THE LEICESTERSHIRE MANOR OF
WHETSTONE AND TRINITY
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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In the Archives of Trinity College, Cambridge, is a rich deposit relating to the
manor of Whetstone, which the College acquired in 1558 under the will of the
Revd Thomas Allen of Stevenage, Hertfordshire. This secure environment has
ensured the survival of a very large quantity of documents; and the fact that
they have been carefully indexed, and in detail, increases their value to
Leicestershire historians. The existence of this extraordinary collection was
hinted at by John Nichols at the turn of the nineteenth century, and the purpose
of this article is to introduce the reader, in summary form, to its contents. But
the article is neither a study in manorial history, nor an in-depth account of
Whetstone Manor: many details are extracted from the index, rather than from
the documents themselves; and indices, which may contain errors, cannot
substitute for work based entirely on the documents themselves. Nevertheless,
the extracts are offered here in the hope that they will be of interest to readers.

The long association between the Leicestershire manor of Whetstone and Trinity
College, Cambridge, dates from 1558. In that year Thomas Allen, Rector of
Stevenage, Hertfordshire, and ancestor of a prolific Leicestershire family,¹
conveyed it to the College.² In the course of its long history the manor generated a
huge archive. This whole deposit is in Trinity College Archives (hereafter TCA),
and the mainstay of the collection is the series of individually-numbered
documents preserved in ‘Box 32: Whetstone Manor’. Most are leases; but they are
supplemented by other classes, such as terriers, manorial court records and
miscellaneous correspondence, and it is the purpose of this article to make the
collection and its excellent card-index more widely known to the public.
Throughout the article, item-numbers in square brackets refer to documents in
Box 32. All pre-1752 dates are given in New Style, unless indicated otherwise in
quotations from an original document. In the latter, editorial additions and
expanded scribal contractions are enclosed in square brackets, and lacunae in <>. 

¹ For pedigrees see: The Visitation of the County of Leicester 1619, edited by J. Featherstone,
History and Antiquities of The County of Leicester, 4 vols in 8 parts, London: J. Nichols
1791–1815, hereafter “Nichols, History”; Scolar Press: Menston (Yorks) R/1971, IV/i, 163, and
Charts 1 and 2, below. See also I. Payne, ‘A County Connection of the “Vicar of Bray”’,
Leicestershire Historian, 36 (2000), 4–7 (at p. 5).
² Will of Thomas Allen, TNA, PROB 11/42A, fols 305v–308r, made 20–24 May 1558, and proved 17
February 1559. For details of the bequest, see pp. 138–9 below. Further on Allen’s career, see D. De
Salis and R. Stephens, ‘An Innings Well Played: The Story of Alleyne’s School, Stevenage,
Original capitalization and punctuation have been retained wherever possible but superscript letters are lowered without comment. The only exception is in ‘lī’ and ‘l’ (= £), which is less confusing if superscripts are retained.

A word about the structure of this paper may be helpful to begin with. The main section, based largely on the contents of Box 32, relies heavily on leases and is roughly chronological. It sub-divides naturally into two parts: the first covers the period from c.1496 to the mid-1550s when Allen acquired the manor from Sir Ralph Rowlett of St Albans, Hertfordshire; the second deals with the actual period of the College’s lordship, from 1558 down to the nineteenth century. The next section is devoted to materials that do not fit so neatly into a narrative framework, and the article concludes with an account of the steward’s role and duties as illustrated by three members of the Freer family and related correspondence. In presenting the material, a middle course has been steered between two extremes. It seeks to avoid, on the one hand, the uncritical practice of Nennius, the Dark-Age British historian who claimed simply to have ‘made a heap of all that I have found’, and on the other hand, the tracing of detailed manorial descents such as is attempted, for example, in some volumes of the *Victoria County History*.

**THE DESCENT OF WHETSTONE MANOR, c.1496–1558**

**The Pre-Trinity Period**

Although most of Trinity College’s Whetstone documents postdate its acquisition of the manor in 1558, some are of much earlier date. This important subgroup evidently comprised ‘all and sing[u]ler dedes evidences Ch[a]r[t]res Courtrolles mynymentes and wrytinges’ which relate to the period prior to Allen’s ownership, passed to the College with the manor itself, and are so described in his will.

Into this early group fit documents [1–35]. These relate to the descent of the manor from c.1300 to Allen’s own acquisition of it in 1554. Only the first seven pieces are earlier in date than 1496, however, and we shall begin in that year with [8]. Dated Trinity Term 1496, this is a common recovery of a message, 3 tofts, 80 acres of land, 20 of meadow, 40 of pasture and 4s. rent in Whetstone, between Thomas Pulteney, knight, Robert Jakes and William ‘Assheby’ the younger, plaintiffs, and John and Margaret Palmer, tenants. (This clearly refers to the Ashbys of Loseby and the Pulteney’s of Misterton, whose blood relationship, achieved by the marriage of William Ashby to Agnes daughter of John Pulteney (d.1492) and sister to Sir Thomas (d.1540) of Misterton, was successively garbled by the 1619 visitation’s Ashby of Loseby of pedigree, misplaced by John Nichols, corrected by George Farnham, and clarified by the present writer.) On 20 July of

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4 TNA, PROB 11/42A, fol. 306v.
the same year John Palmer quitclaimed to the plaintiffs any interest in this property [9]; and two years later, on 15 May 1498, an exemplification of the transaction [10] was sealed by the College.

Six documents [11–16] shed light on the famous Wyggeston family in the period 1524–37. An indenture of marriage settlement [11], dated 23 June 1524, reports the passage in fee simple of the manors of Theddingworth, Whetstone, Enderby, and lands in Leicester, Wartnaby, Carlton [Curlieu] and Belgrave – ‘the Hall place of Belgrave’ and 4 yardlands there excepted – to William Wyggeston and Margery, his wife. The document confirms that William was the son of Roger Wyggeston of Leicester, Esquire (who according to Nichols owned a manor at Whetstone in 1496), and second husband of Margery, sister to Sir John Mundy. With [12], an indenture of bargain dated 2 September 1534, the manor came a step closer to its acquisition by Thomas Allen. It relates that William and Margery Wyggeston sold the manor and appurtenances (yearly value £10 5s 4d) to Ralph Rowlett, Esquire, of St Albans, for £200. In an indenture of covenant dated 20 July 1537 [15], Cecily, daughter of William Wyggeston the elder of Belgrave, Esquire, and wife of John Preston, citizen and mercer of London, agreed to make over in fee simple to Rowlett all their lands in Wartnaby, Carlton [Curliu] and Whetstone, for a consideration of £140, before the ensuing Christmas. A quitclaim [16] followed late in October; and on 3 November, a fine [17a/b] named Rowlett as plaintiff and John and Cecily as defendants of 8 messuages, 4 tofts, 200 acres of land, 40 of meadow, 100 of pasture, 20 of wood, 60 of furze and heath, and 40s. rent, in Whetstone, Wartnaby and Carlton. An exemplification of this fine [18] was made on 26 November in the same year.

The next batch of documents [26–31] records Rowlett’s activities in awarding 21-year leases of property in Whetstone to various individuals. First, on 25 April 1552, Robert Botfish of Whetstone was granted a messuage with croft adjoining and 1 ½ yardlands [26], and William Ward of Hallaton a ‘capital messuage’, 3 closes and 3 yardlands in the tenure of Richard Sutton [27]. In the following year, grants of property were made to various families [28–30, 32–4], including (on 10 January 1553) a messuage and one yardland in Whetstone to William Botfish [31a/b]). Another lease, dated 31 March 1554, makes early reference to manorial appurtenances outside Whetstone itself [35], when Rowlett leased to William Oswyn of Bably, for 21 years, a house, 2 closes and 2 yardlands in Bably and Countesthorpe, at 28s. 8d. annual rent and suit of service.

By an indenture of bargain dated 28 November 1554 [76], Sir Ralph Rowlett – described in the index as of ‘Goreham’s’ (Hertfordshire) – confirmed the conveyance of his manor to Thomas Allen, Rector of Stevenage, for the sum of £516 13s 4d. (Nichols says that he was ‘son of Sir John Allen, lord mayor of London’, but there is no evidence for this; he was however the brother of another prominent London figure, Ralph Allen, by whose will ‘my brother maister Thomas Alen p[ar]son of Stevenage… ‘was to receive money ‘and do dedes of

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6 Nichols, History, IV/ii, 165. Readers should note that the two genealogical abstracts quoted here differ in some details from Nichols’s account of the ‘Wigston’ family (Nichols, History, I/ii, 504).
charitie’ with it.\(^7\) The estate’s extent is described as Whetstone manor, with all messuages, lands, courts etc., a messuage, a cottage, 3½ yardlands in Blaby, 1½ yardlands in Whetstone (in the tenure of John Webster, parcel of the Priory of St Johns Jerusalem) and a further 1½ yardlands there (in the tenure of Richard Stretton, late of St Sepulchre’s College, Warwick), at a yearly value of £20 13s 4d. The parcel specifically excluded the parsonage of Whetstone and the advowson of the vicarage there. Although the indenture of bargain and sale \(^7\) is dated 20 January 1555, part of this sum (£216 13s 4d) was paid by 8 December \(^7\). The transaction was concluded by fine at the Octave of St Hilary 1555 \([80a/b]\), naming Allen as plaintiff, and Sir Ralph Rowlett and Dorothy his wife as defendants of the manor of Whetstone, which is described as follows: 20 messuages, 20 cottages, 10 tofts, 20 gardens, 20 orchards, 2 dovecotes, 1,000 acres of land, 300 of meadow, 500 of pasture, 20 of wood, 1,000 of furze and heath, and 100s rent in Whetstone, Blaby and Countesthorpe. The price is set at 620 marks.\(^8\)

