The Notebook of Thomas Noblet, a Lancashire Joiner

WILLIAM McCARTNEY

This is the story of how the Thomas Noblet notebook was discovered. It all began in the mid-1990s when my wife decided to try to wean me away from a very intensive and full career in corporate rescue. She took me to an independent adult education centre in Wilmslow, south Manchester, to try a course on genealogy. This was a course organised by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies in Canterbury. After the first lecture we both decided to enrol and eventually completed the various examinations.

I knew very little about my family background apart from a few surviving cousins who were still alive in my home city of Liverpool. We were doing our research before online facilities, visiting local record offices and registry offices for information. It soon became clear that a main branch of my family through my great grandmother Agnes Jolly had originated in the Fylde area of Lancashire. When I started examining the church records in the area I found many Jollys being born, married and buried over several centuries, often having the same Christian names. It was very difficult to distinguish the various lines of descent. This is not unusual in small rural communities, exacerbated by the use of family naming patterns, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

After gathering as many as possible pieces of data from the church records, wills, estate records, &c., I did manage by 1998 to produce preliminary groups of relatives into a series of fifteen logical pedigree charts. With the help of some other researchers this was then refined by 2002 to cover the Jolly family back to 1580 on twenty charts. These charts contained some 600 family groups and 1800 individuals, including relatives in the USA.

A key group in my section arose from the marriage of James Jolly with Sarah Noblet in 1817. In previous generations both families had been largely in involved in agriculture, but several members of both families then pursued careers in joinery and cabinet-making.

In 2000, as I had been able to work out the family lines, I decided to try and find any Jolly family members still in the Fylde to see if my analysis was correct, and also to see if anybody had any further documents. I found a Michael Jolly living in Wrea Green and I wrote to him explaining who I was and what I had found. I had no reply to my letter. Some weeks later, during a visit to area with my wife, I drove to his address. As I stopped outside the farm I saw a man with two small dogs in the farmyard. I went over to the gate and went inside, intending to introduce myself and see if I was in the correct location. He shouted to me and I thought that he was asking me to close the farm gate behind me which I did. At this point one of the dogs grabbed me by the leg and the man shouted for me to get the other side of the gate.

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The dog had drawn blood: I introduced myself and found that I was in fact talking to Michael Jolly. He then locked the dogs away and took us into the house to treat my bleeding calf. He explained that his wife was very ill and he had not been able to respond to my letter which he had received and read with interest. After I was cleaned up we then spent some time looking at my charts and discussing our family links. He then announced that he had a bag of family papers in the loft.

I looked through the documents which included details of the family joinery business. It was clear to me that this was a valuable find. Michael told me that the business failed when it lost a lot of money mainly due to non-payment of bills, and he very generously offered to lend the bag to me for further examination. I wrote back to him in May 2000 saying that there were three items of particular interest: an account book of the business from 1795 to 1855; a small white notebook from a Thomas Noblet dated 1725; and a school attendance roll from the Wrea Green village school, undated. There were also numerous letters and notes from Jolly and Noblet family members from the same period.

After some preliminary work on the account book and notebook it was obvious that they were both in such a poor condition that professional conservation work was necessary to ensure that they were properly preserved. This work was carried out by Susan Wood, a conservator based in Matlock, Derbyshire, who was suggested by the Lancashire Record Office. She had been an archivist with a record office in the Midlands and said that she had not seen anything to compare with the notebook and that it could be a useful find.

THE NOBLET FAMILY

The Noblet family is a long established family on the Fylde and there are descendants still living in the area. There are records of wills and marriages from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards. The family have been involved in the Kirkham/Warton area for many years. Kirkham is a small market town located in the Fylde area of west Lancashire, lying between Blackpool to the west and Preston to the east, while Warton is now well known for being the location of British Aerospace Systems. Other towns in the borough include Lytham St Annes, Poulton le Fylde and Blackpool.

In 1635 and 1638, William and Robert Noblet were among the 'Thirty Sworn Men' of Kirkham:

> The 'Thirty Sworn men of Kirkham' was the name given to a council which took cognizance of parochial affairs, and of certain matters connected with the church, amongst other things appointing the churchwardens. This assembly was composed of representatives from the different sections of the parish, two who were elected to manage the affairs of Kirkham.
>
> John Porter, *The History of the Fylde of Lancashire* (1876)

The records of St Michaels Church, Kirkham, show that Thomas Noblet was born in Warton and baptised on 16 April 1704, the second son of William Noblet and Jane (Jennet) Mercer. William Noblet was a farmer, and he and Jane had at least three children — George (1699), Elizabeth (1703), and Thomas (1704). Since the eldest son, George, would follow his father on the family farm, Thomas was obliged to take up a trade to earn his living.

Thomas was only twenty-one years of age when his father died in 1725. He was probably near the end of his apprenticeship, and his father left a provision of £35 in his will for Thomas to complete his term:

> *Item I give to Thomas Noblet my son the sum of thirtie five pounds of current money of great Brittaine to be payd to him within the space of three years next after my decease. Item all the rest and residue of my Estate both Reall and Personall whatsoever or whosoever I Give and Devise and Bequeath unto George Noblet my son his heirs and Executors Administrators and Assignes. He the said George Noblet my Son Provideing and finding the said Thomas Noblet my Son all sorts of Apparell during the remainder of his apprencticeship.*[1]

Although we do not know where Thomas served his time, or with whom, it could have been in or near Manchester, for in December 1728 Noblet was living in Disley, near Stockport. While there he married Elizabeth Winstanley, who lived in the neighbouring parish of Manchester.[2] Disley is on the edge of Lyme Park, the seat of the Legh family, and it is tempting to speculate that Thomas was involved with the remodelling of the house under Giacomo Leoni in the 1720s, but Lyme's records contain no trace of him. It seems likely that it was the end of his apprenticeship and the beginning of his career as a joiner in the year 1725/6 that Noblet marked with a flourish in the opening page of his book.

The records show that Thomas lived for the major portion of his life in Wrea Green (also called Ribby or Ribby with Wrea), which lies about two miles west of Kirkham in the Fylde, north of Preston. The details of his married life are somewhat sketchy but we do know that he had three wives. Thomas and Elizabeth were married for fourteen years and we have records of two daughters, Jane who died in November 1741 and Ellen who died in May 1742. Both died in Ribby and were buried in Kirkham. We cannot find any birth records for them or any other siblings by this marriage. Elizabeth herself died in May 1744 and was also buried in Kirkham. The period of Thomas's marriage to Elizabeth is the period mainly covered by the notebook and its sudden end in the 1740s may well have some connection to the sad events occurring around that time.

