

Wraxall Manor

Wraxall

Dorset



50, BLACKBOY ROAD, EXETER, DEVON EX4 6TB

t 01392 435728

e keystonehb@aol.com

www.keystone-historic-buildings.com

WRAXALL MANOR

WRAXALL

DORSET

Produced for

Camilla Cobham

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Brief	p.1
Setting	p.2
Online Notes and Gleanings	p.4
Building Materials	p.13
Layout	p.14
Exterior	p.16
Phase 1: The 16th century West Range	p.29
Dating and Discussion	p.30
Phase 2: A mid 17th century rebuild for William Lawrence	p.31
Dating and Discussion	p.36
Phase 3: The c.1905 refurbishment for William Gould Busk	p.34
Statement of Significance	p.44
Acknowledgements	p.46
Conditions and Limitations	p.46

WRAXALL MANOR

WRAXALL

DORSET

OS Ref. ST 56640 01139

Report K936

Grade 2* listed building – HE ref. 1302719

The Brief

Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants are contracted by Camilla Cobham, the owner, to provide an assessment of the listed manor house from an historic and archaeological point of view. The report comprises a description of the fabric of the building, its setting, layout, features, dating and development, followed by a Statement of Historic Significance. It is accompanied by a photographic record.

The site survey was entirely non-invasive so it is likely that future building works will uncover historic information which may refine, or even alter, the conclusions contained in this report.



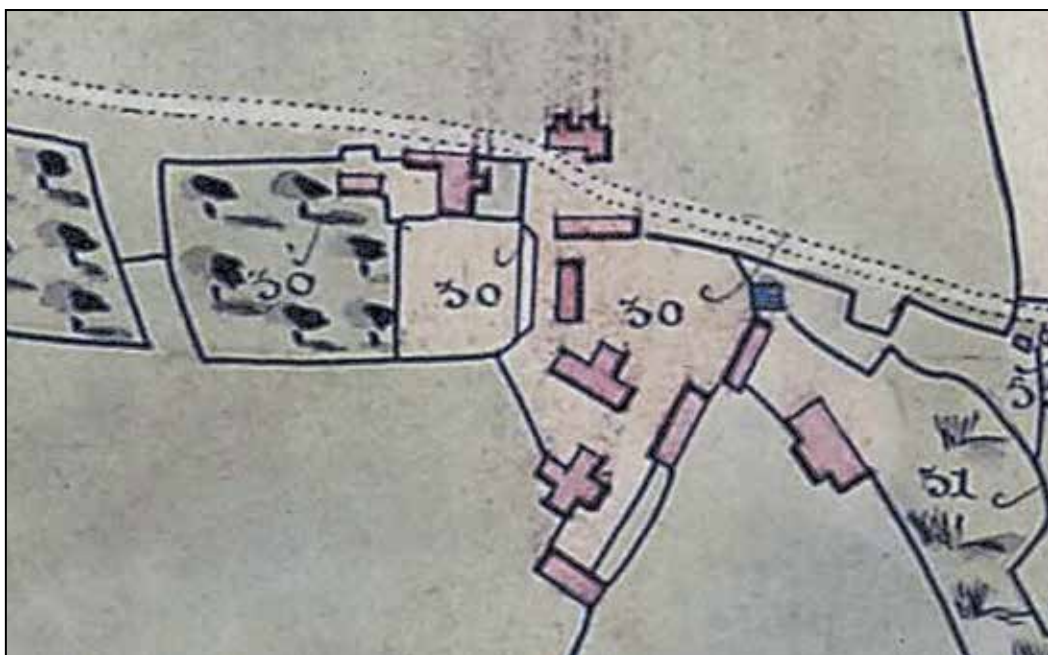
1. The east front of Wraxall Manor.

SETTING

The small west Dorset parish of Wraxall is situated about half way between Crewkerne and Dorchester, and the nearest market town is Beaminster, approx. 11k to the west. The parish consists of two hamlets, High Wraxall (which includes Wraxall Manor, and Lower Wraxall (which includes the church of St Mary). They both occupy a small valley in the chalk hills of the Dorset Downs. Higher Wraxall is on the springline and a stream flows southeastwards from it to Lower Wraxall.

Wraxall Manor is built in the bottom of the small valley with the land rising relatively steeply to the northwest, and more gently to the southeast and southwest. The ranges of the manor steading are built on a rough northeast-southwest or northwest-southeast axis, but, for the sake of simplicity, these are described in this report according to the cardinal compass points. Thus the northeast front of the house is described as the east front, with the uphill side of house to the north, the pleasure garden to the south, and rear to the west.

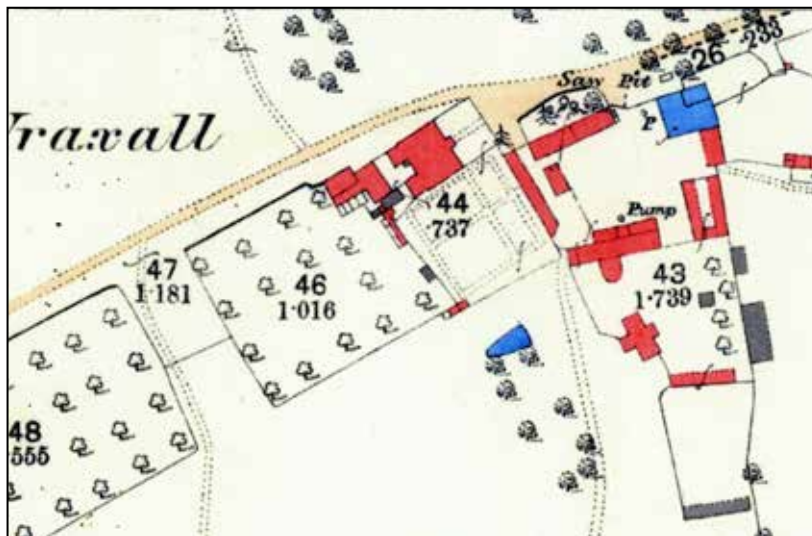
The earliest of the known historic maps produced at a scale large enough to identify individual buildings is the parish tithe map of 1840 (Fig.2). It shows the house to northwest of a large farmyard with its traditional farm buildings. The main block of the house is shown at the east end with an over-sized porch projecting forward from the east front onto the small front garden. The map also shows a narrow rear block projecting westwards from the northwest corner, alongside the lane. A detached rear (west) block is shown as an east-west range. This must be the old west range which still remains but on a north-south axis. The tithe maps are of variable quality and a number include surveyor's errors when scrutinised in detail. The 1840 apportionment or award which accompanies the map records that the owner and occupier of Wraxall Manor was then John Stein, Esq. Plot 30 is described as 'Wraxall Farm House, Barton, Garden, Orchard and premises'. Plot 31 is 'Willow Beds and Garden'.



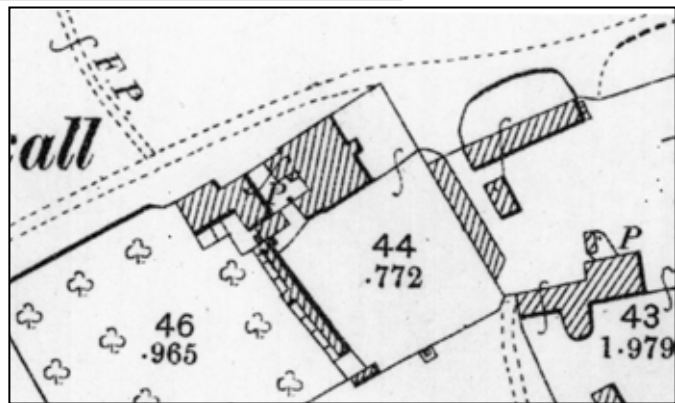
2. *The Wraxall Manor steading on the parish tithe map of 1840.*

The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1887-8 (Fig.3) is clearly a more carefully surveyed map. It shows the main block with rear wings projecting westward from the north and south. The detached west range is depicted correctly on a north-south axis, but not extending quite as far south as it does today. The second edition OS map of 1901-2 (Fig.4) is very similar to the first in terms of the house, although the later map shows a pump between the main house and the detached west range.

The farm buildings were outside the scope of this report but the listed Grade 2 stable and cartshed/coach house (HE ref. I323857) is important to the setting of the manor house. The house faces east onto a lane-side yard with the pretentious stable block on the south side (Fig.5), built in the early 19th century, maybe by John Stein, and altered in the late 19th century (according to the listing), but maybe early 20th century for George Gould Busk.



3. *Wraxall Manor on the first edition OS map, surveyed in 1887 and published in 1888.*
4. *Wraxall Manor on the first edition OS map, revised in 1901 and published in 1902.*
5. *The stable block from the northwest.*



ONLINE NOTES AND GLEANINGS

Documentary research was not part of the brief, beyond the presentation of historic maps that are available online. This was the case because of the present Covid-19 pandemic circumstances which has led to the closure of all archives including the Dorset History Centre. The following account is simply a list of results of internet searches, with some commentary by Keystone and e-mail communication with the secretary of the Lutyens Trust. It must not be regarded as a definitive documentary history of the property, but it has been helpful to dispel some myths and the results have contributed to a better understanding of the house and its immediate environs.