**Thomas Allen conveys Whetstone Manor to the College**

Allen had less than five years to enjoy his new purchase, for he was buried at St Nicholas Church, Stevenage, on 3 August 1558,\(^9\) having willed to Trinity his estates at Whetstone, Wittersham, Kent and Tillington, Staffs, together with four tenements in the parish of St-Martin-within-Ludgate, London.\(^10\) Certain conditions were imposed on the College by Allen’s will, which reflected his ‘ernest zeale desire and mynde to sett upp and maynteyne for ev[er] suche good and laudable workes …to th[h]ono[u]r and glorie of all mightie god’, especially in the field of education, for which he is remembered today. He provided 40s. ‘towards the fyndyng[e] of [an] exhibition of one poore Scholler’ at Trinity;\(^11\) but his most enduring monuments are his three grammar-school foundations, at Stevenage – known as Alleyne’s School, Stone, and Uttoxeter.\(^12\)

Also of interest are the clergyman’s enduring provisions for his son James and his descendants. (James Allen ‘of Sherlande’, Derbyshire is surely identical with James, Thomas Allen’s son and heir, described in the 1619 visitation pedigree as ‘de Whetstone’.\(^13\) After listing his conveyance to the College of land and property – including ‘my manor of Whe[t]ston[e] w[i]th appurten[a]nces in the countie of Leicester’ – Allen set these out as follows:

*I give graunte and will unto James Allen of Sherlande... one annuell rent of tenne pounds... yerely gowing out of my said mano[u]r of Whe[t]ston[e] w[i]lt[h] thapp[u]rtten[a]unces and out of all other my landes tenementes and*

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\(^7\) Nichols, *History*, IV/i, 165; Will of Ralph Allen (TNA, PROB 11/31, fols 216r–v, at fol. 216r).

\(^8\) That is, 620 x 6s. 8d. = £206 13s. 4d. (3 x 6s. 8d. = £1) or approximately £206.66 in modern currency. (This equivalence is in number only, not in value.)

\(^9\) De Salis and Stephens 1989, as n. 2, p. 15.

\(^10\) TNA, PROB 11/42A, fol. 306v.

\(^11\) TNA, PROB 11/42A, fol. 307v.

\(^12\) For the schools, see De Salis and Stephens 1989, as n. 2, pp. 19, 57, 58.

\(^13\) *Visitation of the County of Leicester* 1619, as n. 1, p. 109.
hereditamentes in Whe[t]ston[e] aforesaid and Blabye and Countesthorpe...[.] To have leyve and p[er]ceyve the saide yerely rente of tenne poundes to the said James Allen and to his heyses and assignes for ev[er]. And to be payed at two partes of the yere That is to saie... [Michaelmas and Lady Day]... by even portions to be payed ...[.] And I will that if yt shall happen the saide yerely rent of tenne poundes to be behynde in part or in all after any of the said feastes ... by the space of one moneth and yt being laufuly asked Then I will that yt shall be lawfull to the said James Allen his heyses and assigns into the said manor[ur] of Whe[t]ston[e] and other the p[re]mysses in Whe[t]ston[e] Blabye and Countesthorpe w[i]t[h] thappurten[a]nunces to entre and distreyne and the distresse there so taken to beare leade drye and carye awaie and the same to reteyne and kepe untill the said James his heyses and assignes of the said yerely rent and of ev[er]y p[ar]cell ther[e]of w[i]t[h] tharrerag[e] of the same if any suche shall fortune to be shalbe unto the said James his heyses and assignes fullaie contentid and payed[.]

And I hartely pray the saide m[aste]r fel[l]owes and schollers of the said Colledge to demyse graunte and lett to farme the said manor of Whe[t]ston[e] And all other the p[re]mysses in Whe[t]ston[e] Blabye and Countesthorpe unto the said James his executours and assigns for the terme of fiftie yeres next ensuene after the day of my death yeeldinge and payenge unto the said m[aste]r fellowes and schollers ... yerely duringe the said terme of fiftie yeres the yerely rent of xxh [£20] w[i]t[h] other Rasonable coven[a]ntes to be conteyneyd in the said lease[.]

And I will that the said James and his heyses shall yerely defaulhte abate and deducte tenne poundes of the said yerely rent of xxh [£20] for his ... saide yer[e]lie a[n]nyt of tenne poundes during the said terme of fiftie yeres[.] Also I will that the said M[aste]r Fellowes and Scholl[l]ers ... sha[l]l well and sufficienly uphold repayre and maynteyne all the houses edifices and bu[y]ldinges in and upon all and singler the p[re]mysses frome tyme to tyme when and as often as neede shall requyre for evermore[.]

And I will and devise that the said m[aste]r fellowes and scholl[l]ers ...w[i]t[h] part of the rentes Revenues yssues and proufettes of the said Manours [sic] land<s> and tenementes and other the p[re]mysses shall aswell content and paye unto the said James All<e>n his heyses and assignes the said a[n]nuall rent of tenne poundes ...[.]14

There is no evidence that Thomas Allen ever resided in Leicestershire, but his son James was described at the 1619 visitation as ‘de Whetston’, and their descendants throng its parish registers from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. Most, if not indeed all, were apparently descendants of James’s three sons (Thomas, Christopher and Ralph) by Elianor Garret. Mentioned together as early as a terrer of 1582 [42], these sons’ respective burials at Whetstone on 14 February 1622, 22 October 1617 and 1 May 1618 are recorded in the parish register.15

14 TNA, PROB 11/42A, fol.307v. (Division into paragraphs is by the author.)
15 Visitation of the County of Leicester 1619, as n. 1, p. 109; and Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (hereafter ROLLR), Whetstone parish register.
The Elizabethan Period

James, the clergyman’s son, is the only Allen listed in a note of lands held by lessees of the College in about 1560 [37]. (The other lessees are named as Robert and William Botfish, Alexander Glen, John Bell, Thomas Norman, William Jacob, Robert Stretton, William Jarves, Richard More, William Atkins, John Webster, Michael Yonge and Thomas Oswen.) By 1 October 1579, however, he too was dead, and discord had broken out in his family. On that date the overseer of his will, John Bent of Cosby, sent the College a letter of complaint alleging that James Allen’s widow, named ‘Margery’, had contravened the provisions of her late husband’s will in respect of some of his younger children [86]. Apparently, the related document [87], entitled in the index ‘Conditions for performance of Covenants in Indenture quadripartite’ and dated 7 December 1579, was intended to remedy this situation (Fig. 1).

The four parties to this indenture were: 1) Trinity College; 2) Margery Allen, ‘wydowe, Late wyfe of James’, and John, Mary, Elyanor, Joan, Dorothy, Alice and Ann ‘the chyldren of the said James Allen’; 3) Thomas Allen (d.1622), James’s eldest ‘sonne & heyre’; 4) Thomas (as (3)), Christopher and Ralph Allen ‘as legators and executors’ of James. Herein lies a mystery, however, for neither Margery, who was presumably James’s third wife, nor any of the above-named additional children is mentioned in the 1619 visitation pedigree. Probably all were products of this third marriage, for it is clear from these documents that James’s will (which has not survived) made separate provision for them; and there is no doubt that the three sons named at the 1619 visitation – which attributes them to his second wife, Elyanor Garret mentioned above – were James’s chief heirs. Of this triumvirate, only Thomas and Ralph left surviving wills, and only the former mentions Trinity, stating that his widow, Elizabeth, is to receive his £10 annuity ‘yssuinge and goinge out of the landes, tenementes and hereditamentes in Wheston [sic], Blaby and Countesthorpe belonginge to Trinitie Colledge in Cambridge... dureinge her naturall lyfe’.

In 1593, far from late-Elizabethan Whetstone, Trinity was fortunate in the enlightened appointment of Dr Thomas Nevile to the Mastership. Nevile came from a minor Nottinghamshire branch of the ancient family, and following in the footsteps of a comparatively bland predecessor (Dr John Still, Master 1577–93) made a huge and lasting impact on the College. (Even today, the magnificent Great Court and Nevile’s Court form one of his most visible and enduring monuments in Cambridge.) Nevile’s character and personal qualities (Trevelyan

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16 The Bents, a prosperous yeoman family, are discussed by W.G. Hoskins, ‘The Leicestershire Farmer in the sixteenth-Century’, TLAS 22 (1944–5), 34–94 (at pp. 47, 51, 61–3). They were related to the Allens by marriage: see Charts 1 and 2, below. The fullest pedigrees are in Nichols, History, IV/6, 144 (Cosby) and 163 (Enderby). See also I. Payne, A Keeper of the Magazine Identify’d: William Raynor (c.1594–1645) and Allegations of Atrocities at the Siege of Leicester (1645), Hereford: Severinus Press [1995], pp. 14–16, 42–3, 46, 52–3.

17 ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1622 no. 37 and 1618 no. 25, respectively.
Fig. 1. Document dated 7 December 1579, reciting the conditions for performance of covenants in an indenture quadripartite.
(TCA, Box 32, no. 87. Reproduced by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.)
calls him ‘a man of unusual imagination, authority and strength of will’),
and in particular his zealous running of the College, have been described elsewhere;
but it seems likely that he would have brought the same qualities to his overall
supervision of the Whetstone estates as well, for in c.1598 a fresh list was drawn
up of College tenants there [91]. And in that year there began a new period of
lease-renewal, the organization of which may betray the new Master’s hand.

One such renewal [92] was granted on 18 December 1598 to Thomas Allen
d.(d.1622), yeoman, James’s eldest son. Thomas’s wife, Elizabeth née Ward,
belonged to one ‘of the richest yeoman families in Leicestershire’. The leasehold
included a messuage in Whetstone, in which Thomas and his wife resided, with 3
½ yardlands and closes belonging to it; 2 messuages in Blaby and Countesthorpe
(occupied by John Bell and John Webster); and 3 cottages in Whetstone (occupied
by Thomas Ives, John Lipman and John Herberd). There was also a rent of 49s per
annum which, says an attached memorandum, was to be reserved to the use of the
Allen lessee for life (and of his heirs after his death) as part of the £10 annuity due
to the Revd Allen’s heir specified in his will (see above). Document [93], another
counterpart lease drawn up on the same date, states that the manor house or
‘mansion place’ of Whetstone was occupied by Thomas and Margery Smyth. A
memorandum adds that 16s 8d rent was payable to them as part of the annuity
due to the clergyman’s heirs.