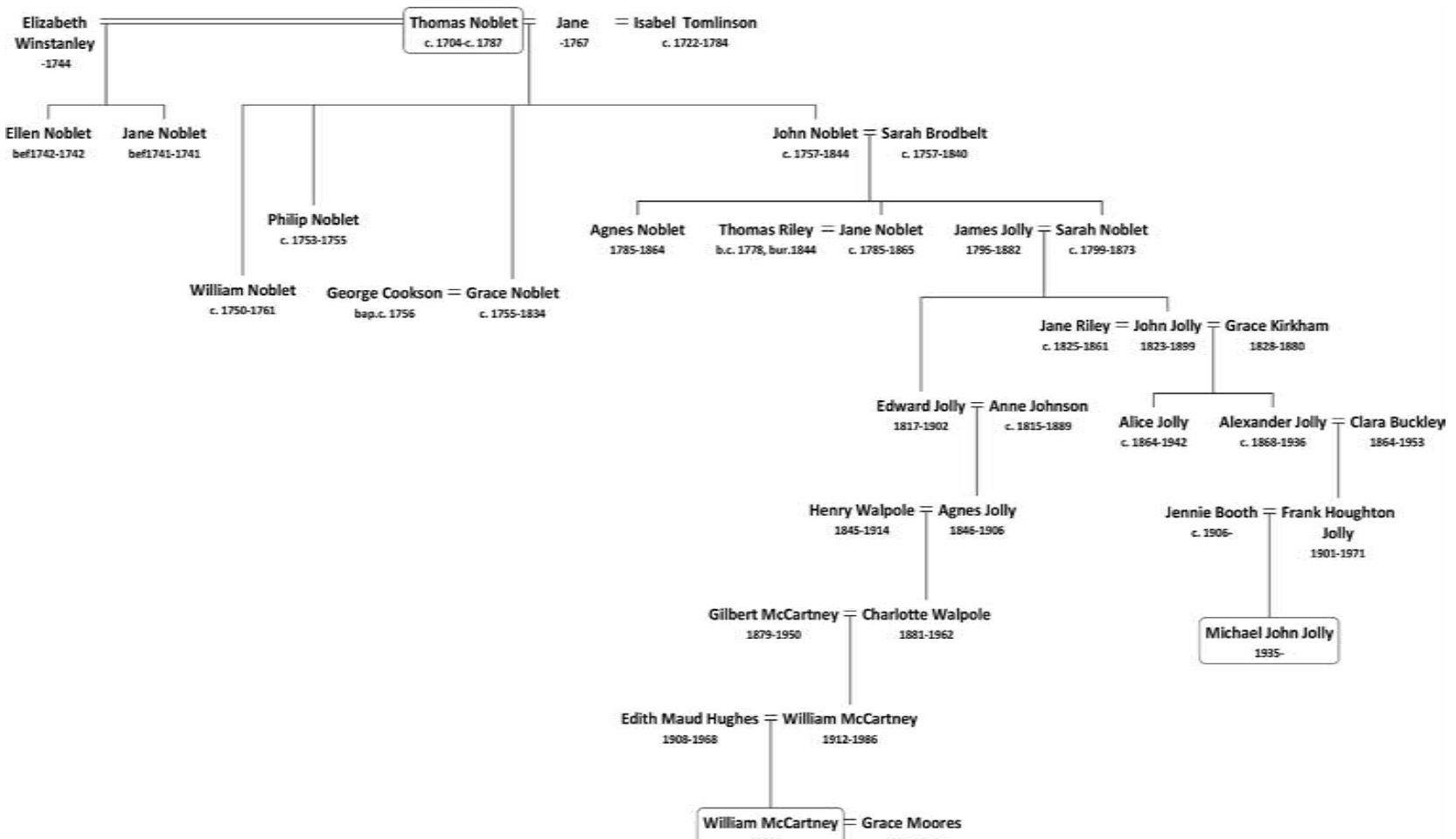
Thomas remarried and then had further children with his second wife Jane. Again we do not have a record of this marriage. They had at least four children, all born in Ribby and baptised in Kirkham — William (1750), Philip (1753), Grace (1755) and John (1757). Philip died within two years and was buried on 22 March 1755. William died aged 11 in October 1761.

Jane died in 1767 and Thomas married his third wife, Isabel Tomlinson, on 29 October 1770. Thomas died, aged 82, in 1787, in Ribby cum Wrea and was buried in Kirkham.

Grace Noblet married George Cookson and had nine children. John married Sarah Brodbelt and carried the cabinet-making/joinery business forward. John and Sarah

[1] Lancashire Record Office, W/RW/A/R63B/15, Will of William Noblet the Elder, 19 July1725.

[2] www.findmypast, *Cheshire Marriage License bonds*, 1606–1905. The notebook reveals that Thomas's father-in-law was called Thomas Winstanley. Searching for the birth of Elizabeth to a Thomas Winstanley has produced only one possibility, dated 22 May 1705 in Wigan. There is a doubt as to whether this is written *Elizth* or *Ellen* and the records are not clear, but the date is about right



1 Family tree showing the author's descent from Thomas Noblet

had eight children. Their first daughter was Agnes Noblet (b. 1785) who became the schoolmistress at Wrea Green for forty-five years. Their last daughter was Sarah Noblet
(b. 1799) who then married James Jolly in 1817 and was my great-great-great grandmother.

James and Sarah Jolly also had eight children, the first of whom was Edward Jolly (1817–1902). He became a cabinet-maker based in Poulton le Fylde. His daughter Agnes married Henry Walpole, a French polisher from Liverpool, and these were my great grandparents.

James and Sarah's second son was John Jolly born in 1823. John followed the cabinet-making/joinery trade and took over the business when John Noblet retired. It was this branch of the family from whom Michael Jolly is descended and that is how the family papers survived. A family tree showing all these connections is shown in figure 1.

At the time of writing it has not been possible to find any furniture made by Thomas Noblet still in family hands, but some box pews and a pulpit closely corresponding to those described on pages 35 and 58 of the notebook survive in the old parish church of St John the Baptist at Pilling, about 15 miles north of Wrea Green (Figures 2 and 3). The church was built in 1717 and fitted out by 1719, which rules out Thomas as the joiner, but the design of the panelling is identical to that illustrated in the notebook, so Noblet's joinery must have been of this character and quality. The pulpit, originally a 'three decker', has been moved, reduced in height and reconfigured, but some of the pews are probably in their original positions. The curate of Pilling at this time was John Anyon, appointed in 1715, and it was under his supervision that the church was built. In 1731 he left Pilling and moved to Wrea Green, where he died in 1770, so he undoubtedly knew Thomas Noblet.