Early Manorial History

Wraxall was a Domesday manor known as Brocheshale.

<http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/dorset3.html>

No references were discovered in passing from 1086 until c.1600 since the online search concentrated on those names associated with the standing building.

The Lawrence Family and Wraxall Manor in the 17th century

Wraxall Manor House, 1,050 yards N.W. of the church, is of two storeys with attics; the walls are of rubble ashlar-faced and the roofs are slate-covered. It was built early in the 17th century probably by William Lawrence, together with a small detached block to the S.W. The house has been much altered internally in recent times when the modern wing was built joining the two blocks. The N.E. front (Plate 116) is symmetrically designed of four gabled bays with a gabled two-storeyed porch in the middle. The windows are stone-mullioned and have labels; those of the two main floors are each of four transomed lights. The gables are each crowned with a single chimney-shaft. The porch has an outer archway with moulded jambs and four-centred head; the inner doorway is similar. The upper storey has a three-light window with a label and the gable is finished with a pinnacle. The S.E. and N.W. ends have each two gables and a number of windows of similar character to those in front. Inside the building, the staircase-hall is entered by a high stone arch with a round head moulded on the N.E. face. There are a number of original stone fireplaces with moulded or chamfered jambs and heads. One bedroom is lined with early 18th-century panelling. The small S.W. block, called the Chapel, retains a restored three-light window with a label. The roof is of six bays; the arched braces of the easternmost trusses are moulded. The modern loggia on the S.W. side of the main block is constructed of moulded ceiling-beams from the house.

RCHME (1952) *Dorset; A Survey and Inventory. Volume 1 – The West.* p.269

ST 50 SE 3/206

WRAXALL, HIGHER WRAXALL *Wraxall Manor, with attached front walls, piers, gates*

4.12.57

GV II*

Manor House, with grounds. Early C17, probably by William Lawrence. Early C20 service range to rear of main block, and linking with formerly detached south-west block. Ashlar stone walls, slate roofs, with stone gable-copings. c.C17 stone stacks with moulded cornices on gable ends of the main parallel ridges. 4 stone stacks, C17, one on each of the 4 front gables. Double-depth house, with central through-hall. Rear staircase-hall remodelled early C20. Two storeys and attics. 4 bay front, with 2-storey porch at centre, squeezed between bays 2 and 3. Entrance front: 4-light hollow- chamfered stone mullions, transomed and with straight heads. Separate, volumed labels to all windows. Mixture of iron and C20 metal casements with rectangular leaded lights. Each gable has a blocked 2-light stone mullion with separate label over. Two storey porch at centre, with stone gable-coping, obelisk finial and slate roof. Outer entrance has moulded jambs and a 4-centred head. Inner doorway has moulded jambs and same head. Plank-and-muntin door, studded. Gable-ends. North wall has blocked mullions with four-centred heads of 2-, 3-, and- 4-lights. South wall has 4- light mullions with transoms throughout, 2-light in gables. Service-range joining to south-west block is of 4 bays of compatible early C20 design: 2- and 3-light stone mullions with metal casements and lead lights. Separate labels, South-west block, at right-angles to road, same materials, stone stacks at gable end to garden and facing house. 2 storeys, 3- and 4-light stone mullions with renewed casements. Four-centred heads to mullions facing road. Service-door, to south-west, recess-panelled, C19. Interior: C17 stone fireplaces with moulded jambs and depressed- arch heads in ground floor and first floor rooms, some set diagonally. Left front room has Siena and white marble fireplace in neo-Classical style, with urn impostes and central puliti. Interior very much refashioned in C19 and C20, with recess-panelling throughout. Rear stair-well and stair redesigned . early C20. Some window seats and panelling survive in main house. The south- west block has a roof of 6 bays, with moulded arch-brace trusses, and heavy purlins, C16. RCHM refers to the block as "The Chapel". Attached front walls, gate-piers and gates, 15 metres by 18 metres, rubble-stone and stone-coped. Low front walls with iron railings on top. Square stone gate-piers with pyramid capstones and large ball-finials. Wrought-iron gate, C18-C19.

(RCHM Dorset I, p269(2))

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1302719>

[In the church] There are references and monuments to the Lawrence family dating from the 17th century when the family was lord of the manor.

*Higher Wraxall is set in a valley of its own up in the hills; there are a few cottages, a farm and Wraxall Manor House. This fine house was built in the early 17th century, probably by William Lawrence. The regular stone-built front has four gables, large mullioned windows and a centre projecting porch that has a smaller and lower gable. William Lawrence was an eminent lawyer during the Civil War and later, after a disagreement with his wife whom he thought had been dishonest towards him, he wrote a book: *A Vindication of Marriage by the Moral Law of God*; in the same volume he argued the case for the Duke of Monmouth's claim to the succession.*

Stewart Boyd of Wraxall comments: "although it is true that John Aubrey (1621-1597[sic]) says it was written on disaffection from his wife, Martha Sydenham of Wynford Eagle, the book appeared several years after her death. Aubrey's story may be true, but seems unlikely." <https://dorset-ancestors.com/?p=2313>

History: Wraxall Manor as it is today is believed to date from circa 1630 although the manor itself is mentioned in the Domesday Book where Wraxall is known as Brocheshale. The owner at that time was William Lawrence who inscribed his name on an internal mullion and was a distinguished Parliamentarian in the time of Cromwell. Other owners have included John Stein who was a member of the Stein family of Whisky distillers and William Busk who established a cattle ranch in Texas and founded the remote town of Gouldbusk which still exists. During World War II the house was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence and for a time occupied by 62 Commando who were known as the Small Scale Raiding Force, later the SAS. The house is also mentioned in Pevsner who describes it as being "an orderly and harmonious stone house of circa 1630, quite large but quite without idiosyncrasies."

On-line Savills Sales Particulars 2019

Lawrence, William (c. 1613–1682), lawyer, was the elder son in a family of eight—two sons and six daughters—born to William Lawrence (1579–1640) of Wraxall, Dorset, and Elizabeth (d. 1672), daughter of William Gibbs, bencher of the Middle Temple, of South Perrott, Dorset. Though Lawrence's father, like others of the family, was merely a tenant on the Stawell estates and formally denied gentry status by the heralds, he took the lead in exposing foul abuses in the county gaol to the privy council. Lawrence matriculated as a gentleman commoner from Trinity College, Oxford, in 1631, spending three years 'under a careful tutor' (Wood, Ath. Oxon., 62). He was admitted to his grandfather's inn in 1634, and under his father's will he was to complete his studies in the common law on a generous allowance of £60 a year. Lawrence was called to the bar in 1641 and remained in London during the civil war, his mother retaining control of Wraxall until he was thirty-one. She contributed supplies and money to the parliamentary cause, with which Lawrence identified himself by his marriage in 1649 to Martha (b. 1622), daughter of William Sydenham, from a local branch of the Somerset magnate family. Her five brothers had all been in arms for parliament. Lawrence's landlord, Sir John Stawell, on the other hand, was a sufficiently obstinate cavalier to incur the forfeiture of his entire estate, and Lawrence bought the Stawell moiety of Wraxall from the Rump. As a safe man he was appointed to the county bench under the Commonwealth, and to a Dorset commission for the relief of poor prisoners. His brother-in-law Colonel William Sydenham, reporting from the council of state on 24 October 1653, recommended him as a replacement for one of the English judges who introduced an unprecedented degree of efficiency into the Scottish judicial system. From Edinburgh he conducted a pamphlet war with Stawell over the validity of his purchase. Sydenham had Lawrence elected for the Isle of Wight in 1656 and for one of the boroughs in 1658, but he made no mark in either parliament. Compromised by Sydenham's collusion with the military junta in 1659, at the Restoration Lawrence quietly resumed his practice at the English bar as 'a counsellor of note' (Wood, Ath. Oxon., 62), though he did not return to chambers and never became a bencher. As bailiff of

Wraxall he attended Stawell's grandiose funeral in 1662. Lawrence's marriage broke up in 1669 'upon a discontent arising from his wife, ... whom he esteemed disloyal to him' (*ibid.*, 62). 'Mrs Lawrence', wrote a local magistrate, 'seems confident that her husband will not be brought to anything but a starving allowance' (Alnwick Castle MS 533, fol. 51). The episode inspired in him an interest in the marriage laws, which the collapse of episcopal censorship eventually allowed him to pursue in print in three substantial volumes. A believer in hereditary succession as against the inconveniences of an elective monarchy, he took up a strictly constitutional attitude towards the succession. The duke of York had forfeited his right to the throne by his conversion to Roman Catholicism. In these circumstances Charles II would have been justified in divorcing his blameless but barren queen, leaving him free to produce an unchallengeable heir. But Lawrence took account of the king's obstinacy over this issue, and adopted the unorthodox position that 'carnal knowledge and not ceremonies make marriage' (W. Lawrence, *Marriage by the Law of God Vindicated*, 1680, 113). This was very acceptable to those inclined to support the claims of the duke of Monmouth, the king's eldest bastard. Lawrence signed his will on 6 March 1682, and died at Bedfont, Middlesex, on the road to London twelve days later; he was buried in Bedfont. The will was proved on 17 March 1683. A memorial, bearing some verses of his own composition, but with an impossible date of death, was erected in the chancel at Wraxall. His only child, William, went bankrupt about 1712 and died in a debtors' gaol.

