

Stonehouse Court has been regarded as rebuilt in 1601 on the site of the previous manor house. However, recent examination of a bundle of legal documents in Gloucestershire Archives, reference D445/L9, has suggested that the earlier building may have been sited nearer the church.



View from the canal lawn gate by the church north towards Stonehouse Court. The proposed site of the Old Hall is through the trees to the right.

The Old Hall farmhouse

Thomas Smith the younger of Stonehouse Court, lord of the manor, died in 1686, leaving the manor to be shared between his two daughters, Mary Smith and Fowler Smith. They had different mothers, his second wife Elizabeth Smith,

mother of Fowler, having a life interest in the Court and its immediate surroundings. In 1696 Mary Smith married John Ball, and the Balls brought a case against Elizabeth Smith to challenge her administration on behalf of her daughter, Fowler Smith, who died in 1701. John Ball bought Fowler Smith's share of the manor estate from the Smiths in 1704. Elizabeth Smith probably kept her life interest until she died in 1721.

The examination of Elizabeth Smith's activities shows that she lived mainly in Haresfield, choosing to let the 1601 house out to a succession of gentlemen who were not expected to run the manor farm. She therefore repaired the 'tenement called the Old Hall' from 1687 onwards as a farmhouse for John Apperley and his family. Accounts for repairs to the 'farmhouse' include lime plastering with hair and wool, thatching, nails for both laths and stone [tiles], windows and mason's work, suggesting a mix of timber framing and stone. If this was the old manor house, it had perhaps been used as workers' housing or barns since 1601.

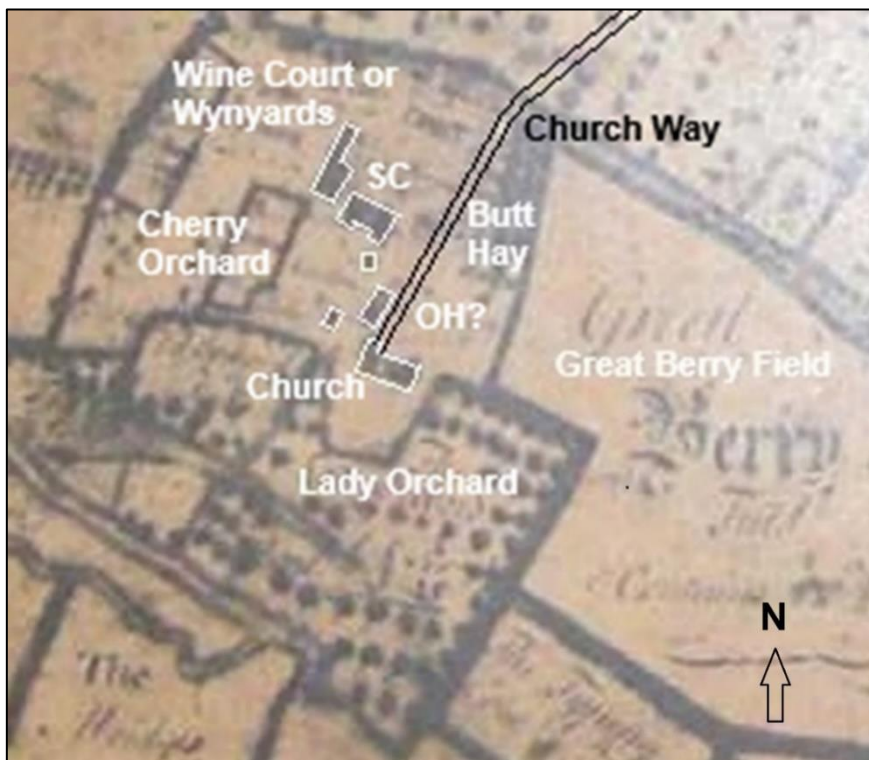
John Apperley occupied this farmhouse until about 1714, when he moved to King's Stanley. However, his son Samuel Apperley appears to have moved into the Court, perhaps after the death of Elizabeth Smith in 1721. He was both farmer and caretaker for the Ball family, who were based in London, but did visit Stonehouse. During the legal case 1702-10 the court had appointed Walter Marshall, gentleman and attorney of Eastington, as estate manager, 'attending in London very many times about the same'. John Ball junior, gentleman of London, captain in the first foot guards, was buried in Stonehouse in 1729, 'much lamented'.