THE NOTEBOOK

When first seen, the notebook was a very grubby, vellum-covered volume containing sixty-four pages of notes, drawings, calculations and sundry jottings. It is not a bound book in the proper sense, being almost certainly home made. It is made in distinct sections, each comprising four sheets of paper, folded to make eight leaves or sixteen pages. The sheets are sewn together along the fold, each section then being sewn to the next and simply enfolded (but not bound) into the vellum cover. However, the notebook is not complete, because several sections have had one or more pages excised. The page size is roughly foolscap octavo (about four inches by six and a half), small enough to fit into a pocket, and it seems that this was essentially its purpose, to be carried in Noblet's coat pocket to make notes or drawings as occasion demanded. It opens with a dated title page (1725) followed by the beginnings of an index, but quickly becomes spontaneous, unsystematic and a little chaotic, perhaps reflecting Noblet's own life in the early years of his career.

Page 61 was perhaps originally intended as a title page; it is inscribed with a bold flourish and a tag in schoolboy Latin – *Ejus Liber* (his book). The hand is bold and fluent, very different from the experimental signatures found folded into the vellum cover (see page 67), which suggests a hand other than Thomas's, for judging by his

2 The reconfigured pulpit. Church of St John the Baptist, Pillling. *The Author*

3 One of the original pew doors. Church of St John the Baptist, Pilling. Dated 1719. *The Author*

spelling and syntax Noblet was not well educated. And yet he was clearly numerate and also literate to the extent that he could communicate in writing with his neighbours, workmen, and fellow tradesmen. His spelling is often phonetic and occasionally bizarre, but was probably no worse than that of his customers, who seem mostly to have been very local. His arithmetic is accurate, and the extraordinary decimal calculation on page 53 suggests an interest in abstract mathematics well beyond that required by his work.

The book is not a continuous record. The earliest year, given on what might have been the original title page, is 1724/5, and the latest, noted on page 59, is 1746, but most of it was probably written in the years 1730 and 1731. During conservation work a backing paper (page 64B) was discovered where Thomas had been apparently practising signatures and dates. It is possible that the death of his father in 1725 may have had a bearing on the start date, or perhaps this was the year when he finished his apprenticeship.

The variety of work recorded in the notebook is remarkable and reflects the wide range of the country joiner's activities. What is particularly noteworthy is the inclusion, alongside traditional joinery, of fashionable furniture such as cases for pendulum clocks, dressing tables and easy chairs, clearly derived from London models. How these came within Noblet's purview is uncertain, since there is no evidence he ever went out of Lancashire and Cheshire. The care with which some pieces were drawn and measured suggests that he might have copied furniture he saw in client's houses, and then made his own versions. In this respect the notebook is a unique record of design transmission in provincial England.

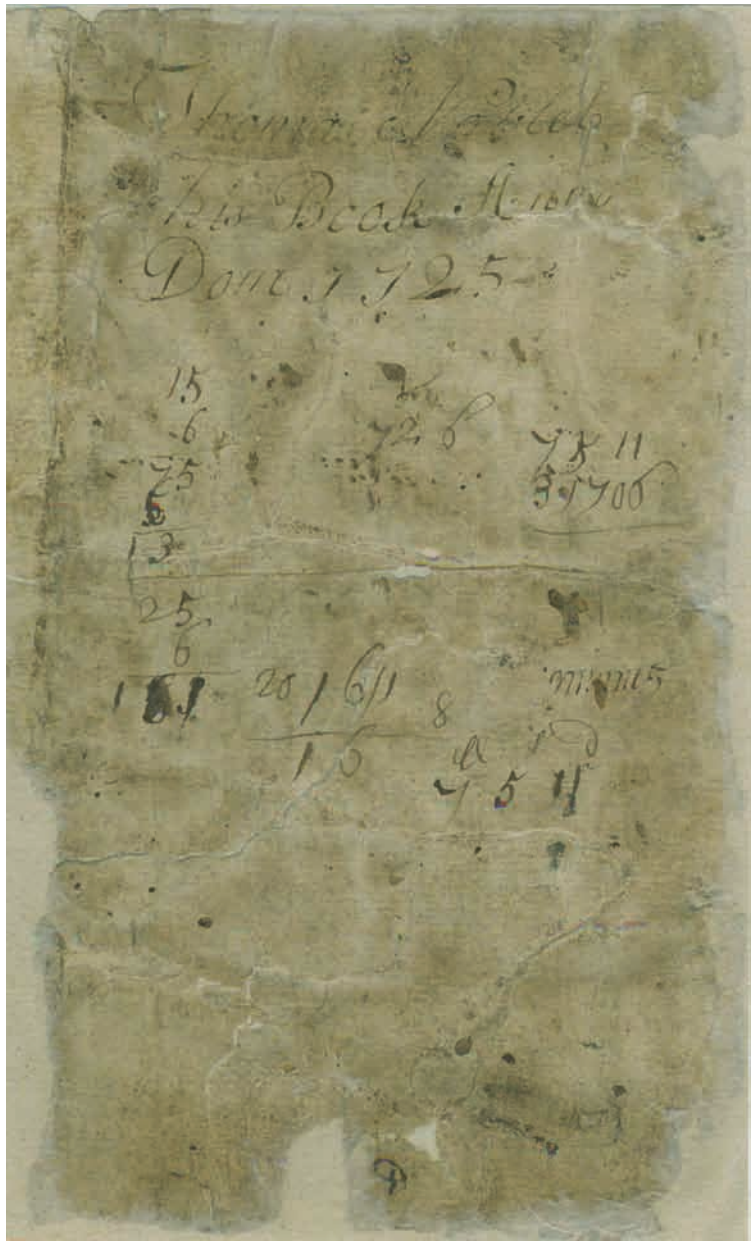
At times Noblet was poor, and had to borrow money from his wife's family. Sometimes he had little to eat, and it appears sometimes he was paid in kind rather than cash. And yet he managed to raise two families and support three wives (though not all at once!). It is possible that Noblet's fortunes improved with his second marriage shortly before 1750. By the time he died he was able to leave a viable business to his surviving son John, and from him descended a line of furniture-makers extending into the twentieth century..

List of Notebook Pages

The numbers refer to the page sequence of the notebook, shown below each notebook page as reproduced in this journal.