'A man of parts and considerable reading' (Wood, *Ath. Oxon.*, 62), Lawrence was able to dismiss most of the arguments against his position as the work of papists or bishops, whom he disliked just as much. It cannot be said that he tackled the practical difficulties, and interest in his work lapsed when it lost topical relevance with the execution of Monmouth in 1685.

Sources

- J. Hutchins, *The history and antiquities of the county of Dorset*, 3rd edn, ed. W. Shipp and J. W. Hodson (1863), 201–3
- A. Wood, 2 vols. (1691–2); 2nd edn (1721); new edn, ed. P. Bliss, 4 vols. (1813–20); repr. (1967) and (1969) Wood, *Ath. Oxon.*, new edn, 4.62–3
- letter-book of Sir John Fitzjames, 1668–70, Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, Alnwick Castle MS 533, fols. 44–51
- F. A. Crisp, *Fragmenta genealogica*, 13 (1909), 135
- G. Donaldson, *Scotland: James V to James VII* (1965), vol. 3 of *The Edinburgh history of Scotland* (1965–75), 348
- G. K. Fortescue and others, eds., *Catalogue of the pamphlets, books, newspapers, and manuscripts relating to the civil war, the Commonwealth, and Restoration*, collected by George Thomason, 1640–1661, 2 (1908), 91, 101, 114
- will, National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Record Office, London TNA: PRO, PROB 11184, fol. 277 [William Lawrence, father, 1638]
- C. T. Martin, ed., *Minutes of parliament of the Middle Temple*, 4 vols. (1904–5), vol. 2, p. 894
- G. E. Aylmer, *The state's servants: the civil service of the English republic, 1649–1660* (1973), 135
- will, National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Record Office, London TNA: PRO, PROB 11372, fol. 279
- Quarter sessions order and minute book, 1625–37*, Dorset Record Office, Dorchester Dorset RO, QSM 111 [Sherborne, April 1637; Bridport, October, 1637]
- C. H. Mayo, ed., *The minute books of the Dorset standing committee* (1902), 518

H. Nenner, *The right to be king (1995)*

Archives

Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, papers

Dorset Record Office, Dorchester Dorset RO, QSM 111

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – available on-line if subscribed.

(A Summary from Ford's book). The lawyer, William Lawrence (junior), was a supporter of the parliamentary cause and dispatched to Scotland in 1653, during the Interregnum, where he diligently, sought to align Scottish and English law according to Parliament. However, what is interesting is that Ford's account includes more information about his, and his father's involvement with Wraxall Manor. His father, William the elder, had been granted a lease on 'a farm at Wraxal'l – presumably the manor - in the early 17th century by Sir John Stowell (aka Stowell) who was one of the leading Royalists in Dorset. During the Civil Wars Sir John was a royalist commander and therefore forfeited his estate, although there was a legal process by which fines could be paid and estates returned. However, in 1651, William junior, had bought the freehold of the manor and, whilst Stowell recovered much of his estate, William, the lawyer fought Stowell in the courts over ownership of Wraxall Manor, and won, not only because he was an eminent lawyer, but also had the support of the English Parliament.

John D. Ford (2007) *Law and opinion in 17th century Scotland* – available on-line.

John Stein at Wraxall Manor in the first half of the 19th century

John Stein, Esquire, (1775-1854) is recorded as owner and resident in the tithe award of 1840 (see above) and the census of 1841. The recent sales particulars describe him as 'a member of the Stein family of Whisky distillers'. He could be connected, but Keystone's internet searches found only John Steins working with whiskey at this time, unsurprisingly, in Scotland. Our research found another John Stein, Esq, and another legal man who was appointed Sheriff of Dorset in 1836 (according to the Quarterly Sessions Order Books available on Ancestry.com). Earlier he was apparently living at High Cliff one of the finest Georgian houses in Lyme Regis between 1829-39. He is described as shipbuilder and High Sherriff of Dorset in 1829. He sold High Cliff and its grounds in 1839, retaining Cliff Lodge for his mother-in-law, Monique Bellingham.

<https://www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk/>

The 1851 census records Stein living in Chalmington House in Cattistock, apparently owner of a modest but comfortable estate (if the Dorset properties listed in surveys belonging to him included in the Dorset History Centre indexes and other archives are anything to go by).

Wraxall Manor in the second half of the 19th century

All we can find are a couple of newspaper entries from British Newspapers online
An anonymous author returns to Wraxall (and other places) after a long absence, refers to its having been 'one of the roughest villages in Dorset' in his childhood, but now respectable. Refers to passing 'the old house of John Stein Esq and found it not very much altered under the present Colonel Digby'
'Miscellaneous Jottings' Bridport News - Friday 15 November 1878

HIGHER WRAXALL FARM. DORSET, Three Miles from Maiden Newton. PRELIMINARY NOTICE most IMPORTANT and EXTENSIVE FARM STOCK BALE, comprising the DORSET HORN BREEDING FLOCK of 370 EWES and CHILVER LAMBS; First-class HERD of 106 CROSS-BRED DAIRY COWS, HEIFERS, and YEARLINGS and including several PURE-BRED DEVONS ; 9 WORKING CART HORSES and COLTS ; 150 PIGS ; Large Assortment of Modern FARM IMPLEMENTS and MACHINERY ; DAIRY UTENSILS ; CONTENTS of BLACKSMITH'S SHOP; and 60 CIDER CASKS ; together with the 5 RICKS of PASTURE HAY and 2 RICKS of STRAW, with liberty of removal; and FEED of 60 ACRES PRIME SWEDES. In Lots, and RUN of the LAND
Western Chronicle - Friday 25 October 1895

William Gould Busk Esq. at Wraxall Manor in the early 20th century

Ancestry.com gives us the dates of William Gould Busk (1860–1922) whose occupation of Wraxall Manor left a significant impression on the house and gardens.

He had an interesting career. He was the youngest son of Edward Thomas Buck Esq. (no woman mentioned) JP of Fords Grove, Middlesex. He was educated at Eton and Magdalen College, Oxford. He married [his second cousin from Hertfordshire] Margaret Alice Buck in 1889. By 1919 he was a magistrate living at Wraxall Manor

Edward Walford (1919) The County Families of the United Kingdom; or, royal, Manual of the titled and untitled aristocracy of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland – 59th edition). Available on-line.

Ancestry.com then relates how, in c.1886, he bought the Starkweather ranch in what is now Gouldbusk in Texas. In 1890 their son Joseph was born in Iwerne Minster. According to shipping records he undertook a return journey between Liverpool and New York in 1891. Between 1892-96 he is recorded residing in Montague Square, Paddington. He moved around. In 1900 he is described as ranch owner, residing in Texas; also living in Berkshire in the same year. Significantly in 1903 he subdivided his ranch into smaller farms and sold them off [we assume enjoying profit]. Ancestry.com records the return from another transatlantic visit in 1907, but their earliest record of George Busk at Wraxall is the 1911 census where he was 'living on own means', and without his wife that night (Fig.6). In 1915 & 1916 the Busks are

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911									
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to head of family	AGE	SEX	EDUCATION	INDUSTRY or OCCUPATION of person and the parent and spouse	SUBSTANCE of any farms	APPROXIMATE VALUE of any farms	RESIDENCE	RESIDENCE
William Goodrich	Head	58	Male	None	Retired			Wrexham	
Margaret Goodrich	Wife	20	Female	None				Wrexham	
George Goodrich	Son	30	Male	None				Wrexham	
Emily Goodrich	Daughter	24	Female	None				Wrexham	
Henry Goodrich	Son	22	Male	None				Wrexham	
Elizabeth Goodrich	Daughter	20	Female	None				Wrexham	
John Goodrich	Son	18	Male	None				Wrexham	

6. The 1911 census return for Wrexham Manor.

documented at Wrexham Manor. In 1920 George's will was lodged in Texas. He died in 1922 at Wrexham Manor, leaving £42,000 to his wife and three sons after being buried in Wrexham churchyard

Margaret Busk apparently stayed on at Wrexham Manor. She was still there in 1931, but living elsewhere by 1939

Mrs Busk who has now let all her farms was selling the live and dead farmstock of the home farm

Western Gazette - Friday 04 September 1931

During World War II the house was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence and for a time occupied by 62 Commando who were known as the Small Scale Raiding Force, later the SAS. On-line Savills Sales Particulars 2019

Peter Inchbald and others at Wrexham Manor in the mid and late 20th century

The Savill's sale particulars state: 'The interior was remodelled in about 1905, possibly by the young Edward [sic] Lutyens. Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944) is not mentioned in the list description, or in the Pevsner account of the building. While the early 20th century phase has some elements of the Arts and Crafts influence, there is little in the plain interior that suggests his hand as designer. The possible source of the attribution is the novelist, painter, designer and sculptor, Peter Inchbald (1919-2004). He lived in the house, which was then associated with a small estate, in the late 1940s with his extended family and wrote about it in his autobiography, 'Jack of all Trades and his Family' (2013), which was completed and tidied up by his son after his death.