Similar 20–year counterpart leases were issued on that same day in 1598 to
other Allen descendants. Thus James Allen’s second son, Christopher (d.1617),
and Elizabeth (d.1623) his wife, leased a tenement in Whetstone, 2½ yardlands,
and a cottage occupied by John Gamble [94]. (Once again, the ubiquitous
memorandum stipulates that the money rent (23s 4d) be paid to Thomas Allen or
his heirs as part of the £10 annuity.) Among the other lessees who benefited on
this date was Fausten Collins of Lylborne (Northants) [95]: his holding included a
messuage in Whetstone and 1 ¾ yardlands, with meadow and pasture, occupied
by William Devonshire, himself a member of an interesting local family, the
Sheens, Smiths and Wale(se)s of Whetstone, and the Kings and Hookes of Monks
Kirby (Warks) [96–101].) (The will of William Devonshire, alias Denshire,
husbandman, of Whetstone shows that he also had property in Copston,
Warwickshire. His probable ancestor, Francis, is mentioned in the Whetstone
manor’s Elizabethan court rolls; and his eldest son, another William, is probably
the ‘olde Sheepheard’ stated in the Whetstone parish register to have been buried
on 10 January 1639, having been mentioned nine years earlier in a Whetstone

p. 21.
20 Namely, the Wards of Carlton Curleiu and Burton Overy; see Hoskins 1944–5, as n. 16, pp. 38–9.
See also *Visitation of the County of Leicestershire*, as n. 1, p. 83; and Payne 1999, as n. 5, with the
references cited there.
dispute recorded in the Leicester Borough records.\textsuperscript{21} To conclude this series [102], Ralph and Amy Allen were awarded a 20–year lease on the messuage and closes ‘wherein they dwell’, 2¼ yardlands and 2 cottages in occupation of John Trawlove and William Glenn. Finally, all of these main lessees are named in [103a–k], a parcel of bonds given to the College for performance of covenants in the leases of tenements and lands in Whetstone. (The complete list of tenants from this parcel is as follows, all individuals being of Whetstone unless stated otherwise: Thomas Allen in 100 marks; Thomas Smyth £30; Christopher Allen £40; Fausten Collins of Lylborne £30; John Smyth £30; Andrew King of Monks Kirby £30; William Shene £30; ‘Edgine’ King of Atherstone, tanner £30; Christopher Hooke of Monks Kirby £30; Ralph Allen £40; Richard Wale £30.)

The Seventeenth and early-Eighteenth Centuries

The earliest seventeenth-century lease in Box 32 is dated 20 December 1604 [104]. It granted to Richard Warde of Cold Ashby, for 14 years, a messuage and 1¼ yardlands late in occupation of William Devonshire but subsequently demised to Fausten Collins. The next lease-related items in Box 32 are letters of attorney, dated April 1631, for sealing and delivering leases granted by the College [107a–e]. (Thus, for example, Richard Ward appointed Alexander Allen as his attorney [107d]. According to the Whetstone parish register Alexander Allen, gentleman, was buried on 23 February 1642. He was the eldest son and heir of Thomas (d.1622).

Altogether more interesting is the light shed by these documents on the identity of William Allen ‘the yonger’, yeoman, so described in [107b] presumably to distinguish him from his cousin William, son of Ralph Allen, his senior by at least three years and probably the yeoman whose will was proved in May 1661, leaving three sons (Alexander, William and Edward) and three married daughters.\textsuperscript{22} In this letter of attorney William ‘the yonger’ makes his ‘Welbeloved broth[e]r James Allen... yeoman my trewe & Lawfull Attourney to seale and deliv[e]r for me & in my name one Indenture’ between the College and ‘me the saide Will[i]a[m] Allen’. (His brother James was also dead by 1661.\textsuperscript{23} In his letter, which he signed himself, William promised that, once ‘sealed and deliu[e]r’d’ by his attorney, his indenture ‘shalbe myne effectuall de[e]d in the Lawe and... of as good strength force & effect in the Lawe to all intent[e]s construcci[ons] & pu[r]poses to binde me [and] my heirs & execut[o]rs ... as thoughe I ... had sealed & delivered the same my selfe’ (Fig. 2).

William the younger also features in [108]: on 19 April 1658 Zachary, son of William and Isabel Allen (the latter by now a widow), was declared to be of age to

\textsuperscript{22} ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1661 no. C.47.
\textsuperscript{23} ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1661 no. C.44.
Fig. 2. Letter of attorney, dated 23 April 1631, signed by William Allen ‘the younger’. (TCA, Box 32, no. 107b. Reproduced by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.)
renew his lease in his own name. Isabel, a sister of Ralph Sheen, had died in 1642 after willing to her heir ‘Zacharius’ the family’s house and lands when he attained the age of 21: as their son ‘Zacharie’ had been baptized in 1636, he would have come of age by about 1658.24 (The Whetstone parish register confirms both that Isabel Allen, ‘widow’, was buried in February 1642 and that ‘Zachary’ was the son of William and Isabel Allen. William, described in the register as a husbandman, was buried on 28 November 1641.) It is likely, then, that all early-seventeenth century references to a ‘younger’ William Allen distinguish Christopher’s son of that name from Ralph’s son, an older William. Fortunately, although the Whetstone parish register offers only limited help in disentangling the web of Allens at this early period, the 1619 visitation does give the ages of these two Williams as 18 and 21 in that year, strengthening further their respective claims as younger and elder.25 No ambiguity surrounds Alexander and Thomas of this generation, however: they are identified as sons of Thomas (d.1622). The resultant relationships are outlined in Chart 1.

By the date of the next lease [111] in this collection – 11 June 1667 – Trinity had naturally gained a new Master, the theologian Dr John Pearson, who presided (1662–72) while the young Isaac Newton was growing in eminence in the University. This counterpart lease confirms to Richard and Jane Wale, for a term of 20 years, a messuage, a close of pasture adjoining and 2 yardlands (52½ acres), the rent being payable at ‘the late dwelling-house of Alexander Allen late of Whetstone in part of the annuity of £10 out of the manor’ which the Revd Allen provided for his son James and his heirs. A similar document – [112], dated 21 June two years later – relates to the Whetstone manorial appurtenances in Blaby and Countesthorpe, where Nathaniel Palmer of Little Glen leased a moiety of a messuage and of 2 yardlands formerly in the tenure of Robert Goddard.

At this period, too, another Whetstone family emerges from the shadows and looms large in College records. The Stan(d)leys, like the Freers to be discussed below, do not figure among the College’s Elizabethan and Jacobean tenants. (Although one Stanley is named as an occupier of land abutting that of the College in a survey of 1567 [84], there is no known connection with the later family under discussion, and none is necessarily implied by the c.110–year gap (1568–1679) between Stanley entries in the parish register.) However, at the Court Baron held on 9 August 1664 Thomas Stanley was said to hold two virgates of land;26 and by 21 May 1701 Isaac Stanley (d.1727) had ‘lately’ acquired the tenancy of 2 yardlands (50 acres and one rood) belonging to the manor house [114]. On 24 June following, ‘Mr Stanley’ received notice that the master and bursar were ‘at home’ and ready to treat for the renewal of several Whetstone leases [115]. This Isaac was the father of another Isaac ‘Stanley otherwise Standly’ (d.1748), a cordwainer and College tenant, who apparently dying without issue bequeathed to his mother, Dorothy Stanley

24 ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1642 no. 49. Made 2 February, proved 29 October, 1642.
25 Visitation of the County of Leicester 1619, as n. 1, p. 109.
26 TCA 73, 18, Court Rolls, fols 14v–15r.
Chart 1. Some early descendants of Thomas Allen (d. 1558).
All that Tenement (now used as two dwelling Houses) situ[ate and being in Whetstone... and also all that Half yard Land lying and being dispersedly in the Com[m]on and Open Fields of Whetstone... which said Tenement and half yard Land I now hold and enjoy under and in Vertue of a certain Lease to me thereof made by the Master Fellows and Scholars of Trinity College in Cambridge.  

Later Stanleys, all inconveniently named William, leased (in 1741, 1773, 1780 and 1800) the manor house and lands comprising 52 acres 3 roods [139a-d]. Another parcel of leases [155a-f] records that William (1771, 1778), Thomas (1799, 1807, 1815) and Ann (1834) Stanley successively held a tenement and ½ yardland formerly Christopher Allen’s. (It is known from another source that four Stanleys held freehold lands in Whetstone in the mid 1770s: Isaac (resident at Kilby); and Thomas, and Williams senior and junior – all three resident at Whetstone. 28) Finally, manorial documents covering the period from 1792 to 1805 confirm that William Stanley leased a messuage, a close and 39½ acres of land formerly held by John Smith [156e-g]. 29 The Stanleys intermarried freely with familiar ‘local’ families, such as the Martins, Jarvises and Perkinses; and when husbandman Thomas Stanley died early in 1720, holding ‘Lands Lying in Whetstone’, one of the valuers of his probate inventory was James Allen. 30 However, the same deficiencies and ambiguities in the documentary record bedevil the Stanleys as much as the Allens, and it is not known whether he is identical with the Thomas Stanley referred to in 1664.