1. Title page, dated 1725.
2. Unfinished index of furniture and sundry jottings.
3. Account of work for various people.
4. Drawing of a snuff box &c.
5. Work done for William Noblet.
6. Drawing of a clock case.
7. Drawings of mouldings.
8. Specifications of a clock case and a half round table.
9. Drawing of a buffet stool.
10. Drawing of a dressing table.
11. Drawing of a chair crest rail.
12. Drawing of chair, front view.
13. Drawing of a chair, side view.
14. Drawing of a dado rail.
15. Blank.
16. Drawing of a high chest of drawers.
17. Specifications of a cradle and a table.
18. Drawing of a clothes chest.
19. Specifications of a chest for Jane Moss.
20. Drawing of a clock case.
21. Blank.
22. Drawing of a two-panel door.
23. Drawing of a four-panel door.
24. Drawing of a six-panel door.
25. Drawing of a six-panel door with arched panels.
26. Drawing of a spice box.
27. Blank.
28. Specification of a snap table.
29. Specification of an oval table and a close stool.
30. Specification of a dressing table.
31. Specification of an unknown structure.
32. Blank.
33. Specification of a chest of drawers.
34. Specification of a church gallery.
35. Specification of a pew.
36. Recipe for worm oil.
37. Specification for a squab, with sketch.
38. Specification of a chest for James Sanderson.
39. Blank.
40. Blank.
41. Accounts for William Riding and Eling Grimbilston
42. Specifications of a squab and two tables.
43. Specifications of a sash, snap table and clothes chest.
44. Unspecified arithmetical jottings.
45. Purchase of wood.
46. Blank.
47. Specification of an upholstered easy chair.
48. Drawing of an upholstered easy chair, side view.
49. Drawing of an upholstered easy chair, front view.
50. Blank.
51. Blank.
52. Account of wood bought.
53. Calculation of the content of a decimal yard.
54. Blank.
55. Blank.
56. Account of money borrowed from Thomas's father-in-law.
57. Account of work done for Thomas Whiteside.
58. Specification for a pulpit.
59. Account of work done for various people.
60. Measurement of boards, spars, &c. bought.
61. Fair version title page (upside down), dated 1726.
62. Blank.
63. Memo of the number of days in various months.
64. Rough or original version title page dated 1725.

64B. Rough drafts of signature and date, 1724/5, found folded into notebook cover.



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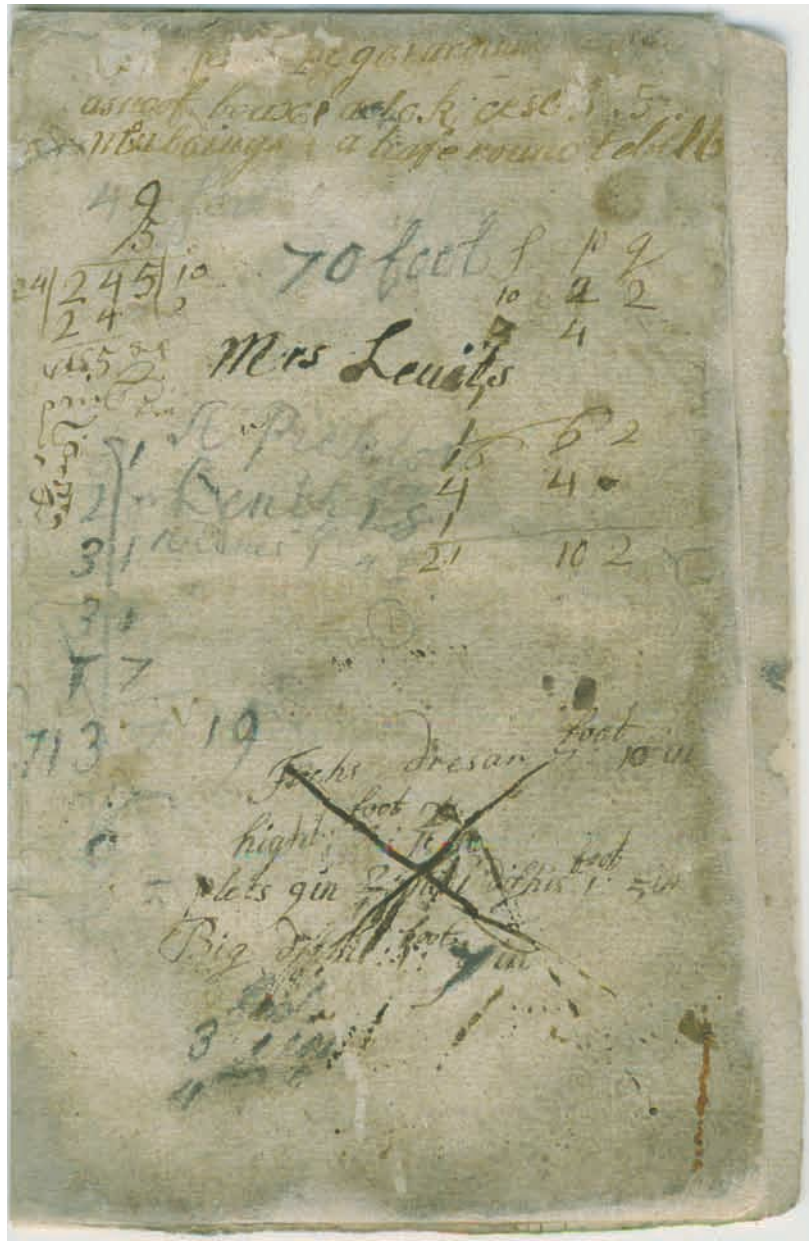