Inchbald's account states: 'In plan the house had a sort of waist where Lutyens had linked its back parts to an outbuilding, so discreetly it is far from obvious, and on the south-eastern, garden front the linking bit is set back to form a recess, or bay, where once, it is said, stood a chapel' (2013, 161).

Inchbald also claims that John Milton stayed at the house in the 17th century, even identifying a room as one he slept in, and that the poet's sonnet, No X, 'to Mr Lawrence' beginning 'Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son', was written to his host. In fact the sonnet was probably written to one of sons of Henry Lawrence (1600–1664) of Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire, a family with no known connection to Wraxall Manor (see below). While it may be tempting to think that Inchbald had access to oral or some written history about the changes that had taken place to the house not very long before his father bought it, on balance Keystone is currently not persuaded that Lutyens was the architect of the early 20th century alterations, although we have asked the Lutyens Trust if they have any information about a connection with this celebrated architect. Writing in an email on 12.06 2020 Rebecca Lilley Trust Secretary confirms that the Trust have no information connecting Lutyens to Wraxall Manor adding 'One of my colleagues has got back to me and says that he visited the property last year and although it does have some Arts and Crafts work in it, he is sure that it is not of Lutyens's design'.

According to Ancestry.com Major Pierre Elliot Inchbald was awarded the Military Cross (M.C.) He lived at Wraxall Manor, Wraxall, Dorset, England. He had three children; Gillain Elizabeth, Peter Bingham and Judy. Major Inchbald was residing in London in 1939 (electoral registers) but died in Dorset 1958. Peter Inchbald, author and sculptor, was born in Marylebone in 1919 a year after his father was married.

Born into privilege, Peter Inchbald was an intellectual who spent the latter part of World War II as an Army Captain and the sole white man for miles around in the foothills of the Karakorums and the Himalaya. He became a minor artist of the postwar era before becoming an equally minor industrialist who helped bring modern design to the silverware and cutlery trade. Later in life he published a series of detective stories. There are really three books in here. The first is a personal memoir, the second a family history - an Appendix provides several family trees. The third is a serious record, full of fascinating historical detail. Inchbald wrote his memoir for many kinds of reader, from those who knew him intimately to distant cousins who had never heard of him and people, some not yet born, to whom he is a dim figure from the past.

Inchbald's account is presumably based on unverified hearsay since his assertions regarding John Milton are certainly erroneous. Milton's poem apparently refers to Henry Lawrence's family who has no connection to William Lawrence although they were both prominent Puritans active during the Civil Wars

Henry Lawrence (1600–1664) was an English Puritan statesman. He graduated from Emmanuel College, Cambridge with an M.A. in 1627. He was commissioner of plantations in 1648, and a commissioner for Ireland in 1652. He served as an M.P. Hertfordshire and Caernarvonshire. He was appointed Keeper of the Library at St. James's House, in 1653. He was Lord President of the Council of State from 1654 until 1659. He also published three

pamphlets between 1646 and 1649 on the doctrine of baptism.

John Milton, in his second Defensio Populi Anglicani (1653–1654), bears eloquent testimony to Lawrence's ability and learning.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – available on-line if subscribed.

Messrs. HENRY DUKE & SON CHARTERED SURVEYORS. AUCTIONEERS and VALUERS DORCHESTER (Phone 426. two lines) SALE THIS OAY (FRIDAY). WRAXALL MANOR, NEAR CATTISTOCK HY. DUKE Ss SON will SELL by AUCTION on Friday, 17th October, 1947, at 12.30. DOMESTIC FURNITURE, including :—Ecko Wireless Set; Garden and other Effects; Ladders; Gent's Cycle; Hive and Colony of Bees; Doors; Field Gate; Timber , and Sundries. No Catalogues. On View Morning of Sale.

Western Gazette - Friday 17 October 1947

As mentioned above Peter's father, Major Inchbald, died in Dorset in 1958 so we might assume that this was at Wraxall Manor. From the 1960s? it was the holiday home for the Boyd family.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The house is built of local chalk rubble including some flint with Hamstone ashlar dressings. The rubblestone is a hard and intractable stone and much of the masonry is now pointed up with cement. Indeed the south front of the south range is rendered with cement which is lightly blocked out as ashlar.

There is an attempt in both the 17th century and c.1905 phases of masonry to lay roughly squared blocks of limestone rubble to rough courses. Perhaps the best example of this can be observed on the ground floor level of the south front of the 17th century main block (Fig.7). The masonry of the north side, again from both major building phases, employs noticeably smaller and more irregular block of chalk rubble. The smallest blocks would seem, generally, to be more common in the north gable end of the west range. A cream-coloured limestone ashlar is used for the chimneyshafts, which are thought to date from the c.1905 refurbishment.

The roofs are covered with Welsh slate and plain red earthenware ridge-tiles which date from c.1905. Limestone slates might be expected in the 17th century or earlier by comparison with other nearby Dorset mansions such as at Mapperton House in Beaminster and Chantmarle in Cattistock.



7. Detail of the masonry from the east end of the south front of the main block.

LAYOUT

The eastern main block is double-depth. The front doorway is in the middle of the east wall opening into a central cross passage through the front section to a large stair hall in the centre of the rear section. The passage lies between two large front rooms – dining room to north heated by a fireplace in the north gable end, and the drawing room/former parlour to south heated by a fireplace in the centre of the east wall. The rooms each side of the stair hall are a library to south heated by a fireplace in the west wall and a possibly originally unheated service room to north – maybe a servery behind the front dining room. The historic maps show rear blocks and we might expect the northern one to be a kitchen.

The first floor level of the main east range largely follows the same layout as the ground floor level with all the chambers (some with adjoining dressing rooms) with access off the enormous stair landing. There is room for attic rooms above the first floor level, but any evidence of them has been destroyed by the rebuilding of the roofs in c.1905.

The link block connects the eastern main block and detached west block. This is a narrow two-storey range built as part of the c.1905 refurbishment. This was built to house the main services at ground floor level. It has an external doorway in a recess at the east end of the south side. This opens into a lobby with four internal doorways from it. There are two on the east side; the southern one into the stair hall (discreetly sited under the half landing of the present grand staircase) and the other into the service room in the northwest corner of the main east range – the putative servery. The northern doorway gives access to the c.1905 butler's pantry or housekeeper's room, which is identified by the inclusion of a walk-in silver safe. It has since been converted to a bathroom and shows no evidence for a fireplace which one might have expected in c.1905. The western doorway from the lobby is to a short corridor past two unlit storage rooms which appear to have been a wine cellar to south and linen cupboard to north (this presumably for table cloths, napkins and the like). The west end of the link block contains two larger heated rooms at ground floor level. The northern one is the c.1905 kitchen with a large fireplace in its west wall, and a small pantry off the east end. The southern room has a more domestic fireplace in its west wall. This is interpreted as the servants' hall from the evidence of the electric service bells box on the south wall with separate red lights for the labelled domestic rooms.

The first floor level of the link block has an east end lobby over the ground floor entrance lobby with a doorway connecting to the main block stair landing and an axial corridor off the west side with access to the west range at its west end. There are two small unheated rooms off the north side of the lobby which have been refurbished in the second half of the 20th century. The corridor passes four chambers, two each side. The larger southern chambers have fireplaces and so too does the western one on the northern side.

The West Range: The formerly detached two-storey west range is described below as the oldest part of the manor house, but was extensively rebuilt c.1905 leaving, as far as can be seen,

only its ancient roof timbers to establish its antiquity. The main block is built on a north-south axis. In c.1905 it was extended a short distance southwards and a projecting bay added to the south end of the west wall. It now has a central cross passage between the external west doorway (for trade deliveries) and an east door connecting to the link block. The external doorway opens to an internal porch with a doorway off its north side (under the service stair) giving access to a steep stair down to an unlit narrow east-west cellar of two compartments (probably built in c.1905). Beyond the internal porch there is a doorway off the south side to a store room and another off the north side to the foot of the service staircase. At the east end of the passage there are doorways off each side to the ground floor rooms – the north one apparently unheated but the south one heated by a fireplace in a chimneystack projecting inside from the south wall. The first floor landing is generous; it is designed to include a full-height linen cupboard (presumably bed-linen). It also includes a doorway through the east wall connecting to the first floor corridor through the main range. The single northern chamber and the two southern chambers are all provided with small fireplaces.

Latterly the west range has been used as a self-contained three-bedroom flat but, in c.1905 it was clearly an integral part of the service end of the manor house. Nevertheless the southern ground and first floor rooms might well have been used as overflow accommodation for visitors.

