang;²⁸ but most documents after that date call him Langley (or Langly, as he himself always signed his name).

Second, why did Langley employ rogues as his servants? James

Roberts appeared on the Gaol Kalendar of 1726 as waiting for transportation, though his crime is not disclosed.²⁹ Langley must have known about Shears's villainy, and perhaps because of this found the man useful in applying pressure when collecting the tithes. There is a scrap of paper addressed to a Mr Cooke (treasurer for the prison in the Common Gaol) amongst the Quarter Session papers for Easter 1723:

'If John Shears of the Parish of Woodbury appears and submits to the court: I desire you will fine him £40 and committ him 'till he pays it for he is a vile fellow. The indictment is for entering money with an pretence of an attachment when he had none—he has served people after this manner.'³⁰

In October 1724 Shears was fined again for the same offence when he was described as a deceiver and a common cheat by the Justice of the Peace. The indictment stated that he pretended to have an authority from the court to seize goods unless he was paid a certain sum.³¹ Whether this was in his capacity of catchpole for Langley I do not know, but it seems impossible that Langley should have been unaware of what sort of man he was. Shears eventually received his just reward when, in 1737, he was transported to America for seven years for stealing an iron bar from a Woodbury yeoman.³² Brice wrote of Langley that

'it has been his constant practice to encourage and entertain for servants, and their bums, the most profligate and abandon'd wretches (knowing 'em to be such), many of whom have been, for their numerous malefactions, brought to condign punishment.'³³

Third, did Langley in fact know the murdered man, Daniel Palmer? In 1720 he leased the aftergrass of an 120-acre meadow in Broadclyst called Wish Meadow.³⁴ The animals grazing there would surely have been sold to farmers or butchers in the parish and not driven all the way back to Woodbury. It seems unlikely that he would not have come across the 'well-known' butcher, Palmer, in his dealings in Broadclyst.

Fourth, why did Andrew Brice attack Langley so vigorously? Had he or his friends fallen foul of Langley at some point? Murder, after all, was not so uncommon and many men were hanged at this time, but others

did not merit the treatment that Brice gave Langley. Perhaps it was just that since Langley was well-known in Exeter and its environs, and people seemed either to love or hate him, he was a character worth writing about. Or it could have been for purely commercial reasons. The Stamp Act of 1725 required duty to be paid on every sheet or half-sheet on which a newspaper was printed: thus, in order to make a profit, perhaps it was necessary to print the news in a sensational fashion so as to increase or even maintain his readership. Whatever the reason for Brice's hostility the important question is how much was the adverse publicity responsible for the country-wide feeling against Langley, and could the jury have been influenced by what was written before the trial?

Lastly, who was the 'Council of eminence' that Judge Hale mentioned, and why was he employed? In Woodbury there were three families who had legal connections and who could possibly have been involved. Firstly there was Henry Pollexfen of Nutwell, the son of Henry Pollexfen, the former Lord Chief justice of Common Pleas.³⁵ Second, there were the Holwells who had been the most influential family in the parish for two hundred years and had risen from yeomen to gentlemen (making advantageous marriages in their progress). Languishing in the debtors prison since 1726 was a close neighbour of Langley, the nephew of Edward Holwell of Parsonage, a young man also called Edward Holwell who lived in Lymphstone, the neighbouring village to Woodbury.³⁶ He is mentioned by Lanyon, as a fellow sufferer, in his letter about conditions in the Debtors Prison.³⁷ He was born in 1705, the son of Edward Holwell of Spratshays in Littleham and Middle Temple, who was called to the bar in 1685. His son Edward, the debtor, was a student of Middle Temple in 1705. His contemporary there was a practising barrister from Ottery St Mary who stood security for him when he was greatly in arrears for his commons and duties at Middle Temple and in danger of being sued.³⁸ Is it possible that the impecunity of Edward Holwell could have been caused partly by Langley's rigorous tithe collecting? The Holwell family would have felt resentment towards Langley if he had caused the debts and may have contacted a barrister amongst their legal acquaintances to prosecute when this opportunity arose. Since Edward Holwell of Middle Temple had died in January 1727 at the age of 70 it is possible that Charles Baker, who practised law in Exeter, was the barrister to act for them against

Esiah Broadmead, an attorney in Exeter, whose family leased another large farm in Woodmanton amongst other properties in the parish.⁴⁰

Brice's description of Langley's nearest neighbours, 'people in office [who] gave him the vilest of characters' would certainly fit any of the aforementioned men. What is certain is that someone influential and wealthy, and with a grudge, had paid for the 'Council of eminence' to bring about Langley's downfall.

And finally, who *did* kill Daniel Palmer, the forgotten victim?