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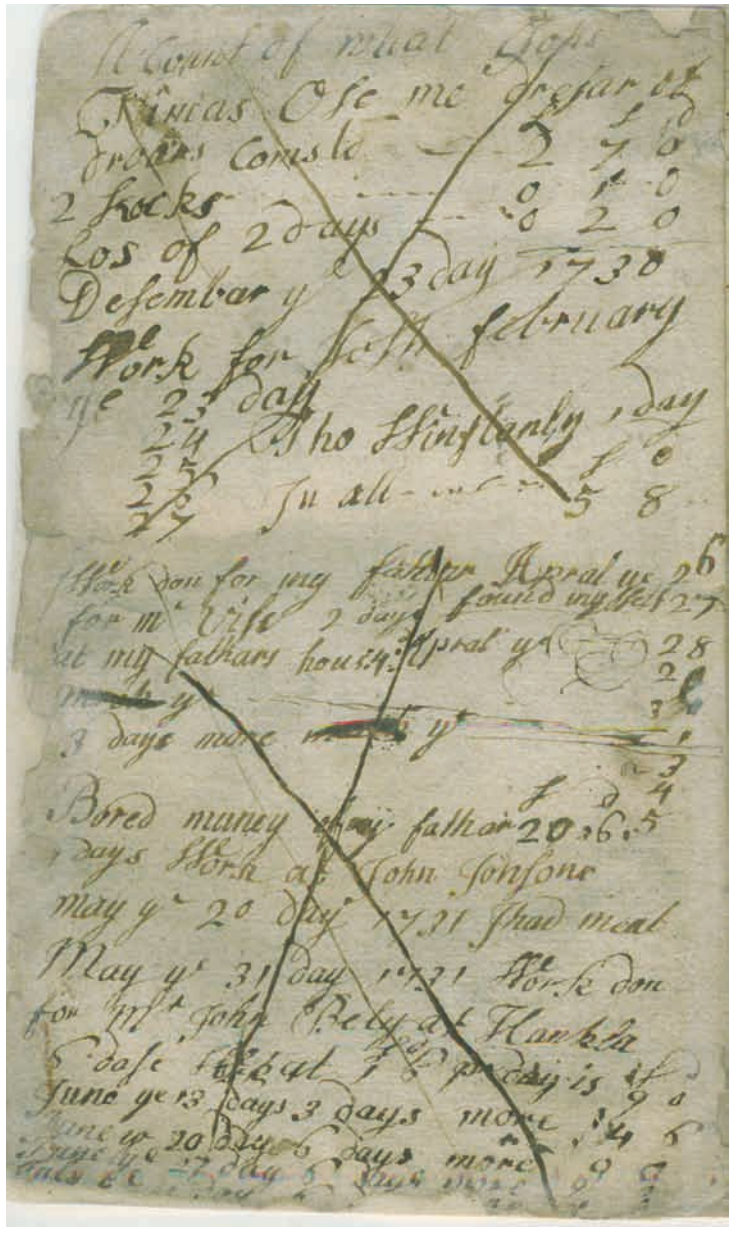

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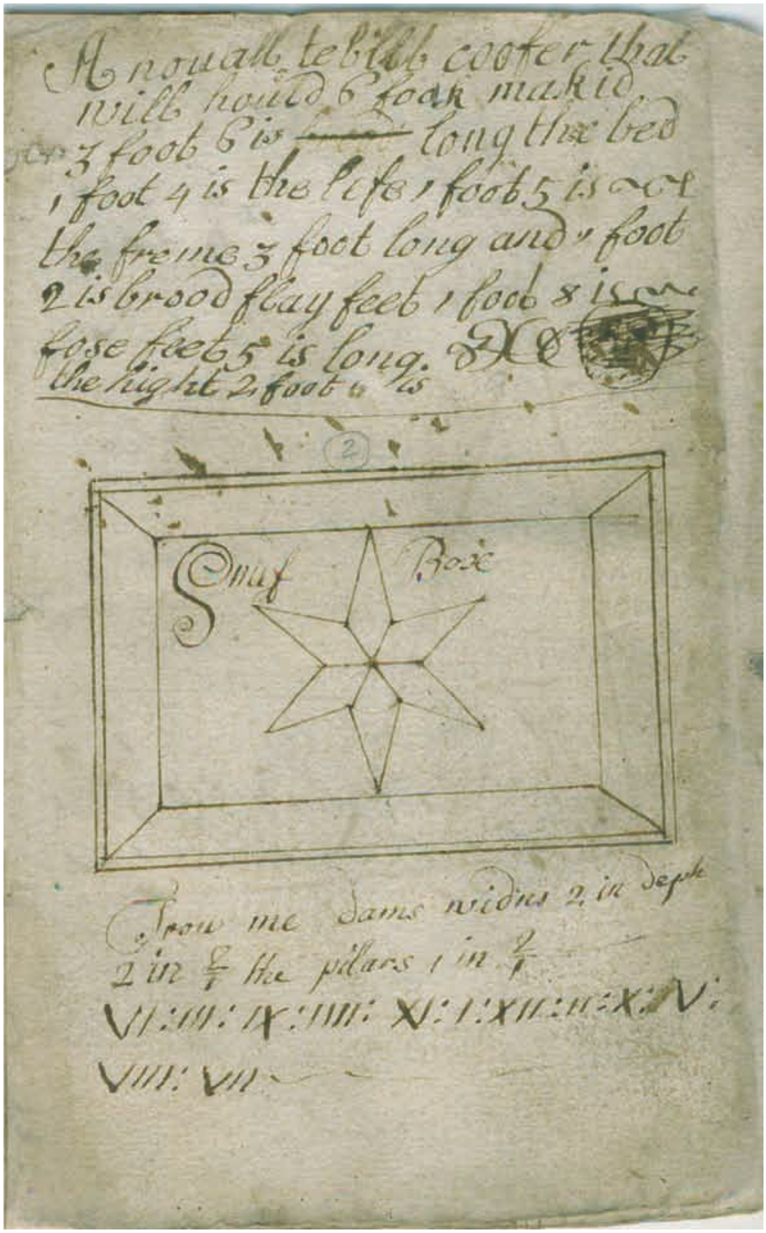

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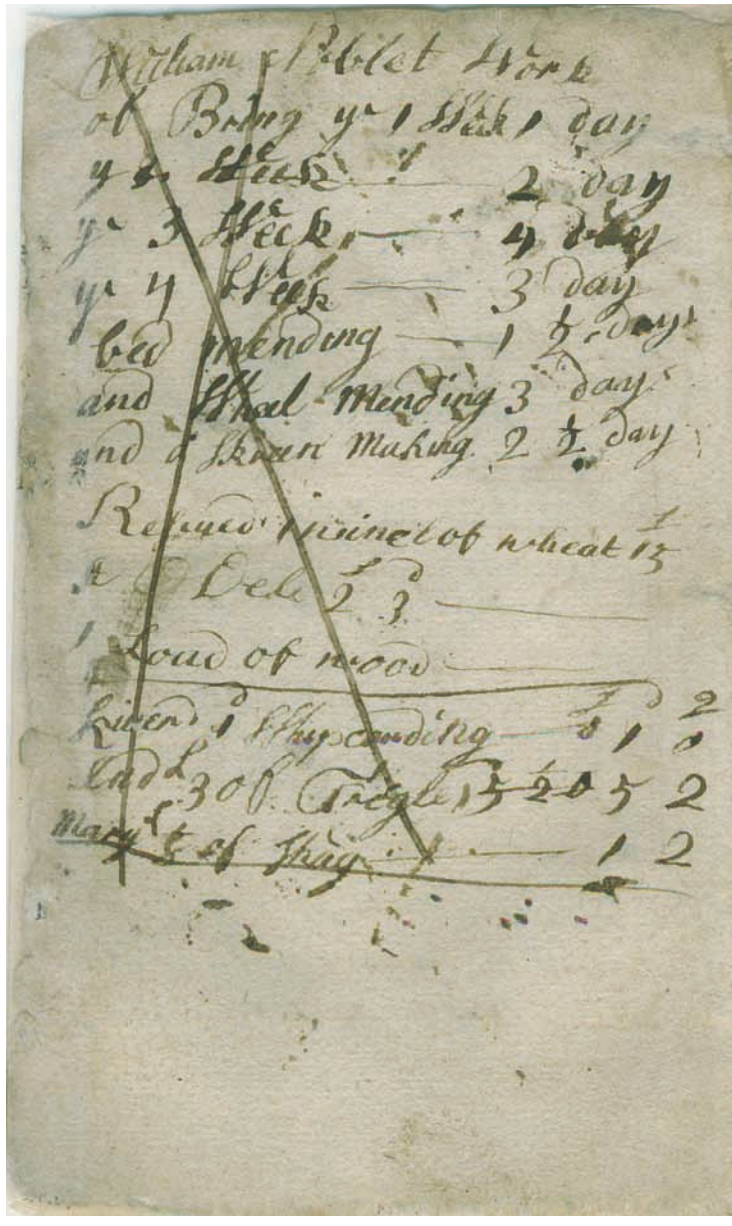