EXTERIOR

East Front:

This was the main domestic front containing the front doorway (Fig.1 above). Built wholly of coursed Hamstone ashlar it presents a symmetrical four-bay front under four gables, all with crossroofs over the main north-south roof over the front part of the main block. The front doorway is in the centre behind a two-storey gabled porch (Fig. 8). The front doorway itself is a Hamstone Tudor arch with an ogee moulded arch down to fillet-step stops. It contains a double-thickness oak door with external studded coverstrips (Fig.9) which dates from c.1905 and includes contemporary wrought-iron ferramenta in Arts and Craft style. The interior of the porch has a plain plaster ceiling, walls of exposed rubblestone, timber covered stone benches each side and flag floor of probably Purbeck stone. The outer arch of the porch is another Tudor arch, but steeper than the doorway, moulded on both sides with outer hollow chamfers to ogee mouldings down to step stops. The first floor has a three-light Hamstone window with hollow-moulded mullions and contains rectangular panes of leaded glass, all under a hoodmould. As elsewhere the gable has Hamstone coping to the verges springing from distinctively shaped block kneelers and crowned by an obelisk-and-ball finial (Fig,10).



8. The porch in the middle of the east front.



9. *The front doorway.*



10. *Detail of the porch gable and false attic-level window in the gable south of centre.*

The ground and first floor windows each side are generous four-light mullioned windows with upper transoms with hoodmoulds and contain rectangular panes of leaded glass and iron-framed casements. The leaded glass and casement ferramenta all date from c.1905 but the window frames appear to be the extensively repaired originals. Some of the lights still retain horizontal iron glazing bars and others preserve evidence of them, whilst c.1905 replacement Hamstone transoms, sill and heads do not.

The four gables include smaller blocked two-light Hamstone mullioned windows. The centre pair, at least, include so much decayed Hamstone that they might be considered unrepaired primary work, and it is interesting to notice that the one south of centre preserves a sgraffito plaster finish to the blocking, that is to say it comprises a base layer of dark grey plaster which was inscribed with lines in imitation of rectangular panes of leaded glass. It was finished with a skim of white lime plaster which was scraped off the faux-lead cames (Fig.10). The use of such sgraffito plasterwork was popular throughout the south of England, and particularly the westcountry, during the second half of the 17th century, with a fewer examples known from the early 18th century. For obvious reasons the great majority of surviving examples of sgraffito decoration remain from the inside of houses where they are commonly found on the inner lining of fireplaces, but a couple of examples of its exterior use are known from Exeter and Kent, both however purely decorative. Here, it seems, the technique was employed for architectural theatre.

Each gable is surmounted by what appears to be a chimneyshaft. It is true that there are two fireplaces in the east wall which probably date back to the 17th century, but this writer has never seen a false chimneyshaft used as a gable finial in his 40 years working on historic buildings in the southwest. If you need chimneys on a strictly symmetrical front this does look like an understandable and satisfactory solution.

Whilst we are at the east front it is worth looking at the garden walls. The north and south walls do not obviously abut the house, but there are enough quoins to support that the walls are actually secondary, but with some justified doubt. These sidewalls are relatively tall, built of local chalk rubble with Hamstone coping, and the south side of the south wall does include some early brick repair. The front east wall is similar but lower with simple iron railings above. The gateway has square piers of Hamstone ashlar with low pyramidal caps surmounted by ball finials which would be happy in any period from the late 17th century onwards. The pretty wrought-iron gate dates from c.1905, like the one through the southern wall into the southern pleasure garden.

The South Front:

This must be considered in three main sections (Fig. 11): the eastern main block, including the western return of the east range, the link block and the west range.



11. The south front from the southwest.



12. *The south front of the main block.*

The south front of the east range is essentially similar in style to the east front (Fig.12) except that it is narrower, that is to say, two gabled bays, and that it is built of local limestone rubble with Hamstone ashlar dressings. Also, above first floor level, the masonry is rendered with a cementiferous plaster lightly blocked out as ashlar (from c.1905). Some idea of the extent of the c.1905 refurbishment is suggested by the plastered gables. These are not symmetrical with the windows. Although the coped parapets spring from kneelers the shoulder of the east one is unusually long suggesting some rebuilding to accommodate the c.1905 roofs.

The fenestration follows the same style completely except for the small two-light window in the western gable includes one fixed light containing rectangular panes of leaded glass and an empty iron-framed casement to west. This glazed, rather than blocked, window almost certainly dates from c.1905 since it would seem to be associated with the insertion of a rather expensive and elaborate retractable timber staircase in c.1905 to the left of this rear roof of the main block.

There is one other historic feature on this wall. This is one of the Hamstone ashlar quoins at the east end close to first floor level. It is an inscribed sundial and probably not a reused stone

(Fig.13), based on the time recorded by my camera and, of course, allowing for British Summer Time and further leeway from before local time was replaced by Greenwich Mean Time. In short the shadow seemed about right for local time, but not perfect.



13. The sundial on one of the eastern quoins of the south front.

14. The western return wall and loggia.



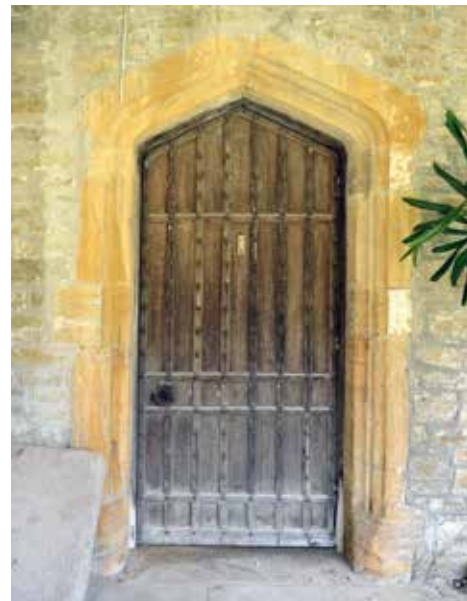
The western return of the main block: This wall appears to be a complete rebuild of c.1905 (Fig.14). There is nothing to suggest an earlier date except for a ground floor level doorway which looks as though it has been reset in this position. The rubble masonry of the wall includes a number of re-used blocks of Hamstone ashlar which are not generally found in primary 17th century rubble masonry. Only the southern end Hamstone quoins appear to survive from the 17th century. One of them, set high in the wall is another sundial (Fig.15). Its situation might indicate that it has been reset. At the very top of the wall there is the block kneeler forming the base of the western gable of the south front, but it is also shaped for a gable on this west wall too.

The wall includes two five-light Hamstone windows of c.1905 lighting the ground and first floor levels of the stair hall. These have hollow-chamfered mullions and hoodmoulds in the style of the 17th century windows. They contain rectangular panes of leaded glass. The doorway is from the main block library (Fig.16). It is a re-used 17th century Hamstone doorway with Tudor arch head and moulded surround (outer ogee to hollow chamfer) down to fillet step stops. It may have been widened and heightened in its present form. It contains a c.1905 door presenting an external face of planks with studded coverstrips (like the east front door) but, inside, it is panelled African mahogany or teak. The 1911 postcard shows a lateral chimneyshaft rising from the eaves towards the south end (Fig.17), which has since gone. The ground floor level lies under the lean-to roof of a loggia or verandah.



15. *The sundial on a high quoin at the south end.*

16. *The re-used doorway.*



17. *The south front on a 1911 postcard from the collection of The DiCamillo Companion. Reproduced with the kind permission of Curt DiCamillo.*



The loggia or verandah was built in c.1905. It is shown in its original form on the postcard of 1911 (Fig.17). It was then open on the west front and south end but, probably in the mid or late 20th century, it was extended to south and the arcades infilled with windows over a low boarded wall and included double glazed doors at the north end of the west front (Fig.18). The inside has a floor of limestone flags. The arcade comprises a series of timber posts resting on stone pads and the wall plate is made up of lengths of maybe 16th century moulded timbers derived from a panelled ceiling of intersecting beams (Fig.19). The slate roof is monopitch and hipped to south. The underside ceiling is boarded.



18. The loggia / verandah looking south.

19. Detail of the moulded 16th century beams used for the wallplate.



The south front of the link block is three bays of c.1905 masonry with a recessed eastern bay, its ground floor level behind the loggia/verandah (Fig.20). The wall rises to a plain Hamstone cornice at eaves level with a low parapet above with flat Hamstone coping. The windows all have Hamstone frames with hoodmoulds and hollow-chamfered mullions, like those described above in the western return wall of the main block. Such windows are consistently used on the show front repaired or rebuilt in c.1905 with, of course, some exceptions to prove the rule on the north side. The first floor windows are of two, four and three lights working from west to east. The ground floor windows are all of two lights. The eastern one, in the recess and under the loggia/verandah is narrower since it was designed as a side-light to the southern doorway and both share the hoodmould (Fig.21). The doorway opening is tall and square-headed with a plain frame of Hamstone ashlar. It contains a plain frame with an overlight containing glazing bars for 12 square panes of glass. The door is six-panelled with projecting mouldings in a vague Queen Anne style.