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO NEWSPAPER ITEMS AND UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

1. DRO 96M 49/5, 13; 50/1 Rolle Estate Papers.
2. DRO 2785 A/PW1 Woodbury Church Wardens' Accounts; 2785 A/P X 1. Woodbury Ale wardens' Accounts.
3. DRO 96M 36/7, 11; 49/5, 9 13, 16, 18, 20 I; 50/1,6; 49/9/13/I; QS 32/5. ECL DD22141, 22145, 22169, 22171 4.
4. ECL DD22171, Deeds of the Vicars Choral of the Cathedral.
5. DRO QS 51/1/1 5.
6. DRO QS 7/9-13, QS 181/82.
7. DRO QS Box 196.
8. PRO ASSI 23/5 & ASSI ²4/39.
9. DRO 2785A, Woodbury Parish Register 1557-1755.
10. DRO QS 32/10.
11. DRO 96M 49/14 — two documents in Latin concerning Nathaniel's brother William Lang, who died intestate in 1715, leaving his wife Hannah, and their children, Hannah (9), Nathaniel (8) and William (3). Nathaniel Langley was appointed guardian to the children on the death of their mother.
12. DRO 2785A, Woodbury Parish Register.
13. I have used the name Langley rather than Lang throughout except when quoting.
14. DRO 2785A, Woodbury Parish Register.

15. DRO 96M 49/18.
16. ECL D&C V/C/3370/4, Accounts of the Vicars Choral. Thomas Furlong was a well-known silversmiths in Exeter at this period (see pamphlet in DRO, *Exeter & West Country Silver*, publication no. 86: Exeter Museum, n.d.).
17. ECL D & C/VC/5369, Minutes Book of the Vicars Choral.
18. ECL D & C/VC/5ECL DD 22144. In this deed of 1704 there is a memo dated 1707 in which the Vicars Choral 'declare and agree that if the Parsonage House of Woodbury shall fortune to fall into our hands during the within-mentioned term (14 years) then the within-named Nathaniel Langley and his assignees shall enjoy the same with its appurtenances for so many years as shall be then to come of the within demised term without paying out any rent for the same'.
19. DRO 96M 17/2.
20. PRO SP36/5/26-27.
21. PRO SP36/5/7 8.
22. ECT. D&C V/C 3370/4. There is a note of 2s. 6d. paid to the by the Vicars Choral to the Justices in the Langley against Shears case, which, presumably, is the tithes action.
23. PRO SP36/5/78-83.
24. *Brices WeeklyJournal*, 8 September 1727.
25. DRO 96M 49/18: 'He had a bond of Willm Manning of £15.10.0 three pound of which being paid to Langleigh which said bond & ten shillings was delivered Peter Glubb to pay Mrs Langley a halfe year annuity which was accordingly done & the receipt delivered & that sum not carried to acct 12.10.0'.
26. DRO 96M 17/2.
27. DRO 96M 17/2. Subsequently a case was brought in the Chancery Court resulting in the Rectory Manor retaining the property.
28. PRO E1334 12 WM3 TRIN 2, Court of Exchequer.
29. DRO QS Box 193.
30. DRO QS Box 189.
31. DRO QS Box 191.
32. DRO QS Box 219.

33. *Brices Weekly Journal*, 25 November 1726.
34. DRO 96M 49/13, lease for 14 years at £20 per annum.
35. DRO 346M F/891/2/3, Drake Estate Papers.
36. DRO QS 1/17, Epiphany 1726.
37. *Brice's Weekly Journal*, 8 September 1727.
38. Middle Temple Library, Minutes of the Middle Temple Parliament, 27 November 1724.
39. DRO 2785A.
40. Survey of Woodbury Manor, Rolle Estate Office in Bicton
41. DRO PR1/2, Broadclyst Parish Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1653 -1788. Daniel Palmer was baptised on 3 September 1657 and buried on 4 Feb. 1721.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DRO	Devon Record Office
ECL	Exeter Cathedral Library
PRO	Public Record Office (National Archives)
QS	Quarter Sessions
SP	State Papers

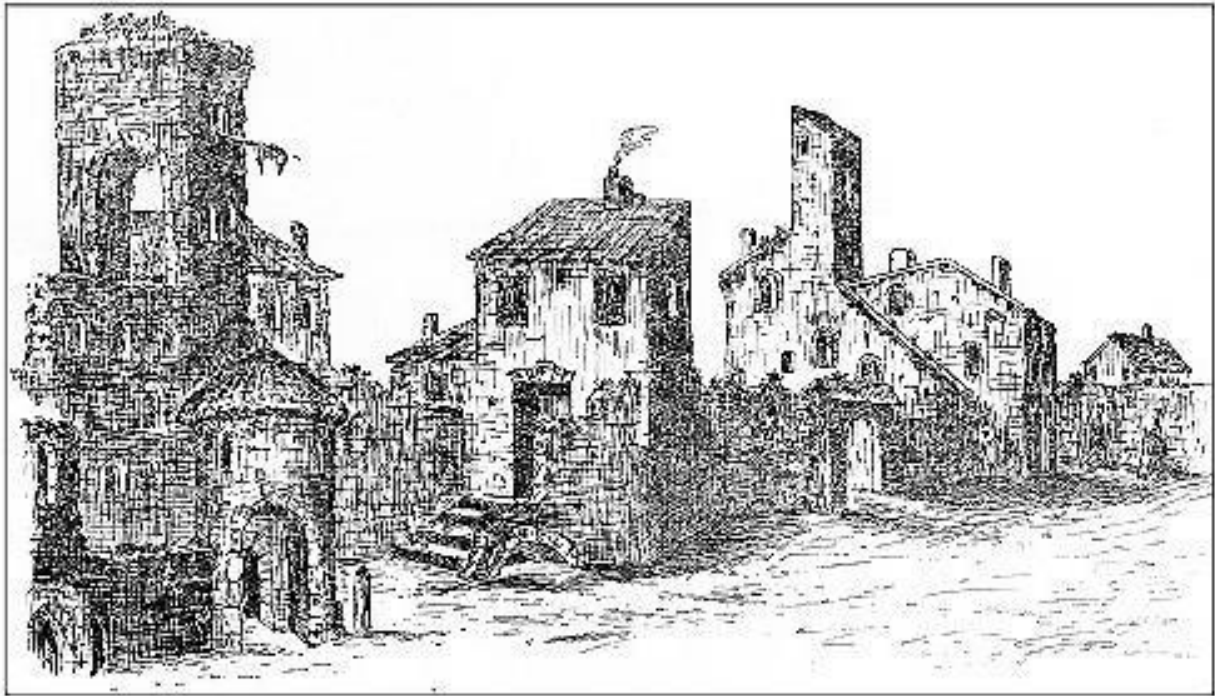
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover map from Woodbury Tithe map, courtesy of Roger Stokes