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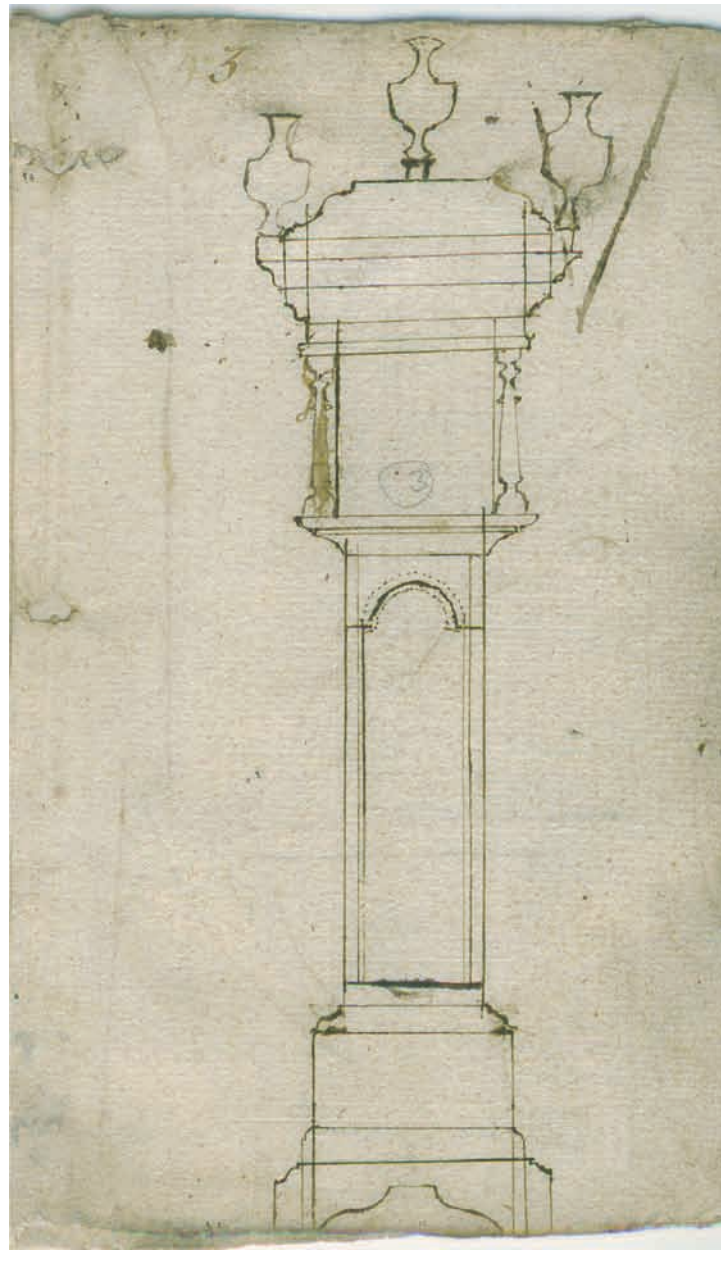

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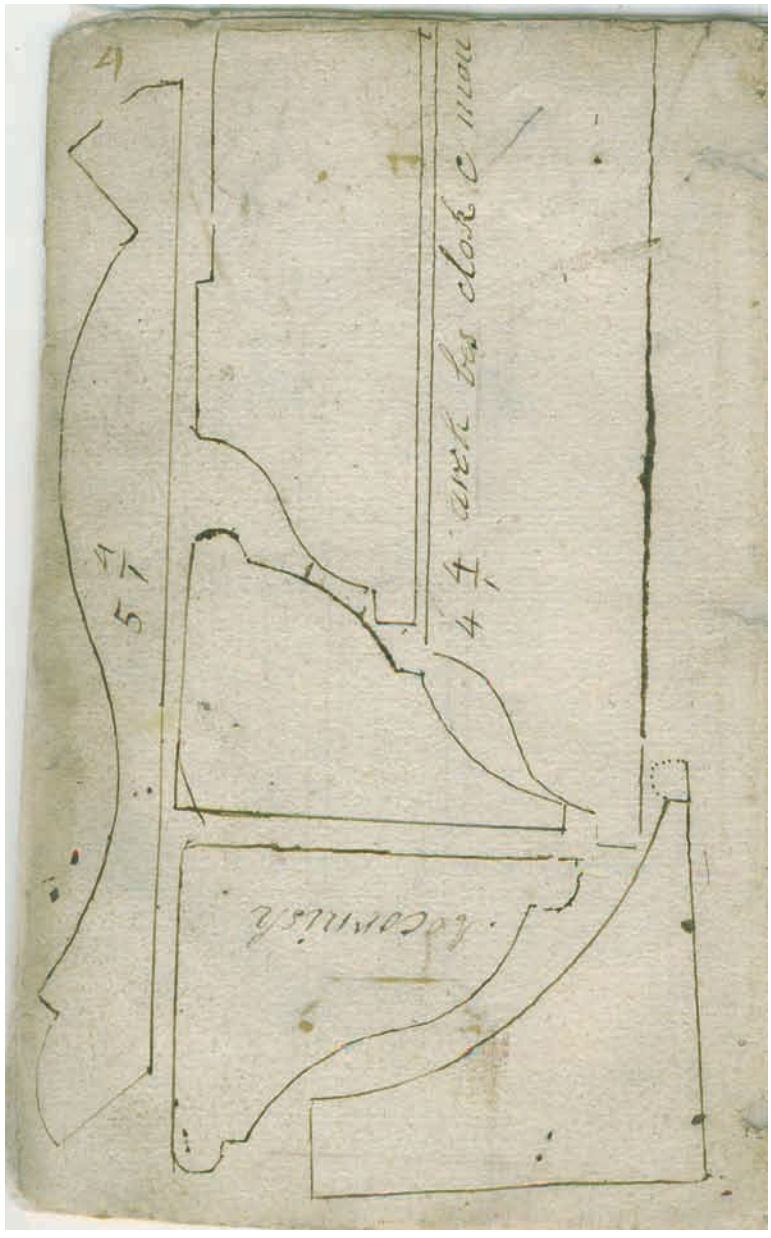