20. The south front of the link block.

21. The doorway and window inside the loggia / verandah.



The south front of the west range projects forward from the link block with a blind eastern return wall. It too is wholly c.1905 masonry, including the western end projecting bay to left of the gable over the main range (Fig.22). It continues the same style as the link block, but losing the parapet to west of the gable. The ground and first floor windows to the main block are east of centre, four lights to the ground floor and three to the first; the western projection has a single-light window without a hoodmould as the status of the Edwardian architecture declines from east to west.



22. *The south end of the west range.*

The West end:

This is the back of the house (Fig.23), which has been somewhat altered since the publication of the second edition OS map in 1902; c.1905 would seem the most likely date. The projecting bay and a low single-storey range (now converted to Squirrel Cottage) form the south side of a small service yard, which is also flanked by another east-west storage building on the north side. The west end of the house proper features the blind gable of the c.1905 gabled two-storey bay on the south side. The central service door is down a couple of steps from the yard. The opening is lined with plain Hamstone ashlar under a monopitch hood on plain timber brackets, now covered with corrugated iron. The doorway has a plain solid timber frame and contains a probably c.1905 door of four panels below an eight-pane top-light. The doorway is flanked by windows and the first floor has a central window to the service stair landing and one to the south of it, and another in the northern return of the projecting bay. All have plain Hamstone ashlar surrounds with those to the ground floor with segmental arch heads. All contain replacement late 20th century timber casements with glazing bars and are two lights, apart from the three-light window to the stair landing.



23. *The west end*

The North Front:

The long north front faces onto the lane passing by the manor house. Here all three sections of the house are in line creating a continuous facade (Fig.24).



Main (east) Range

Link Block

West Range

24. *The north front.*



25. *The north front of the main block.*

The north front of the east range: Like the opposite south front this is a double-gabled elevation (Fig.25). Also the east end kneeler has an extended shoulder whilst the western shoulder has no kneeler (more like those built in c.1905). Such details might suggest that the gables here too have been altered to accommodate the c.1905 roofs.

The fenestration is intriguing. As usual the windows have Hamstone ashlar frames with hoodmoulds and hollow-chamfered mullions but the lights have (almost rounded) Tudor arch heads with sunken spandrels, looking more 16th than 17th century in style. There is a central three-light window to each level under the eastern gable, but both are blocked with internal fireplaces is directly behind both windows. They could be genuine 16th century windows that were blocked up in the 17th century rebuild, but this writer has doubts, suspecting that they were inserted here c.1905 to regularise the appearance of the overall northern front. Nevertheless they could be old windows repositioned here in c.1905.

There is an irregular arrangement of two windows to each floor level under the western gable. The Hamstone masonry is crisp suggesting that these were installed in c.1905. There is a small fifth window near the west end of the first floor level which is blocked. It looks like the kind of window provided for a closed stool garderobe closet and could well date from the 17th century.



26. *The north front of the link block.*

The north front of the link block: At the east end there is no obvious break in the masonry between the east range and the link block. This maybe because this side of the link block includes masonry from the 17th century kitchen range or earlier masonry, or simply that, in the hands of a local mason used to working stone rubble, it would be easy to tie in new masonry into older work without leaving obvious evidence. At the west end there are a number of Hamstone blocks butting up to the old rubble masonry of the west range.

However it is clear that the link block was massively rebuilt in c.1905 presenting a unified but not symmetrical façade (Fig.26). At each floor level there are 2 two-light windows to east and 2 four-light windows to west – all Hamstone with flat-headed lights. The parapet steps up to a gable over the inner four-light windows; it includes a vertical ventilator slit.



27. *The north end of the west range.*

The north end of the west range: This is the west gable-end of the possibly 16th century range (Fig.27). It too has been extensively rebuilt in c.1905. It includes a single window at each floor level and a ventilator slit in the top of the gable. The lower window is a tall three-light transomed window with square-headed lights while the first floor window, set high in the wall, is a two-light window with pointed segmental arch heads. The two windows were built in c.1905 with the architect choosing to dispense with hoodmoulds. The gable is surmounted with a four-way base, presumably designed for a finial, as at the gable apex of the east front porch (Fig.10 – above).

PHASE 1. THE 16TH CENTURY WEST RANGE

Described by the RCHME as a 'small S.W. Block, called the chapel' (RCHME 1952, p.259) this is the west range of this report. It is the oldest building on the site, but was massively rebuilt and enlarged a short distance to south in c.1905. All that can be seen of earlier work today are the roof timbers.

The roof is six bays long and carried on five trusses made up of generous and smartly finished lengths of oak. The eastern four are (or were) arch-braced A-frame trusses, in which the principals engage at the apex with plain mortise-and-tenon joints fixed by a single oak peg, and the flat collars are mortise-and-tenoned into the principals and fixed by two pegs each side (Fig.28). A block descends from the centre of the collar to lock the arch-braces in place. When complete arch-braces formed a continuous curve from wall to wall and finished with an outer hollow to inner ogee moulding on both sides. The collars include central drilled holes, a feature which is not uncommon in late medieval and early post-medieval roof collars and is conventionally understood as a means of aligning the trusses during their erection using a string through the holes. The trusses carry two sets of plain purlins lap-jointed over trenches cut into the backs of the principals, and there are V-notches at each apex for diagonally set ridges. The original ridges have been replaced by c.1905 plate yokes carrying a ridgeboard. The great majority of the original common rafters have been replaced and none of the remainders survive above upper purlin level.



28. *The upper part of the second truss from the south end.*



29. *The arch braces of the southern two trusses looking northeast.*

Two of the arch-braces are exposed below ceiling level in the southeast chamber on the east side (Fig.29). The southern one is moulded only on the north side, which suggests that this was the south end truss of the 16th century range and that it was built up against a solid masonry wall. The north end truss is a similar A-frame truss but without arch-braces or moulded finish. Its principals have curving feet descending into the sidewalls in cruck-like fashion.

Dating and Discussion

The probable reasons to suggest that the west range was a chapel come firstly from its apparent detached location. This appears to be a fair assumption if one assumes that it was from the same build as the manor house in 'c.1630'. It will be argued below that the main manor house was actually built after 1651, and the surviving roof over the west range is unlikely to date that late. A second reason may be the height of the north window in relation to the north end chamber. It is oddly high for the room, but it dates from the c.1905 refurbishment, and maybe influenced by the legend of the chapel.

The building is tall enough to have been built two storeys high. It just might be the case that the moulded oak beams re-used in the loggia/verandah came from that first floor level. An intersecting beam (or panelled) ceiling made up of moulded beams would certainly suit a ground floor room below the arch-braced roof. Such an arrangement would identify the west range as a parlour and master chamber range probably from a superior 16th century farmhouse or manor house. Most southwestern examples date from the mid 16th century in houses of some social status, but late 16th century examples are known – for instance at Bovey House, Beer, in east Devon (dated 1592) where the beams over the ground floor parlour have the same mouldings as the arch-bracing of the trusses over the chamber above. This writer cannot think of any houses of the status of Wraxall built after 1640 including such beamed ceilings. If so the existing west range would have probably been a crosswing at the west end of a 16th century house, presumably projecting eastwards. This alternative interpretation could only be verified by dendrochronological analysis of the roof timbers and reused beams from the loggia/verandah, and, of course this writer might be proved wrong.

PHASE 2. A MID 17TH CENTURY REBUILD FOR WILLIAM LAWRENCE

The extent of the c.1905 rebuild of the manor house makes a description of this significant building phase difficult, because it is clear that, besides the new work, some historic features have been moved, and others retained in their original locations. We have seen this in the above description of the exterior features.

The starting point for any assessment of the 17th century house is the east range. Its basic double-depth layout is accepted as of this date since the main room divisions are defined by internal stone walls. If we are to question the dating of these, we are in serious trouble interpreting the 17th century house. So the eastern main block is considered the core of the house, as described above with a rear kitchen range projecting to rear of the north side. Moreover there are some features which may well date from the late 17th century which will also be described as part of this building phase.

Ground Floor

Drawing Room/former parlour: Apart from the repaired east and south windows no 17th century features are exposed in this room although it is reasonable to suppose that the doorway opening is from this period.



30. *The dining room fireplace.*

Dining Room: This too has repaired windows to the east, and probably doorway openings with 17th century origins. The north wall has a limestone ashlar fireplace in an internal chimneystack. It is generous in scale with a surround of multiple mouldings (Fig.30). The outer ogee mouldings rises to a square head creating spandrels as the inner hollow and roll mouldings create a Tudor arch head, all descending to semi-urn stops. This is a long-lived pattern which could easily date from either c.1630 or c.1651.

The library – rear southwest: Apart from the repaired south window and maybe the opening of the northern doorway no 17th century features are exposed.

The stair hall: No exposed 17th century features although some doorway openings might fossilize 17th century openings.

The service room – rear northwest: The first floor of this tall room is carried on two axial beams finished with broad chamfers to step stops (Fig.31). Again doorways might occupy 17th century openings but there is no other 17th century fabric or features exposed.