It is likely that from about 1721 the Old Hall was again used to house estate workers. Robert Ball lived at Ebworth House in Painswick, leaving management of the Stonehouse estate to John Andrews, gentleman of Haywardsend. Robert's marriage

settlement of 1751 explained that this was because ‘the capital message to [Stonehouse manor] being an old farm house [apparently his opinion of the Court] the same hath been usually let with the lands belonging to the farm, and a small apartment therein hath only been reserved to the landlord’. Most of the Court was let to Mary Apperley, widow of Samuel (died 1740), who lived there with her farmer son, another Samuel Apperley, until her death in 1771. The apartment was sometimes let out, although Robert Ball may have used it more in his later years: he had children baptised in Stonehouse in the 1760s and was himself buried there in 1766. William Freeman was the farmer 1772-77, when William King took the tenancy. In 1784 Thomas White of Paganhill bought the manor from Robert Ball’s widow Mary, still with William King in the Court as tenant of both mansion and farmhouse.

Where was the Old Hall?

It might be thought that the older farmhouse was on the site of the present Court Farm house, to the west of Stonehouse Court. However, the legal accounts state that Elizabeth Smith let to various gentlemen, with the 1601 house, the dairy house, outhouses and stable, gardens, Cherry Orchard and the Wynyards. John Apperley, on the other hand, held the Old Hall, other barns and stables, Butt Hay, Lady Orchard and Great Berry Field, among other lands. These fields are all shown on a map of the manor estate made for Levi Ball in about 1729. The group of buildings west of Stonehouse Court probably contained the stables and outhouses let with it.



Map of Stonehouse manor estate belonging to Levi Ball, c1729: SHG collection, courtesy of Stonehouse Court Hotel

SC = Stonehouse Court and outbuildings, OH = proposed Old Hall and outbuildings

Early medieval churches and the home of their founder or patron often stood close together, whereas the 1601 house may have been deliberately sited further away from the church, commanding a new vista to the north. The Old Hall may be a substantial building shown near the church in 1729, with associated outbuildings, on land represented by plot 744 on the tithe map of 1839. It faced onto the former line of the Church Way, a medieval route linking church and village, and was surrounded by the pieces of land let to John Apperley when he was the tenant of the old farmhouse. This building is shown on a plan of the proposed canal in 1775, and it or one of its outbuildings may be glimpsed on an engraving of the canal in 1781.



This engraving of 1781 shows part of a building near the church, which may be part of the Old Hall, or one of its outhouses.

SHG collection

The proposed Old Hall building is still shown on John Elliott's map of 1803 but without any outhouses. A drawing made in 1807 shows it between Stonehouse Court and the church. The gable on the

north end has a large arched opening, suggesting that Thomas White had converted it into a coach house and stables. He built the present Court Farm house, and the barn now the Apple Store, for William King by about 1795, demolishing the stables shown in 1729, so would have wanted to replace them. He then lived at the Court until he died in 1801, followed by his son Thomas Little White until his death in 1812.

Stonehouse Court from the north, 1807. The proposed Old Hall is between the Court and the church.

Abstracts...Respecting the County of Gloucester by T.D.Fosbrooke

The proposed Old Hall building had been reduced to a smaller coach house and stable by the time of the 1839 tithe map. This in its turn had been succeeded by a small outhouse on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map.



Sources of information: GA = [Archives | Gloucestershire Archives](#)

Will of Thomas Smith 1686, National Archives PROB 11/384/52

Legal case Ball v Smith 1696-1710, GA D445/L9

Map of Stonehouse manor made for Levi Ball c1729, SHG collection, courtesy of Stonehouse Court Hotel

Plan of proposed canal c1775, GA D1278/P/3

Map of Stonehouse by John Elliott 1803, survey 1804, GA D1347 maps, P263/MI9

Deeds and accounts of Stonehouse manor, GA D445/T13, T14, T15, T17, T18, E5, E7

Fosbrooke, T.D., *Abstracts of Records and Manuscripts Respecting the County of Gloucester, Formed into a History* (2 vols., Gloucester, 1807)

Will of Thomas Little White 1812, National Archives PROB 11/1533/325

Stonehouse tithe award 1839, apportionment at [GRO Tithe Search \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](#): map, and Ordnance Survey maps, at <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=glos>