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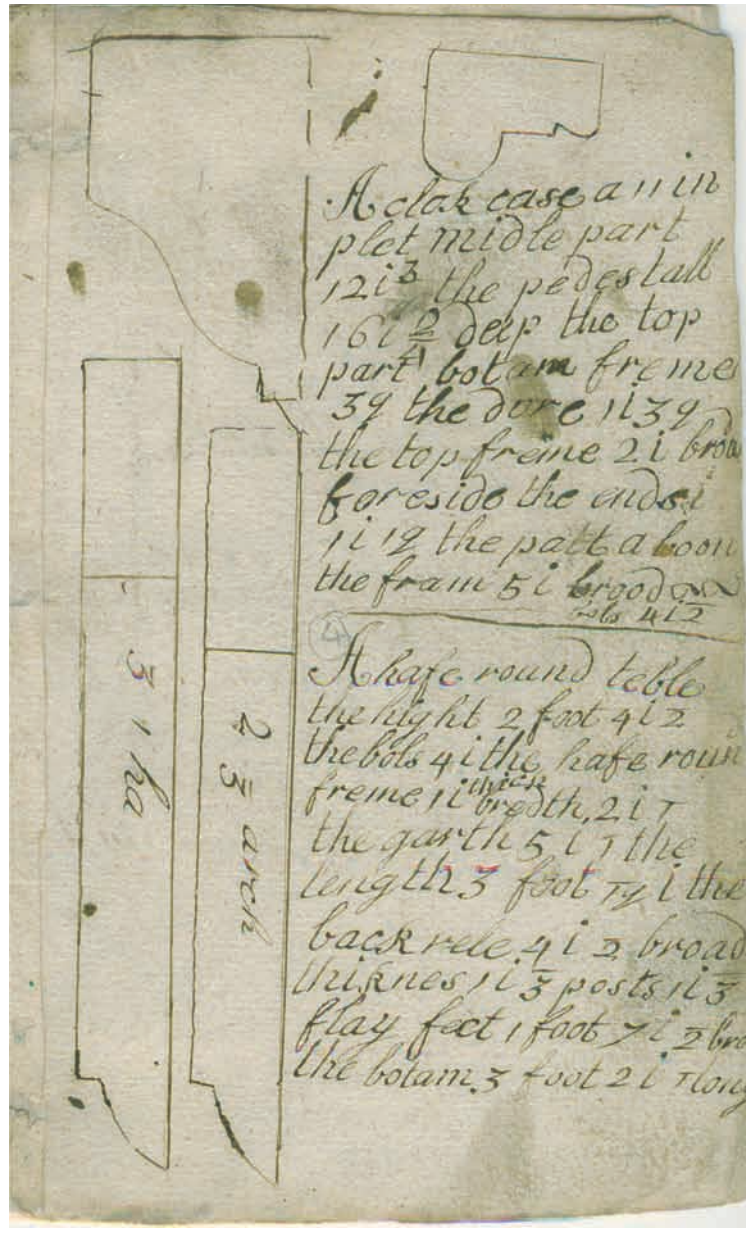
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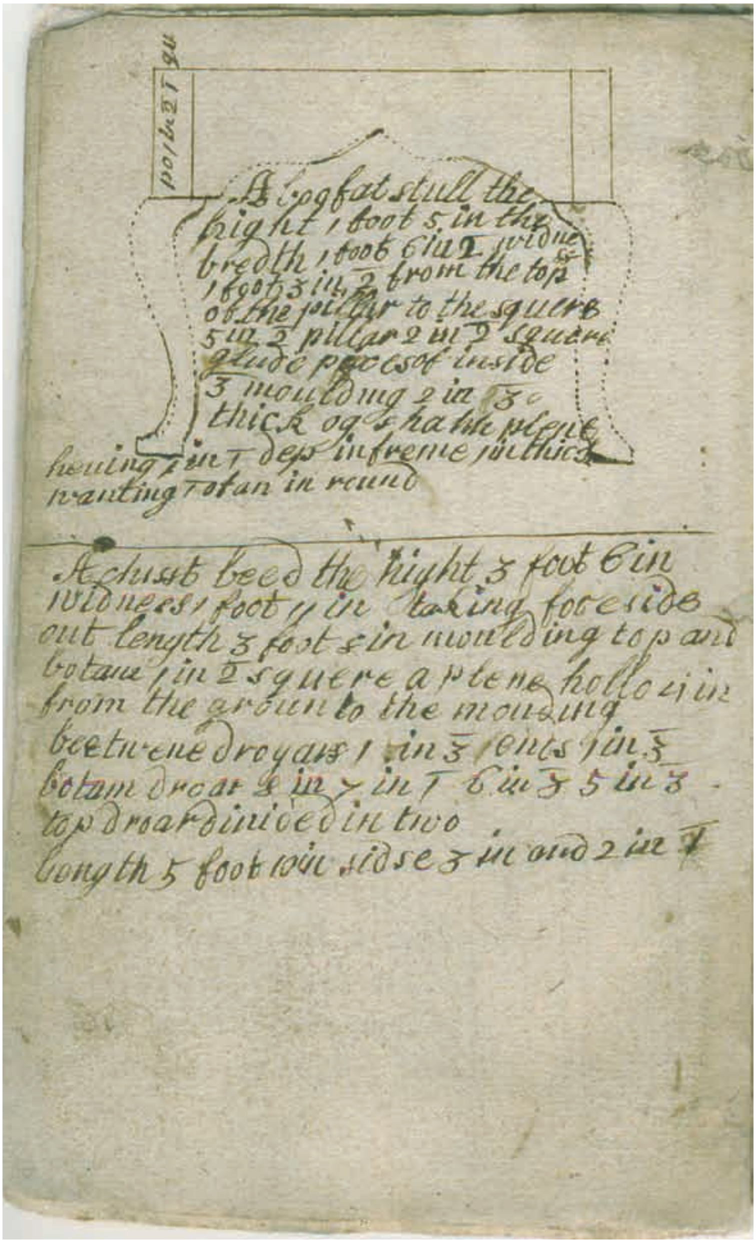
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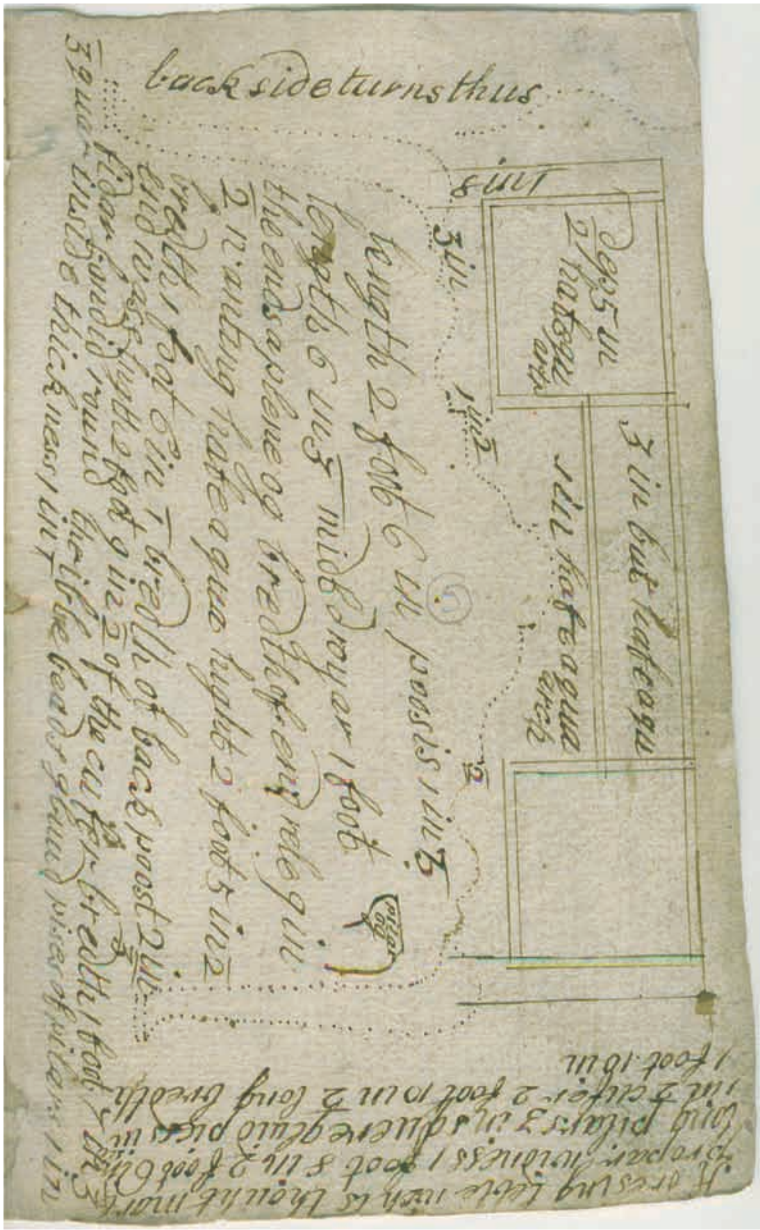