Beginning in 1724, a batch of documents marks the stages by which the £10 annuity fixed by the Reverend Allen’s will passed out of the hands of the Allen family. On 30 July Thomas Allen of Blaby, cordwainer, conveyed an interest in it to Thomas Byrd, Esquire, of Claybrook, during the grantor’s life. Allen was to take the surplus, after Byrd had received £5 clear [123]. (See also the similar [124], dated 8 February 1725.) Then an indenture dated 17 January 1727 covenanted, for £80, to levy a fine on the annuity already granted to Byrd during the life of Thomas Allen, ‘which fine’, quotes the index, ‘shall enure to the use of Thomas Byrd, his heirs and assigns’ [125]. Later the same year, Byrd was plaintiff in a fine of 2 messuages, 2 acres of land, and £10 rent [126]. At length, on 12 February 1737, Byrd had conveyed his right in the annuity to various landowners [128]; and a note dated 20 November 1738 records that Dr Richard Walker, a fellow of the College, had purchased the annuity ‘heretofore Allen’s’ [137]. 31 (See also [135], an abstract of title to this annuity since 1558.)

Much of this renewed activity about the manor took place during the early eighteenth-century Mastership (1700–42) of Richard Bentley, who, while definitely a man of Nevile’s stature, lacked his predecessor’s tact and diplomacy.

27 ROLLR, Leics Wills 1748.
28 County Poll Book for 1775, sub Whetstone (p. 91).
29 ROLLR DE 3093/38 (an abstract of title) and DE 3093/15–16 (deeds to property in Willoughby Waterless) illustrate additional ties between the Stanleys and the Allens and Coopers.
30 See ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1720, no call-number.
31 Further on the Byrd family, see Nichols, History, vii, 614 and iv/i, 104–5.
Branded ‘utterly fearless’ and an arrogant tyran, he was also credited as a man of consummate ability, a supreme Classical scholar, and a brilliant administrator.32

The late Eighteenth Century and a Whetstone-Cosby Connection

The Allen family continued to flourish in Whetstone as the eighteenth century progressed. On 28 January 1771 John Allen entered on property surrendered by Samuel Robinson and John March [152]; and four years later a quartet of resident Allen freeholders – Edward, James, John and William – each occupied a house and land there.33 Finally, on 21 December 1796 James Allen leased a cottage and croft in Whetstone called Stony Furlong Close, formerly held by Thomas Allen and others [122c].

Extant family wills of this period add colour to the picture. In 1785 James Allen, ‘farmer’, left to his son William ‘all those my Messuages, Cottages or Tenements Close or ground inclosed in Whetstone’. His will was proved on 6 January 1787. By his will proved in 1793 Thomas Allen, a victualler and maltster resident at the inn ‘known by name of the Bulls Head’, devised his Whetstone property – ‘all that my Messuage or tenement with the Malt Office stables and other buildings… together with the Yard orchard &c other the Premises… now in my occupation’ – to John Cooper of Whetstone, gentleman, and ‘my Cosen James Allen of the same Farmer & Graizer’. These trustees were instructed to sell his ‘Messuage heredit[ament]s &c real estate for the best price and prices that can be procured’ and to provide funds ‘towards the maintenance & education’ of his children.34 (Some of these men can be identified with varying degrees of confidence. Thomas was probably a son of William, whose will was proved in 1777: see below. Cousin James, clearly the son of Frances and Edward (d.1748), was dead by 1787. Finally, James’s father Edward Allen may be identical with the similarly-named lessee who, on 31 October 1746, had entered on a messuage, a close and 65 acres of land in Whetstone lately held by Ralph Allen [143a]. But the 1746 lessee’s identity, like that of so many other family members named in this article, is not yet firmly established.)

That James was indeed Thomas’s ‘cosen’ can be seen from Charts 1 and 2. In fact, as a son of Frances Allen (née Allen), James seems to have represented the lesser of two main lines descended most probably from Thomas Allen (d.1622), the clergyman’s eldest son. (The other, more important, line is represented by Frances’s brother James, who in 1717 married Elizabeth daughter of ‘Mr’ Thomas Bent (d.1716), an Arnesby yeoman.) James and Frances certainly shared the same father, James of Whetstone, gentleman, who identifies them clearly in his will, describes property in Whetstone and Willoughby Waterless, names four married daughters, and makes his eldest son James his executor. James Allen senior died in

32 Trevelyan 1976, as n. 18, pp. 51–6.
33 See County Poll Book for 1775, as n. 28, p. 91. The equivalent book for 1741 (fol. 64r) lists only two, Edward and John.
34 ROLLR, PR/T/1787/3 (James Allen); ROLLR, PR/T/1793/2 (Thomas Allen).
1729, James junior, his eldest son, is the most probable ancestor of the line which led ultimately, in the nineteenth century, to Mary Isabella Allen: see below and Chart 2.

The numerous Allen clan also included men with mixed occupations or trades other than farmer and grazer. Among those who followed other occupations was James of Whetstone, cordwainer, who in 1763 left ‘Messuages Cottages Closes Lands [and] Tenements’ to his sons John and Thomas, and was dead by 27 October the following year. Two others, William and his son William Tebbs Allen, were butchers there. The best documented members of this sub-group, however, belong to the Cosby branch of the family. As Charts 1 and 2 make clear, it is not yet possible to demonstrate the direct descent of the first Cosby Allens – two brothers named Merrick (d.1737) and Ralph (d.1714) – from the earlier Whetstone family. That they were however closely related is attested, inter alia, by intermarriage between the branches (for example, that between Edward and Frances Allen recorded in Chart 2) and by Mary Allen’s 1784 will (see below). Given the perpetuation of his Christian name, it is perhaps most likely that this particular branch descended from Ralph (d.1618).

On 16 April 1781 ‘Mr’ Edward Allen of Cosby, yeoman, bequeathed his ‘Messuage or Tenement Malt Office with the Orchard Homestead or Backside containing by estimation three Roods… in Whetstone’ to his mother, Mary. (This appears to be the property described in 1776 by his father, the above-mentioned ‘Mr’ William Allen, a Cosby innholder and maltster, when he drew up his own will: this was proved in August the following year, naming five sons, including Edward, and a wife Mary who would receive an annuity or annual rent charge out of the property.) Edward’s will was proved on 31 May 1783; and when his mother, Mary, made her own in February 1784, she entrusted to two ‘friends’ – James Allen the younger of Whetstone, son of Edward Allen deceased (d.1748), and William Armston of Cosby, gentleman – the very property described by William and Edward, who were to sell it to the benefit of her four surviving children. According to other leases in the same parcel, this property continued in Edward’s name until 27 January 1775, when it was made out to his son, James. (This is corroborated by the will of Edward’s widow, Frances: in March 1773 she bequeathed all her property to James, whom she identified as her son and executor. She had died by 23 September 1775.) The lease was renewed in James’s name for the last time on 16 November 1836, and on 15 October 1862 it passed to John Cooper Allen [143b-j]. Most of these individuals appear in Chart 2.

Shortly after the eighteenth century had drawn to a close James Nichols, fascinated by the College’s Whetstone manor, discovered information about it

35 ROLLR, Leics. Wills (no call-number). Dated 25 March, proved 26 April, 1729.  
36 ROLLR, PR/T/1764/2, PR/T/1782/3 and PR/T/1812/4 respectively.  
37 ROLLR, PR/T/1783/3.  
38 ROLLR, PR/T/1777/2.  
39 ROLLR, PR/T/1784/7. Proved 23 September 1784.  
40 ROLLR, PR/T/1775/2.
Chart 2. Some later Allens and the Whetstone-Cosby connection.*
among ‘the MSS of Mr Samuel Carte’, an important local antiquary. (Carte had
spent the latter part of his life as vicar of St Martin’s, Leicester, corresponded with
the leading antiquaries of his day, and collected manuscript materials for a history
of Leicester on which Nichols later ‘drew extensively’. He died in 1740 and was
buried inside St Martin’s.\textsuperscript{41}) Nichols, after briefly describing the terms of Thomas
Allen’s 1558 will, wrote as follows about the state of the manor at the turn of the
nineteenth century, as he understood it, drawing freely on Carte’s information:

‘A large share of the lands of this town [Whetstone] still belongs to the College;
they are demised in 16 or 17 leases, and to as many different persons. The College
has likewise a manor here, with several copyholders holding under it. The profits
of the manor, with the royalty, waifs, heriots, &c. the College reserves to its own
use. The manor house is, inter alia, demised to Isaac Stanley. In the beginning of
queen Elizabeth’s reign, these several farms were held by tenants all of the name of
Allen; and to this day (1805) there are several families here of that name.’ The
College manor spoken of by Carte might probably be nothing more than a right of
holding a Court for granting leases to the copyholders; of which there are
instances in other manors.\textsuperscript{42}

The Nineteenth Century

With the nineteenth century Trinity entered a period dubbed by Trevelyan ‘the
new age’, during which it excelled in the study of English and Classical literature,
mathematics and science. From 1820 to 1841 the Master was Christopher
Wordsworth, brother of the poet; and between 1814 and 1833 Trinity men
(including Bulwer-Lytton and Macaulay) won University prizes for their poetry.
Another prize-winner, a composer of sonnets in the style of William Wordsworth,
was William Whewell (Master 1841–66), who keenly promoted scientific studies
in the University. In fact, as Trevelyan (himself Master of Trinity 1940–51)
proudly proclaims, ‘according to the O[xford] E[nglish] D[ictionary], the word
“scientist” was used for the first time by Whewell... in 1840’.\textsuperscript{43}

As the new century dawned over the College’s Whetstone estate, leases
continued to be issued in favour of the Allen family, and Trinity to be mentioned
in Leicestershire wills. Thus one parcel [127], dated 1728–1845, relates the
passing of a messuage, closes and 52 acres of land in Whetstone from Christopher
to James Allen. Another [148], covering the period 1766–1836, includes leases in
the name of James Allen of a messuage, cottages and land in Whetstone formerly
held by Alexander Allen.\textsuperscript{44}

In May 1805 James Allen, grazier, bequeathed ‘all the Leasehold Messuages
Lands Tenements and Hereditaments held by me of Trinity College’ to his son,

\textsuperscript{41} See P. Sherlock, ‘Carte, Samuel’, in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography edited by H. C. G.
Matthew and B. Harrison, 60 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004, X, 331–2; J. and J. A.
298.