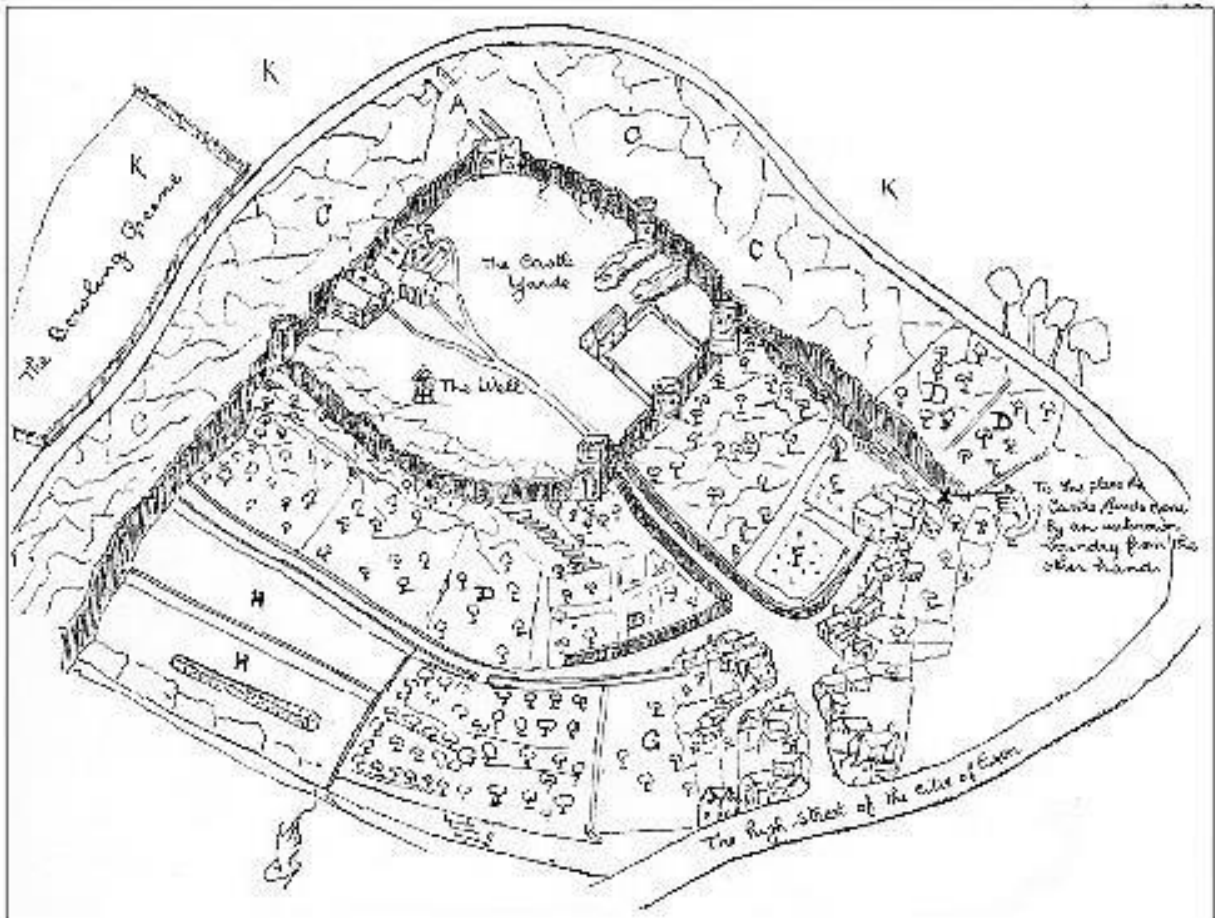
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Rougemont Castle in the 18th Century.



Map of the Castle and grounds in 17th Century.
B Assize Court House, E and F County Gaol and garden.