31. The service room looking southeast.

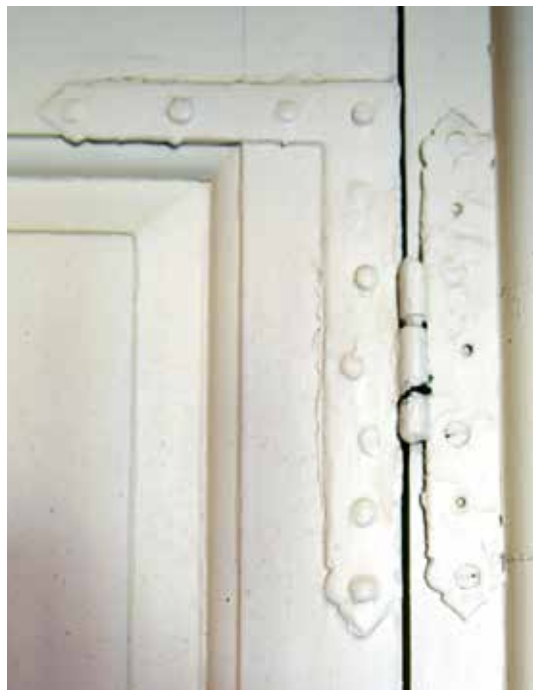
Link block: There may have been a kitchen on the north side, but no 17th century fabric or features show.

First Floor

The dining room chamber: The east wall has a repaired 17th century window. Other features in the room indicate a renovation from the c.1680s to c.1700. For instance, the windowseat and below is lined with fielded panelling; also the limestone ashlar chimneypiece in the centre of the north wall. The fireplace is the only example of its type in the house with an austere design of chimneypiece – flat-faced with bead moulded surround provided and outer ogee-moulded surround (Fig.32). The third is the doorway from the first floor landing. It is a fielded six-panel door (not at all unusual) except that this one is hung on HL-hinges with teardrop finials (Fig.33). As is common with pieces of joinery the hinge displays evidence that it might not necessarily be in its original position. The part of the hinge attached to the door is the original wrought-iron nails, but it is fixed to the frame with screws, presumably from c.1905.



32. *The fireplace in the dining room chamber.*



33. *One of the door hinges in the dining room chamber.*

Front passage chamber: This is the room that John Milton did not sleep in, the one enjoying the small first floor room over the porch. Of course, it has a repaired 17th century window facing east. Between it and the doorway into the porch room, there is a 17th century limestone fireplace (Fig.34) with a Tudor arch head and chamfered surround down to unusual block stops. The doorways to the landing and porch chamber are probably 17th century openings but now have later boxing and architraves. The porch room door is a probably late 17th century fielded six-panel door but now hung on later hinges.

The Drawing Room/Parlour chamber was probably the same size as the ground floor room but subdivided to provide en-suite facilities in the 20th century (Fig.35). It was formerly lit from two sides by the windows and heated by a canted fireplace in the southwest corner (Fig.36). It is similar to the dining room fireplace on the ground floor. The rear (west) wall includes a large cupboard with a single-panel door hung on cockshead hinges. Just like the HL-hinge described above from the dining room chamber the hinge is fixed to the door with nails



34. The east wall of the passage chamber includes a fireplace and doorway to the porch room.

35. The north wall of the parlour/ drawing room chamber showing the fireplace and the cupboard.

36. Detail of the 17th century fireplace.

37. Detail of the top cockshead hinge on the cupboard.



but screwed onto the frame (Fig.37). Inside the shelves rest on moulded timbers which look like pieces re-used from mid 17th century panelling.

The Library chamber: Besides the repaired window and maybe the doorway opening from the stair landing this chamber has a 17th century limestone fireplace in the south wall; it is very similar to the fireplace in the porch chamber.

The service room chamber: Although this northwest corner of the main block has been somewhat re-ordered in c.1905 the fireplace in the west wall could have a chimneypiece of c.1700 with a later mantlshelf (Fig.38).

The link block: Although an early service block is suspected to rear of the main range, however, there are no signs of early features there today. Most of the lesser fireplaces built in the c.1905 refurbishment employ Delft tiles around the small grates (Fig.39), and so too does the fireplace in the main east range northwest chamber. Such tiles were popular in smart houses in the late 17th century, particularly after William of Orange became king in 1688. The themes are antique so this writer is not qualified to determine whether they are genuine late 17th century tiles, but reused, or Edwardian reproductions.



38. *The fireplace in the west wall of the service room chamber*

39. *Detail of Delft tiles used in a c.1905 chimneypiece from the southeast chamber of the west range. It features sailing ships and sea monsters.*

Dating and Discussion

The most authoritative commentators date the 17th century phase of Wraxall to 1630 for William Lawrence. However there are two Williams in the 17th century. William senior lived between 1579-1646. A 1630 date would mean that he rebuilt the house when aged in his 50s. This is, of course, quite possible, and the building date may be based on documentary evidence that is not possible to access during the current pandemic circumstances. However, this writer proposes a later date based partly on the available history, but mostly on the plan-form of the 17th century house. This puts the building of the house down to the younger William, an eminent lawyer in the parliamentary party during the Civil Wars, and suggests a date from after 1651.

As described above William senior rented Wraxall from St John Stawell, but his son acquired the freehold in 1651, beating off a legal objection from Stawell.

Also, as described above, the east range is the main block of the 17th century house and it has a double depth plan and symmetrical east front. The mid and late 17th century was an interesting and experimental period in the evolution of English architecture as the linear late medieval form evolved into what we might describe as the modern house, where circulation was rationalised and centred on the main stair which gave independent access to the principal rooms – precisely what we have at Wraxall. This writer can think of no westcountry houses with such a layout before the second half of the 17th century.

Of course, the house was extensively refurbished in c.1905 by William Gould Busk but it seems unlikely that he rebuilt the whole house at that time, based on the footprint of the east range shown on the earlier historic maps. We can assume, at least, that the stone walls defining the basic plan of the range derive from the original layout. Even these have been altered. As described above the exposed section of the rear (west) wall was massively rebuilt in c.1905 and, it seems likely, that the 17th century north wall of the stair hall was demolished at first floor level in order to enlarge the first floor landing.

Nevertheless we are left with the remains of a post-1651 house with an advanced plan form, built by a well-travelled Dorset lawyer who must have mixed with the leading thinkers from all professions during the Civil War. The turmoil of the times led to a hiatus in ostentatious building projects in the 1640s. When building work commenced again in the 1650s it tended to use the style of features like doorways, windows, fireplaces and the rest in the style last used in the 1630s. It was only later in the century that new styles developed and those included in the house have been described above.

PHASE 3. THE c.1905 REFURBISHMENT FOR WILLIAM GOULD BUSK

William Busk apparently made his fortune from property deals in the USA, notably in Texas. He acquired Wraxall between 1903 and 1911 from which date we have a postcard showing the refurbishment complete (Fig.17 – above). Climbing plants against the new-build walling are still young but well-established, so the date of 1905 (mentioned by Peter Inchbald in his memoir) has been accepted in this report. Busk's work was extensive and, besides the new link block, affected just about every part of the house and extended into the gardens. An architect must have been involved but probably not the Edwin Lutyens as suggested by Inchbald.

The refurbishment left little evidence of 19th century modernisation (maybe undertaken by John Stein), but those surviving features will be mentioned in this section.

The front doorway opens into a passage in which the style changes from the 17th century to a free Edwardian mixture of Queen Anne and Georgian. The spare but opulent style starts in the passage with its parquet floor, tall skirt, applied high moulded rail featuring a dentil frieze and a restrained plaster cornice to the ceiling (Fig.40). On the west side the doorway to the dining room is typical of those to the main domestic rooms which are mostly from the stair hall. The doorframes are boxed with a distinctively moulded architrave, comprising of two canted fillets with a hollow between, crowned by a kind of waisted pulvinated moulding finishing with a dentil frieze (Figs.41 & 44 – below). It contains a heavy six-panel door built of probably African mahogany or teak and including planted inner panels. At the west end of the passage a large plastered elliptical arch opens into the stair hall with the moulded rail carried round at impost level and the high skirt at the base. The sides are fluted (Fig.41).