\textsuperscript{42} Nichols, History, IV/ii, 165. (Original emphases.)

\textsuperscript{43} Trevelyan 1976, as n. 18, pp. 88–9: the OED reference is quoted from 37 n.**.

\textsuperscript{44} The two leases concerned are dated 17 March 1826 [148e] and 16 November 1836 [148f]
respectively.
James. On 28 November 1809 the testator died a wealthy man, leaving his widow Mary (née Jarvis) a £40 annuity and his daughter a legacy of £1200.\(^{45}\) Later, on 12 October 1857, following the surrender of Whetstone manor house and several closes of land held since 1844 by Mary Martin and a certain John Allen (subject of William Freer’s letter of 1860, below), a counterpart 20–year lease was granted to Martha, John Allen’s widow [177].

The will of John Allen (d. 13 February 1855), which describes him as farmer and grazier ‘theretofore of Willoughby Waterless but late of Whetstone’, is an interesting document.\(^{46}\) In essence, his trustees – Thomas Cooper the younger of Whetstone, farmer and grazier, and John Pochin of Wigston, gentleman – were simply to sell his estates for the benefit of his widow and heirs. But the interest lies in the detail. When he drafted his will, in January 1845, John Allen was childless. However, because his wife (Martha) had previously been married to John Martin and by him had two children, James and Elizabeth, Allen naturally provided for these stepchildren in his will. After drawing up the original document, however, John and Martha Allen had two male children (John and Thomas Perkins Allen) of their own, and on 30 January 1855 a codicil was added making full provision for them. Describing his property, John Allen first lists his freeholds, including two houses with blacksmith’s and carpenter’s shops ‘known by the name of Lady Well’, before the College once again rears its head in a tenant’s will:

> All that my House with the Yard Gardens and appurtenances thereto belonging in which I now reside and also All those four Closes of land now adjoining the last mentioned Garden containing together twelve Acres or thereabouts (which last mentioned House and Premises and four Closes of land are held by me under a lease [sic] from the Master Fellows and Scholars of Trinity College Cambridge) all which before mentioned Premises are situate in Whetstone[].

Trinity’s Whetstone records show that some members of the Allen family continued to flourish as College tenants during the nineteenth century. Among the last male descendants to figure in the index, perhaps the most prosperous and best documented was John Cooper Allen (d.1867). First, in 1860, he was wrongly reported to be the last copyholder for lives [168d]: see the letter of William Freer and Fig. 3, below. Then, a parcel of leases [143a-j] outlines the descent to him in 1862 of a messuage, a close and 65 acres of land in Whetstone successively in the tenure of Ralph Allen, Edward (in 1746) and James (within the period 1775–1836). In October 1862 he had a 10–year lease of a barn, stack garth and lands in Whetstone [189]. By Michaelmas 1868, however, J. C. Allen was dead, and several months earlier dilapidations relating to his tenancy were certificated [195b]. Finally, papers dated 1867–8 describe the terms on which Robert Hind was to lease from the College J. C. Allen’s former holding, as well as negotiations for the removal of some ruinous buildings and the erection of others [192a-c]. According to his will, Allen died on 20 May 1867 at Blaby Hall, leaving a widow

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\(^{45}\) ROLLR, PR/T/1810/3.

\(^{46}\) ROLLR, PR/T/1855/5/1–2. Further research is necessary to identify John Allen genealogically, and he is therefore omitted from Chart 2.
Mary and an only daughter, Mary Isabella. (This document carries a blanket reference to his property, but the College is not mentioned by name.47)

In the following year Mary, J. C. Allen’s widow, was party to a 10–year lease (from 28 October) of a messuage, a garden and pieces of pasture land in Whetstone [197], and in 1869 reference was made to several cottages near the churchyard, formerly leased to J. C. Allen, which the College had agreed to take down and rebuild while at the same time widening the roadway [201a-d]. (Also in 1869, the College prepared a schedule of Whetstone leases then in force [200].) An agreement between the College and Mary Allen, widow, of Blaby Hall, for the yearly tenancy of a messuage and lands at Whetstone, was concluded on 26 February 1870 [202]. A receipt for succession duty of J. C. Allen (described as of Blaby Hall, Esquire) was issued on 21 July the same year: this related to land in Whetstone, and a messuage and land at Willoughby Waterless [203].

The ubiquitous Allens, for all their high profile and large numbers, were naturally not parties to every College transaction in Whetstone, and other families of long standing, for example the related Martins referred to above, frequently appear in the nineteenth-century archives too. Thus on 12 October 1857 Elizabeth, widow of John Martin, was granted a 20–year lease of Bottom Close in Whetstone, a cottage and two gardens [178]. Two years later, on 11 May, Peter Colston (surgeon, of Husbands Bosworth) and Henry Jarvis (hosier, of Leicester) leased a croft and garden in Whetstone, a parcel of land in North Meadow, and another in Far Harton Field and Harton Meadow [179]. In March 1864, another 20–year lease granted a messuage and land to William Draycott [190].

Finally, various leases identify two families, the Hinds and Herberths, who would be named at the turn of the twentieth century as important Whetstone landowners: ‘The principle landowners’, announced a leading directory of that time, ‘are Trinity College, Cambridge, trustees of the late A. Cooper, Mrs. Allen, Mr. W. Herbert, and Mr. Robert Hind’.48 The first [180], concerning a messuage in Whetstone, two cottages, and gardens, buildings and various closes of land awarded on 28 February 1860 to Robert Hind, was issued for a term of just twelve years. (Two further leases of tenements in his name [199], were granted in 1868 and 1872; and Thomas Hind was a recipient in October 1862 [188].) Then, early in the 1860s, the Herberths suddenly become prominent in the archive. On 29 November 1861 William Herbert was granted a 20–year lease of a farmouse and buildings in Whetstone. His several closes totalled roughly 81 acres [181]. On 7 June following he received a further grant: a messuage in Whetstone consisting of three cottages, with appurtenances, built on the site of a farmouse, together with much additional property [186a-b]. Between 1861 and 1864 Herbert’s holdings generated a body of correspondence under the heading ‘Whetstone Gorse’ [183a-e]. And reports were prepared for the College Bursar, spanning the period November 1861–March 1863, on the proposed new buildings for Herbert’s farm and, specifically, on the fact that he had ‘greatly exceeded’ the estimated cost [182a-d].

47 ROLLR, Will Register 1867, pp. 417–21.
This concludes the roughly chronological presentation of indexed material composed principally of leases. It will be useful next to list some of the documents which have not yet been considered owing to the difficulty of placing them in the above narrative. They may conveniently be grouped under three heads: 1) terriers; 2) court and miscellaneous; 3) surveys, maps and plans.

SOME OTHER CLASSES OF DOCUMENT

Terriers

A series of terriers covering the period 1582–1614 provides information on various Whetstone families of Elizabethan and Jacobean vintage, beginning with the Allens themselves. According to a terrier of lands belonging to the executors of James Allen, dated 20 July 1582, three cottages were then in occupation of the Webster, Botfish and Mayes families [38]. According to [41], a lease dated 10 October of the same year, other lands at Whetstone were occupied by Geoffrey Ward. Ralph Allen and Thomas Denshore (that is, Devonshire) and the Ward, Bodycoat and Smith families are subjects of [43]; Christopher Allen of [44]; and Thomas Varnum, Thomas Oswnyn (occupier of a farm in Blaby), and William Ashby (occupier of a farm in Blaby held of the College on 1 June 1614), of [46]. A later series, dated October 1631, relates to Whetstone land in the occupation of Thomas Brown and Thomas Pawley [66]; James Allen [67] (presumably the yeoman whose will was proved in 1661, son of Christopher, and brother of William the younger); Thomas Knight ‘for Gamble’ [68]; William Allen the younger [69]; two yardlands belonging to a house occupied by Richard Wale [70]; and, in 1657, 2¼ yardlands in occupation of Edward Allen [74] (probably a son of Ralph’s son, William the elder: see Chart 1).

Most terriers, like the leases discussed above, concern property in Whetstone itself and many relate to the Allen family. A number of the early seventeenth-century documents bear later annotations, showing that other tenants had entered on these properties by 1721. For example, Halfords and Palmers had entered upon the farm held in 1614 by William Ashby [46] (this states that two of the terriers relate to a farm held by Frances Ashby, widow, in 1721); John Bodycoates upon land held between 1582 and 1614 by Richard Ward [49]; William Thornton upon manorial land in Blaby, occupied in 1614 by Thomas Varnam [60]; Isaac Stanley upon land held in 1614 by John Gamble [64]; and the Halfords and Palmers (again) upon a yardland belonging in 1675 to Thomas Palmer of Little Glen, being a moity of the messuage in Blaby with lands in Blaby and Countesthorpe, late of John Evans of Blaby [75]; Alexander Allen (buried in January 1744) and his wife Rebecca (d.1728) upon property described in four other terriers [47]. A later document (1744) records that William Mason had entered upon land occupied in 1623 by Alexander (d.1642) and Joan Allen [65]. Also in 1744, Robert Foreman was tenant of 1½ yardlands held in 1640 by William Allen the younger [73]. Finally, at a date unspecified in the index Edward Allen entered upon lands occupied in 1633 by William Allen the elder [71].
Court and Miscellaneous Records

The main source of court records is a bound volume entitled ‘Manor of Whetstone in Leicestershire l Trinity Colledge’ (cover) and ‘Whetstone – Court Rolls’ (spine). This volume contains records of the Court Baron held in the following years (see the Appendix for extracts, further notes and name-lists): 1557 (the only roll in the series with Thomas Allen as lord of the manor); 1562, 1564, 1566 (all held under Robert Beaumont, Master); 1591 (John Still); 1616 (John Richardson); 1664, 1666 (John Pearson); 1739 (Richard Bentley); 1758 (Robert Smith). A special Court Baron was held on 4 March 1777, and includes details of John Allen’s holdings after enclosure as he surrendered his tenancy to the College. Two further special courts were held, in 1786 and on 21 August 1815. The last court recorded in the volume was held on 7 February 1845. (For further details about these nineteenth-century courts, see the final section of this article devoted to the Freers.) Finally, here is a curiosity from Box 32: the appointment, in c.1750, of a gamekeeper for the manor of Whetstone [144].

These records are valuable partly for the light they shed on manorial custom, and partly because of the individual tenants they list, showing (among other things) that it was not uncommon for families to remain on the manor for generations. Further court rolls are preserved in Box 32, as follows: 1564 [82], 1566 [83], 1591 [89], 1616 [105], 1664 [109, damaged], 1666 [110], 1702 [117], 1777 [159d]. Some of these are clearly drafts and/or copies.

Surveys, Maps and Plans

Trinity’s Whetstone deposit is especially rich in estate surveys, maps and plans. Numerous documents have tracings or drawings attached. (For example, a tracing accompanied the report on the proposed addition to the churchyard by giving up 2 roods of College land in May 1862 [184a-b]. A plan was originated when, a month later, the College conveyed land in Whetstone to the South Leicestershire Railway Company [185]. However, we are concerned in this section only with the more significant, free-standing, items.) Among the surveys is [37], a note of lands held by lessees of the College, c.1560. (These are named as Robert and William Botfish; Alexander Glen; John Bell; Thomas Norman; William Jacob; Robert Stretton; William Jarvis; Richard More; William Atkins; John Webster; Michael Young; James Allen; and Thomas Oswyn.) Another list [91] was made in c.1598, possibly encouraged by Thomas Nevile’s new-broom approach.

Other documents in these categories include: a prose survey of College lands ‘in Lister’, dated 23 October 1567, by agreement between the College and the mayor and justices of the town of Leicester [84]; a very detailed ‘Survey of the Several Estates at Whetstone in Leicestershire Belonging to Trinity College in Cambridge 1744’, which includes plans of homesteads and identifies the

49 TCA 73, 18. (All references to this document cited in the Appendix below are taken from the item itself.)
occupants of portions of named fields and other properties [140]. (The schedules show that Alexander and Edward Allen held 1½ and 2¼ yardlands each, though James and William Allen (and one ‘Freer’, probably John Freer the steward of whom more below) appear as subtenants. The other main tenants were: John Burgess, Robert Foreman, Thomas Finly, John Garmston, William Mason, John Martin, William and Issac Stanley, Widow Whitmore, Thomas Wale and Mr Thomas.)

There are also plans of five meadows at Whetstone, dated June 1744 [141]; a draft bill for enclosure of common fields there, c.1765 [147] (of related interest, at TCA Box 3, 12, is a plan of land in Whetstone laid out by the Enclosure Commissioners); Jonathan Teal’s map of college estates in Whetstone and Blaby (copy at [161] of the original at TCA Box 3, 13) dated 1800; and a survey book and valuation of College estates in Whetstone and Blaby, also dated 1800, including a letter (24 January 1804) from J.E. Carter of Leicester regarding the apportionment of Allen’s rents among the several tenants [163]. (He is presumably identical with John Edward Carter, gentleman, who occurs in the records as Deputy Steward at a special court convened in 1786, and as author of a letter dated 3 March 1799 relating to land tax redemption particulars of Whetstone. He was still living in 1810, and owned an estate in Desford. [51]) Finally, there are plans of the estate in Willoughby Waterless, property of William Heyrick, Esquire, and of that adjoining the lordship of Whetstone leased to him by the College [172], dated 1845. A valuation of the Whetstone estate, dated 1862, is preserved in a leather-bound manuscript book [187].

FROM COLLEGE TENANTS TO MANORIAL STEWARDS: THE FREER FAMILY OF BLABY

Let the Lord [of the Manor] then procure a Seneschal [Steward]: a man circumspect and faithful, discreet and gracious, humble and chaste and peaceful and modest, learned in the laws and customs of his province and of the duties of a Seneschal; one who will devote himself to guard his Lord’s rights in all matter, and who knoweth how to teach and instruct his master’s under-bailiffs in their doubts and their errors; merciful to the poor, turning aside from the path of justice neither for prayers nor for bribes. [53]

Early in the eighteenth century the Freers, a family prominent in county records, begin to figure significantly in those of the College’s Whetstone manor. This ancient family was one of a number championed by Hoskins, who described its members as ‘typically solid and prosperous yeoman farmers on a middling scale’. [54]

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50 TCA 73, 18, unfoliated portion, and TCA Box 7 Shelf 127, respectively.
51 See Nichols, History, IVii, 782.
52 This member of Heyrick (or Herrick) family lived too late to be included in Nichols’s pedigrees.
54 W. G. Hoskins, Leicestershire Yeoman Families and their Pedigrees rev. J. Wilshere (Leicester: Leicester Research Services, 1974, p. 19; originally published as an article in THLAS, 23 (1946).
Although the surname is common and well documented in the county, especially at Wigston Magna where in 1606 a particularly successful Freer family became joint owners of a manor there,\textsuperscript{55} the most affluent early branch was well settled at Blaby by Elizabeth’s reign.\textsuperscript{56} The manor of Blaby had been held for seven generations by a cadet branch of the Savills of Thornhill (Yorks) when, on 7 December 1671 at Wigston Magna, Grace (d.1729) daughter of George Savile (d.1675) married William Freer (d.1729) ‘of Blaby’\textsuperscript{57} (William left virtually ‘all my Lands and Tenements... in Blaby and County Thorp [sic]’ to his eldest son William; but it is not known whether this was leased from the College. As we shall see, however, his fourth son, John (d.1768), was certainly a tenant.)

This new family tie was formally acknowledged when, twelve years later, the will of Thomas Savile, George’s son and heir, named ‘my sister Grace Frere’, made ‘my brother in law Will[i]am Frere of Blaby’ one of his executors, and stipulated that ten pounds be divided between ‘my brother Freres three Children’.\textsuperscript{58} The Freers had certainly owned and sold property in Blaby and Countesthorpe prior to this union. (For example, John and Thomas Freer concluded property transactions with the Saviles in 1510 and 1576 respectively, while Robert Freer occurs in the Blaby lay subsidy list of 1524, though whether the aforementioned John is identical with the John Freer, husbandman, engaged in transactions Burton Overy in 1507 and 1509 it is impossible to say.\textsuperscript{59}) However, there is no evidence from the College estate records that any family members were tenants prior to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when John (d.1768) is identifiable as such, and Thomas (d.1841) and William (d.1873) were stewards. (See below, and Chart 3 where all three names are capitalized.)

The earliest reference to the Freer family in the index dates from 15 October 1739, when, as part of the opening procedure, John Freer was sworn under the heading ‘The Homage of the Lords’ at a Court Baron and Customary Court presided over by the then steward, William Greaves Beaupre Bell, Esquire.\textsuperscript{60} Freer is not named as a manorial official, and it is not clear whether he acted as foreman. But he is surely identical with John Freer (d.1768), fourth and youngest son of William and Grace Freer of Blaby, and one of two named Freer freeholders


\textsuperscript{56} The pedigree in W. G. D. Fletcher, \textit{Leicestershire Pedigrees and Royal Descents}, Leicester: Clarke and Hodgson 1887, pp. 139–44, though apparently reliable for the later period, is patently less so for the earliest one, and it is not yet certain that George Freer, yeoman (ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1589 no. 91), was William’s Elizabethan ancestor.

\textsuperscript{57} ROLLR, Wigston Magna parish register; and Will and probate inventory of ‘Mr. Will[i]am Freer Sen[ior] ... Lately Deceas’d’ (ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1729, no call-number). He was buried on 24 October, his widow on 11 December, 1729 (ROLLR, Blaby parish register).

\textsuperscript{58} ROLLR, Leics. Wills 1683 no. 146. For an excellent account of the Saviles at Blaby see W. H. Bailey, ‘Notes on the Saviles, Lords of the Manor of Blaby in the County of Leicester’, \textit{Leicestershire Architectural & Archaeological Society Reports and Papers}, 32 part 1 (1913), 229–44.

\textsuperscript{59} See G. Farnham, \textit{Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes}, 6 vols, Leicester: W. Thornley 1929–33, V, 44, 46 (Blaby) and I, 280 (Burton Overy) respectively.

\textsuperscript{60} TCA 73, 18, Court Rolls, fol. 18v. (This formal procedure is set out in R. B. Fisher, \textit{A Practical Treatise on Copyhold Tenure, with the Methods of Holding Courts Leet, Courts Baron, and Other Courts} (London: J. Butterworth 1794), pp. 168–9, 254.)
Chart 3. The Freers of Blaby and Huncote.
resident there in 1719 and 1741.\(^6^1\) (In the earlier year John, though resident at Blaby, also had a freehold at ‘Kelyhallam’; and he may well be identical with the unnamed ‘Frer’ occupant of College land held in 1744 by Edward Allen.\(^6^2\)) As John Freer of Stoughton, gentleman, he made his will on 25 July 1767. Having already provided modest *ante mortem* ‘Fortunes’ for his other children, he bequeathed to his second son John, and daughter Ann, ‘All and singular my Messuages Lands Tenements and Hereditaments in Blaby and Countesthorpe... helden by Leave of the Master Fellows and Scholars of Trinity College in Cambridge and all my Term Estate and Interest now to come and renewable therein where of I have a power of Disposing’.\(^6^3\)

By his wife Eunice Heyley (bap. 1692; d.1754) of Keyham, John Freer had three sons; only the second, another John (baptized at Blaby on 22 October 1721), had an established Trinity connection, and this was as a tenant, not a manorial official. When in 1787 the younger John (by then a grazier at Huncote, in the parish of Narborough) made his own will, he retained his College holding which he described in terms used by his father before him: ‘I give to my ... son John ... All my Lands and Hereditaments at Blaby ... which I hold by Lease from the Master Fellows and Scholars of Trinity College in Cambridge for and during my Term Right and Interest therein he paying to my son William the value thereof in money...’\(^6^4\)

According to the parish register, a younger daughter of John and Eunice, Grace Freer, married Whetstone farmer John Halford in November 1761; while the younger John Freer’s migration from Blaby to Huncote is of interest as showing that the Blaby Freers, like the Whetstone Allens, soon spread to nearby parishes. John had married on 29 May 1746 Mary (d.1781), daughter of a local freeholder, Thomas Elliot (d.1746). Leaving no sons, Elliot bequeathed to his daughter ‘all my house in Narborough and the yard or orchard’ belonging to it with ‘all my land in the field or fields’ there.\(^6^5\) In due course John and Mary Freer’s eldest daughter, Eunice (d.1832), married Randolph (or Randal) Payne of Huncote, miller, farmer and grazier.\(^6^6\) He occupied farmland and ‘ye Mills’ owned by ‘Mr Carter’ – probably Henry Carter of Leicester, lord of Huncote manor;\(^6^7\) and with his brother-in-law John Freer (d.1821) continued to farm in the village until his death


\(^{62}\) TCA Box 32, Document [140], pp. 10–14.