40. Architectural details from c.1905 from the passage side of the archway into the stairhall.



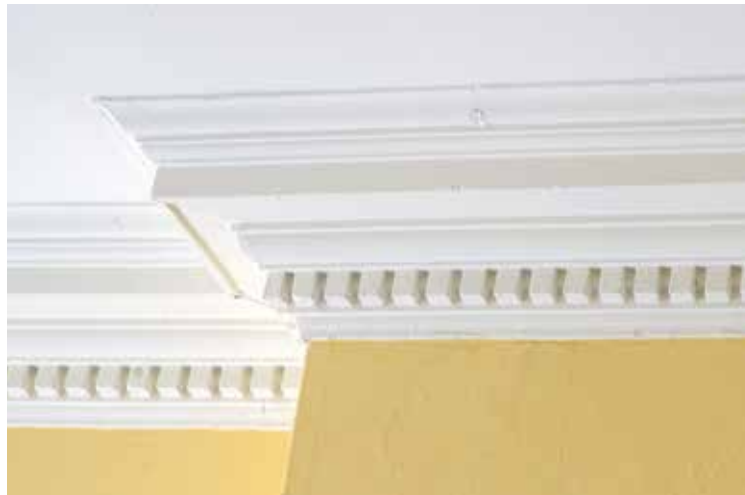
41. *The archway from the entry passage into the stairhall.*

The stair hall is designed to impress and is generously lit by new ground and first floor windows in the west wall. The large open well stair dominates the space (Fig.42). The full-width half landing is typical of its scale. The basic form of the stair probably survives from c.1905, but it underwent a refurbishment, probably in the mid 20th century. It has an open string, features panelled square newel posts with moulded caps and moulded flat handrails, but there is clear evidence that the handrails have been dropped a little, and their undersides show evidence that it originally had timber balusters. It was refurbished with pairs of iron stick balusters alternating with scrolled wrought iron work. The first floor landing occupies an even larger space, encroaching it is thought into the former northern rooms. The landing has the most elaborate plaster cornice in the house and includes the signature dentil frieze (Fig.43).



42. *The grand stairhall looking northwest.*

43. *Detail of the plaster cornice round the generous first floor stair landing.*



The two front (east) rooms are the smartest in the house. To north is the dining room which is heated by a 17th century fireplace in the north wall (Fig.30 – above). The other internal features are the product of the c.1905 refurbishment and include two doorways (maybe primary openings) in the south and west walls, a high skirt, dado rail and moulded plaster cornice featuring a dentil frieze (Fig.44).



44. *The dining room looking southwest.*

The drawing room/17th century parlour includes an early 19th century marble chimneypiece to the fireplace in the middle of the east wall (Fig.45). This is presumably a survivor from the early 19th century house. It is an attractive chimneypiece typical of top end Georgian fireplaces with a base of polychrome marble and white marble reserved for carved and moulded detail. John Stein only acquired Wraxall in 1839 and the style of the fireplace would normally be considered earlier on stylistic grounds, but it is certainly not impossible to find such a chimneypiece from c.1840.



45. *The elegant marble chimneypiece in the east wall of the parlour/ drawing room.*

46. *The southwest corner of the parlour/ drawing room.*



All the other internal features were installed in c.1905. The walls have low skirts and the same minimal moulded cornices as found in the dining room and library. There is a moulded dado and the plaster walls above and below feature projecting mouldings emulating the style of Queen Anne period bolection panelling in two heights. The window seats are panelled and the southwest corner includes a canted display panel with a Georgian-style fanlight (Fig.46).

The library is similar but plainer. The fireplace here in the west wall dates from c.1840. Built of stone it is in the Tudor Gothic style fashionable at this time (Fig.47).



47. *The west end of the library with its c.1840 chimneypiece and c.1905 doorway to the loggia/ verandah.*

The first-floor level was also thoroughly refurbished in c.1905, often reusing older joinery as we have already seen. One late 18th century or early 19th century feature of note is the walk-in cupboard in the southwest corner of the chamber over the library which is round-headed and includes a four-panel door hung on HL-hinges including a fanlight of radiating glazing bars.

The only access to the roof spaces of the main block is by means of a ceiling hatch in the southwest chamber over the library. It retains the remarkable retractable stair from c.1905. This provides the only view of the structures of the rebuilt roofs over the east range and link block. The roofspace is open from north to south and the roof is carried on a series of c.1905 pine tiebeam trusses with collars simply nailed onto the principals. They carry two sets of back purlins notched over the backs of the principals and at the apex plate yokes carry the ridgeboard.

The link block and west range: The link block is c.1905 new build and the west range was massively rebuilt at the same time. The joinery style is consistent throughout with the occasional use of a reused feature, such as the c.1700 fielded panel door between the link block and west range at first floor level. At ground floor level the c.1905 parquet flooring was continued into the link block, but not into the west range. Architraves to the c.1905 doorways use the unusual moulding of canted fillets with hollow chamfer between, and the doors are usually of four plain panels.

In order to avoid much repetition of text the significant features of this part of the house is presented as a series of captioned photographs. Significant 20th century alterations have mostly been mentioned in passing in the above text.

c.1905 and other features from the link block - ground floor level:



48. The servants' hall is the southwest room of the link block. The photograph is looking southwest showing the fireplace, and, to right, steps up to the c.1905 service passage through the west range. Notice that the fireplace chimneypiece is different in style than those on the first floor level.

c.1905 and other features from the link block - first floor level:



49 & 50. The chimneypieces from the c.1905 fireplaces in the west walls of the western first floor chambers, each side of the axial service passage. We might assume a gender difference of the occupants from the Delft tiles which feature flowers, childhood games and rustic scenes from the south chamber and foreign views, sailing ships and sea monsters from northern one.

51. *The chimneypiece to the fireplace in the east wall of the southeast chamber has a Tudor Gothic style, which could well date from c.1840. It has a typical c.1905 grate and is assumed to be repositioned here from John Stein's main block. It is tempting to believe that the pink paint is original.*



c.1905 and other features from the west range - ground floor level:



52. *The southern room of west range. This is within the c.1905 extension of the range to south, including the contemporary bay extension to the west (shown to the right). The c.1905 fireplace seems to have lost its chimneypiece and grate in the late 20th century when the present stove was inserted. Otherwise, the room preserves its c.1905 parquet floor.*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Wraxall Manor is assessed below on the basis of recommendations in Historic England's Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (April 2008). Significance is assessed broadly and divided into categories: evidential (what can actually be seen in the building); historical; aesthetic, and community. Degrees of significance are identified. These are: highly significant; significant; some significance; neutral significance, and detrimental to significance. This assessment does not include the landscape except as the context for the house.

The house is listed Grade 2*

Evidential Significance

The house is highly significant:

- as a 17th century Dorset Manor house built after 1651 in a sustainable fashion from locally-sourced materials.
- for the advanced double-depth layout of the 17th century main block.

The house has some significance:

- for the quality of the surviving 16th and 17th century structural element
- for the surviving 16th century roof of the west range.
- for the advanced double-depth layout of the 17th century main block.
- for the expensive c.1905 extension and general refurbishment.

Detrimental to significance:

- the effect of extensive c.1905 works on the 17th century huse.

Historical Significance

The house has some significance:

- as an evolved ancient manor house set within a farmstead and garden setting. The old farmyard was situated to southeast of the house. Although several of those shown on historic maps have been altered and redeveloped in the 20th century, the northern building is the fine grade 2 listed stable block, The manor house faces east onto the court in front of the stable block. To south the house faces onto a pleasure garden which is known to have existed since the 1840s and is assumed to be much earlier. It is intrinsically an attractive setting.
- as the house largely rebuilt by the distinguished Puritan lawyer, William Lawrence (c.1613-1682), who was active during the Interegnum.
- for the evidence it demonstrates of the house of a leading mid 17th century lawyer.

Aesthetic Significance

The house is significant:

- for the high-quality craftsmanship exhibited in the appearance of the 17th century main block and the external appearance of those parts which were new or rebuilt in c.1905 and occupy an attractive downland situation.

Community significance

The house has some community significance:

- because it lies on a lane which passes by the north elevation of the house and stable block. Passers by can also linger and enjoy the east front of the house.

Conclusion

Wraxall Manor is a most interesting house from an historic and archaeological point of view. Not least from William Lawrence's advanced layout of the main east range. In common with other superior old houses in this part of Dorset the local grey limestone rubble with the honey-coloured Hamstone ashlar dressings make a wonderful combination. The extensive c.1905 work continues in the same style using mullioned window models, apparently derived from 16th and 17th century examples from the old manor house. On the other hand the c.1905 works did affect the architectural integrity of the 17th century main block and 16th century west range. Nevertheless the extent of the c.1905 refurbishment might imply that George Gould Busk took on a building which required extensive repairs. He had the money to undertake the project, and clearly desired a large house fulfilling his expectations of contemporary status and modernity. Fortunately, his work coincided with the Arts and Crafts movement which fostered, albeit nascent, a feeling and respect for historic craftsmanship.

June 2020

Text and photography by John R.L.Thorp
Internet research by John Thorp and Dr Jo Cox

© Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants
50 Blackboy Road
Exeter
Devon EX4 6TB

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are most grateful to owner Camilla Cobham and architect Tim Reeve for arranging access to the house.

Tim Reeve for useful discussions on site.

Rebecca Lilley, Secretary of the Lutyens Trust, for helpful email discussion.

Sandi Ellison input the text.

CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This report has been prepared for use by Camilla Cobham and her professional advisers and not to give assurance to any third party.

The purpose of this report is to give an opinion on the specific matter which was the subject of the request and not to comment on the general condition of the buildings.

Parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed, or otherwise concealed and/or inaccessible have not been inspected.

Acceptance of the report will be deemed to be acceptance of the terms of engagement and limitations.

No copies, either whole or in part, may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, or stored in retrieval systems, without prior written authorisation of Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants unless they are for use by Camilla Cobham and her professional advisers.

No liability for use by unauthorised persons shall be accepted.