\(^{63}\) ROLLR, PR/T/1768/87, proved 11 January 1768.

\(^{64}\) ROLLR, PR/T/1788/70.

\(^{65}\) ROLLR, Narborough parish register; Leics. Wills 1746, no call-number (made 12 February 1745/6, pr. 12 April 1746). In the *Leics Poll Book* for 1741 (fol. 75) Elliot is described as a resident of Huncote and freeholder at Narborough.

\(^{66}\) Baptised in Burton Overy on 16 January 1743/4 (see Payne 1999, as n. 5, p. 54), he is described as miller and already resident at Huncote in his ROLLR marriage bond, dated 30 July 1769. See their respective wills at ROLLR, PR/T/1832/139 and PR/T/1817/156, and joint M.I. in Narborough churchyard.

in 1817.68 (The water-mill, whose modernised building still stands beside Thurlaston Brook, was occupied by the family until after the death of their second son, Charles Freer Payne, in 1833.69) Following a brief tenancy at Narborough, also under Henry Carter,70 their eldest son James (d.1848), farmer and grazier, moved further afield to Ratcliffe on the Wreake and, finally, Ashby Folville Lodge.71 But he had first married (in 1803) Mary Bird at Narborough, whose mother was Elizabeth Allen, daughter of Edward (d.1783) of Cosby discussed above.72 (According to the Cosby parish register, Elizabeth was baptized on 4 November 1754 and had no fewer than eleven children there between 1776 and 1800. She had married John Bird at Whetstone by ROLLR licence dated 29 July 1775.)

Seeking their first (identifiable) manorial official from this family, the College turned to a more senior branch and made Thomas (d.1841) their deputy steward. (He may be identified as the eldest son of William Freer (d.1799) of Blaby, gentleman, by Eleanor Major (d.1794), and a grandson of George Freer (d.1741) and Mary Bruin (d.1783).73) Described as ‘Thomas Freer of the Borough of Leicester Gentleman’, he also benefited under the will of his ‘cousin’, John Freer of Blaby, ‘now a Lieutenant in the Leicestershire Regiment of Militia’, who died, apparently unmarried, in February 1815: Thomas received from the young soldier the bequest of ‘a Messuage or Tenement with the appurtenances situate and being in the Parish of Saint Martin in the Borough of Leicester’.74

Thomas is first encountered in the card index at the special Court Baron and Customary Court held on 21 August 1815 ‘before Thomas Freer[,] Gentleman[,] Deputy Steward there’.75 In 1796, three years before his death, his father William had bequeathed property at ‘Thulston otherwise Thurlaston’ to ‘my Son Thomas Freer of the Town of Leicester, Gentleman’.76 The will makes no specific reference to Trinity or its Whetstone estate; but by 1829 Thomas was steward, according to a memorandum preserved in a collection of papers relating to College copyholders (Box 32, [168b]). This document, addressed from ‘Mr Freer Stew[ar]d’ to ‘The Revd Mr Musgrave[,] Bursar[,] Trinity College Cambridge’, not only reveals some of the practical difficulties experienced in collecting rents, but also Thomas Freer’s apparently shrewd character assessments of the tenants concerned:

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68 ROLLR, QS 62/153/1–37, Huncote LTAs, 1780–1817. The will of John Freer, Eunice’s brother, is at ROLLR, PR/T/1821/60.
70 ROLLR, QS 62/213/29, Narborough LTA, 1807.
72 Mary’s baptismal record has not yet been traced; but she must have been born in c.1780. John and Elizabeth Bird were the only parents with these names known to have had issue in the vicinity of Cosby, Narborough and Whetstone at this period.
73 William was buried at Blaby on 10 January 1799, aged 64, having died six days earlier. See the M.I. in Blaby Church (printed in Nichols, History, IV/ii, 54) and his will (ROLLR, PR/T/1799/66).
74 ROLLR, PR/T/1815/65.
75 TCA 73, 18, Court Rolls, unfoliated portion.
76 See William Freer’s will, as n. 73.
West Cotes[,] Leicester[,] 31 Oct[obe]r 1829

Dear Sir

I received your letter with the account of the Rents due at Michae[lmas] from the Whetstone College Tenants, which I will see to collect up – I have as you desire given notice to Kenney Lawrence & Wilmore that if they do not pay the remainder of their Fines for renewal of their new Leases within the next fortnight legal proceedings will be commenced against them, which I hope will be attended to, though I have made repeated application before time without effect. I will write to you in a fortnight the result of my application[.]

I have applied to Simpkin and Perkins about the Renewal of their Leases, and they wish to have the terms, which I will thank you to send me and if approved you will have no trouble with them in the payment of the Fines – I have mentioned the matter to Hind and Martin but they have given me no directions for a Renewal[.]

Mrs Whitehead has applied to me to obtain the Terms of Renewal of her late Husband’s Lease of about 3 roods of ground in Whetstone Town, of which there is about 3 years to come in the present Lease[.]

I have had Mr Allen with me in Consequence of your letter to him about his Title to a messuage and 28 acres of Land/ late Mr Cooper’s/ which Estate by the death of Mr Cooper Intestate about a year ago came to his Sister Mrs Allen as Heir at Law – This Estate Mr Cooper held by Court Roll for 3 lives [sic]/ all of which are now in being[.]/ In the year 1815, I held a Court to admit the late Mr Cooper upon his entry in a new life for which he paid a fine of [£]212[.]

Mr Cooper’s Father purchased this Estate of an ancestor [sic] of the Martin you mention now making a Claim – There is another small Copyhold Consisting of a Cottage and about 2. a[cre]s of which there is only due life in being, and that is the present King’s[.]

I am Dear Sir
Yours very truly
[signed] Tho: Freer

According to Fletcher, Thomas Freer was born at Blaby on 12 December 1766 and became Clerk of the Peace for Leicestershire. For many years (1788–1841) a partner in the precursor of the New Street based Leicester law firm which still bears the family name, he was married with two sons and died on 27 December 1841.77

The Freers continued to keep the stewardship in their family, and on 7 July 1842 the College ‘made constituted ordained and appointed... William Freer of the Borough of Leicester Gentleman our Steward of the Manor of Whetstone... To have hold and enjoy the said Office ... and receive the profits emoluments

77 Fletcher 1887, as n. 56, p. 140. I am grateful to Mr Neil M. de Voil, of Freer Bouskell (Solicitors), 10 New Street, Leicester, for information about the history of this practice.
advantages and appurtenances thereto belonging’.\(^78\) Five days later William Freer acknowledged his appointment and proposed dates for holding a court [171a]:\(^79\)

Leicester July 11. 1842

Dear Sir,

Manor of Whetstone

I beg to thank you for my appointment to be Steward of the Manor of Whetstone, which I have received safe. I am sorry that our assizes are fixed for the 29th & we have also an adjourned Sessions on the 30th, so that it w[ould] be inappropriate for me to attend on either of those days. The latter end of August or beginning of September would suit me very well & if you will be good enough to fix any time therabut I will endeavour to accommodate myself to it. The copy of the Court Rolls in our possession goes as far back as the 4th & 5th Philip & Mary.

It will be advisable to have the original Rolls when we hold the Court[,] I will look into the matter before the Court is held & see whether any other Documents will be wanted.

I am
Dear Sir
Yours faithfully
[signed] William Freer

Shortly afterwards, on 13 August, Freer had occasion to write again from Leicester [171b]:

Dear Sir,

Tuesday the 4th of October next will suit me to hold a Court for the Manor of Whetstone.

I inclose [sic] you Copy of a letter which I have addressed to Mr. Johnson on the subject of his Copyhold.

I have been confined by indisposition or should have replied earlier to your letter of the 30th ult[imo].\(^80\)

I remain
Dear Sir
Yours faithfully
[signed] William Freer

The enclosure mentioned by Freer (his letter to the tenant named Johnson) is quoted here in full as shedding further light both on the steward’s duties themselves and on the apparent efficiency with which he discharged them [171c]:

\(^78\) TCA 73, 18, Court Rolls, unfoliated portion.

\(^79\) It bears the superscription, added by the College, ‘Whetstone Copyhold/ Mr Freer 11/July/42’.

\(^80\) That is, the previous month (July).
Leicester August 1842

Sir,

I am instructed by the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge lords of the Manor of Whetstone to request you to furnish me with some explanation of the circumstances under which you hold Two Tenements and a close of Land containing about 2 acres Copyhold of this manor. I find on examination of the Court Rolls [that] the property was granted in 1777 for 3 lives[,] namely, The late King George the 4th, The late Duke of York and a Mr Wm. Mason Jun[ior]; the two former are dead and I believe the last is also dead, [and] the property has consequently reverted and now belongs to the College[,] I had hoped from some previous communication with you on this subject [that] you would have explained by what means you < [omitted word] > into possession of the property and upon what grounds you now hold it. I trust you will loose no time in complying with the above reasonable request[,] otherwise I have instructions to adopt summary proceedings in the Court of Chancery under the Act of Parliament provided for such cases, and in default of your producing the parties for whose lives the estate was granted and shewing your Title thereto, the Court will make an Order upon you to deliver up possession to the College and you will be put to considerable expense.

I remain

Sir

Your Obed[ient] Serv[ant]
[signed] William Freer
Steward of the above named Manor

To Mr Johnson
Whetstone

William Freer was still steward on 17 May 1860, when he wrote as follows to the College from Leicester [168d]. The top of his letter bears the scribbled reinforcement ‘Mr J.C. Allen is the last [sic] & only life remaining’, and its subject is once again a troublesome copyhold (Fig. 3):

Whetstone Copyhold
Leicester May 17. 1860

Dear Sir

Whetstone

I find on reference to the Court Books that at a special Court Baron & Customary Court held at Whetstone on the 7th February 1845 Before myself as Steward[,] James Allen & Anne his wife surrendered a Copyhold or Customary Messuage or tenement in Whetstone comprising 28 acres & one rood or thereabouts to the intent that the Lords of the said Manor might regrant the same premises to the said James Allen for the term of the natural lives of John Martin [sic], & of John Cooper Allen aged 35 years, son of the said James Allen[,] & of James Allen the Younger aged 33 years[,] another son of the said James Allen[,] according to the custom of this Manor – And the said James Allen was admitted accordingly for the lives of the said John Martin[,] John Cooper Allen & James Allen the Younger[,]
Fig. 3. Letter from William Freer to the College, dated 17 May 1860, concerning a copyhold for lives. (TCA, Box 32, no. 168d. Reproduced by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.)
Allen the Younger aged 33 year
another son of the said John Allen
according to the custom of the Manor and the said James Allen
was admitted accordingly for the love of the said John Martin John Corner
Allen J. C. Allen the Younger

Keeping the premises in repair by the annual rent of 11s. 4d on the

death of either of said the John
Martin J. C. Allen J. C. Allen
as is the Lord of the Manor
3/4 - rent of court and other services
for the Grant whereof the
said James Allen paid £350.

I believe that Mr. John Martin has
been some time dead. I think that
Mr. J. C. Allen is the only lease
remaining I am further
The Rev. R. Martin
Rev. C. W. F. Geer

Cambridge

Fig. 3. Continued
[sic] Keeping the premises in repair & paying the annual rent of 11/- [i.e. 11s] And on the death of either of them the s[ai]d John Martin, J.C. Allen & Ja[me]s Allen the Yo[unge]r to the Lords of the Manor 3/4 [i.e. 3s 4d] – Suit of Court & other services[,] for the Grant whereof the said James Allen paid £350 – I believe that Mr John Martin has been some time dead, I think [sic] that Mr J.C. Allen’s is the only life now remaining.

I am Dear Sir
Yours [?]sin[cerely]
[signed] W. Freer

[To] The Revd. F. Martin
Trin[irly] Coll:
Cambridge

As it happened, the problem of John Martin’s identity was not resolved for some considerable time. Correspondence dated seven years later [191a-c] reveals that Freer and the College were incorrect in assuming him to be a certain John Martin of Whetstone, deceased. In fact, the subject of their enquiries was found to be very much alive: John Martin, son of Richard, was still resident at Marefield in 1867 at the (then) ripe old age of 78. A letter dated 6 September 1879 [221], reporting the admission of James Allen to a copyhold for a fine of £350 and a quit rent of 11s now expired, mentions that the last manorial court had been held in 1845 by ‘Mr Freer’, then steward.

It was this man, identifiable as William Freer of Houghton on the Hill, who signed the record of the last Court Baron in the book. A nephew of Thomas his predecessor, William was also a solicitor, for his will mentions ‘my messuage or tenement... in New Street in the Borough of Leicester and also all that building lately erected by me adjoining ... and now used as Law Offices by Messrs Freer Reeve and Blunt’. He was a partner from 1823 until his death, living for four years at 10 New Street. Thomas’s son Edward Major Freer, and William Jesse Freer (a great-grandson of Thomas and Anna Maria who appear in Chart 3), were also partners between 1835–45 and 1876–1927 respectively. Born in Birmingham in 1801, William Freer died on 2 October 1873, bringing to an end a formal family association with Trinity College that had lasted more than a hundred years.

POSTSCRIPT

Trinity remained a major landowner in Whetstone in the early twentieth century; but it is with the last entry in the index to Box 32 cited above, not the twilight history of the manor, that this article must conclude. My deliberate focus on the index rather than on the documents themselves may sometimes have led to the practice frowned upon by the anonymous correspondent, ‘Antiquarius’, in the

81 ROLLR, Will Register 1873, p. 732.
82 Ex info Mr de VoiL, as n. 77.
83 See Fletcher 1887, as n. 56, p. 144, for this and other biographical details.
Gentleman’s Magazine for November 1829: I have in places tended ‘to decipher, transcribe, and to pile document upon document, [and] extract upon extract’ from the index rather than adopt in every case the ‘higher views’ of the ‘judicious Antiquary’ who should prefer ‘to draw strong conclusions out of minute facts’. But I trust the end – to publish as much of the index-card catalogue’s substance as possible – has justified the means.

APPENDIX: SOME NOTES ON THE COURT ROLLS IN TCA 73, 18

1557 (TCA 73, 18, fol.1r-v). The ‘Visus Franci plegii cu[m] Cur’ Baron’ Thomae Allen Clerici’, held on 8 November. The homage comprised William Ward; John Webster; Robert Botfish; William Thornton; Richard Shelton; Thomas G[oustre]; Alexander Shene; Richard Maw; William [illegible]; Thomas Norman; William Botfish; John Lytnam; Michael Young; Richard Young.

1562 (TCA 73, 18, fol.2r-v). The ‘Vis’ Franc’ pleg’ cum Curia Venerabilis Viri Roberti Beaumont’, held on 17 July. The homage comprised William Thornton; John Long; William Botfish; Robert Stretton; Thomas Goustre; Richard Wright; William Jarvis; John Bell; William Oswyn; Alexander Shene; Richard Stretton; Richard Moore; John Webster; William Winterton; Thomas Norman; John Lytnam; Thomas Kenneder; Robert Botfish; Francis Foster; Thomas Howder.

1564 (TCA 73, 18, fol.5r-v). The ‘Whetston’ cu[m] Blayle ¶ Curia’ Baron’ of Robert Beaumont, held on 18 May. The homage comprised William Thornton; William Botfish junior; William ‘Jervyce’; William Oswyn; Thomas ‘Gosetree’; Francis Denshire; Thomas Norman; Richard Stretton; John Bell; Alexander Shene junior; Richard More; John Webster; John Lytnam; Michael Young; Robert Stretton; Francis Foster; Robert Botfish.

1566 (TCA 73, 18, fol.6v). This ‘Vis’ franc’ pleg’” was held on 2 September.

1591 (TCA 73, 18, fol.8v). This ‘Curia Baron’, held on 13 April, is the first recorded here to include members of the Allen family in the jury. (Christopher heads the list, and Richard also appears.)

1616 (TCA 73, 18, fol.10r-11v). ‘Curia Baron’ held on 9 August. (Homage includes both Allens named above.)

1664, 1666 (TCA 73, 18, fol.12v and 17r), ‘Curia Baron’ held on 9 August and 2 February, respectively. (Edward and Christopher Allen and John Bent were jurors at the first, and the two Allens were joined by another, Jervis Allen, at the second.)

1739 (TCA 73, 18, fol.18v). At this ‘Court Baron and Customary Court’, held on 15 October, John Freer and Richard Clay were sworn ‘The Homage of the Lords.’ (There is no list of jurors.)

1758 (TCA 73, 18, fol.19v). As before, this ‘Court Baron’, held on 18 July, produced no list of jurors; but John Freer was not one of the two men sworn.

1777 (TCA 73, 18, fol.25r). At this ‘Special Court Baron’, the only jurors listed are Thomas and James Allen, and Christopher Neale.

1786, 1815 (TCA 73, 18, unfoliated portion). At the first, John Edward Carter, gentleman, was deputy steward; at the second, a ‘Special Court Baron and Customary Court’ held ‘before Thomas Freer Gentleman Deputy Steward there’, and ending with an excellent specimen of Freer’s signature, Mr James Allen and Mr John Martin were sworn homage.

**NOTE ON THE GENEALOGICAL CHARTS**

The three genealogical charts are intended solely to clarify some of the key people and relationships discussed in the text. They are therefore illustrative rather than exhaustive, and include mainly those individuals who can be indentified if not with absolute certainty, then at least beyond reasonable doubt. (In Charts 1 and 2, the two queried Allen descents marked with a dashed line are probable and evidence-based, but currently unproven.) Hence not everyone named in the text is charted, and important *lacunae* remain pending further research. Space does not permit detailed references to sources, but all data provided (which is kept to a bare minimum) can be assumed to have been taken from sources used for the article. The main sources for the charts, apart from the Trinity records themselves, are ROLLR wills (all identified in footnotes) and Church of England parish registers. In addition, Chart 1 bases the first three generations of Allens on the family’s pedigree in *Visitation of the County of Leicestershire*, as n.1, p.109, and the later part of Chart 3 draws extensively on the printed Freer pedigree in Fletcher 1887, as n.56, pp.139–44. Some key names are capitalized in the charts: this is to point up the links between branches of the Allen family (Charts 1 and 2) and identify the three Freers named as tenant, deputy steward and steward (Chart 3), respectively.

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Leicester, Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Finally, for the information on those Freers who were practising lawyers, I am grateful to Mr Neil M. de Voil, of Freer Bouskell (Solicitors), 10 New Street, Leicester.

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