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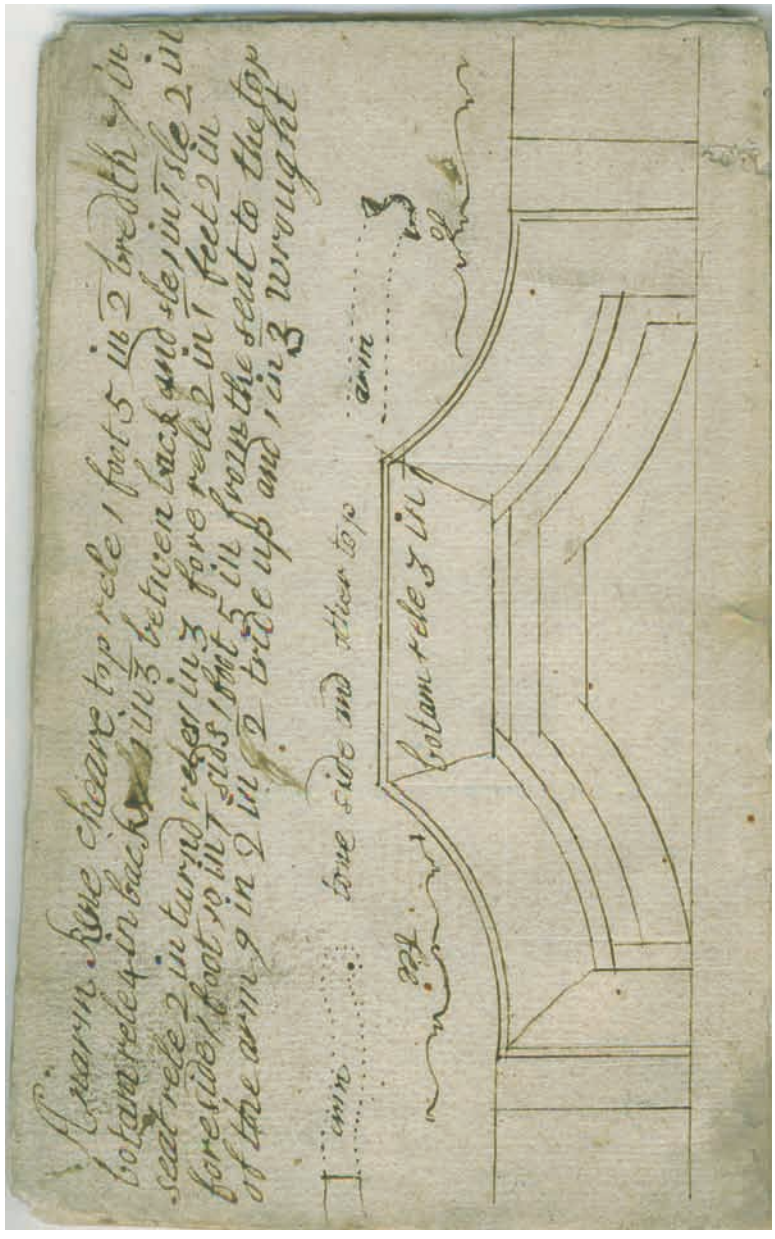

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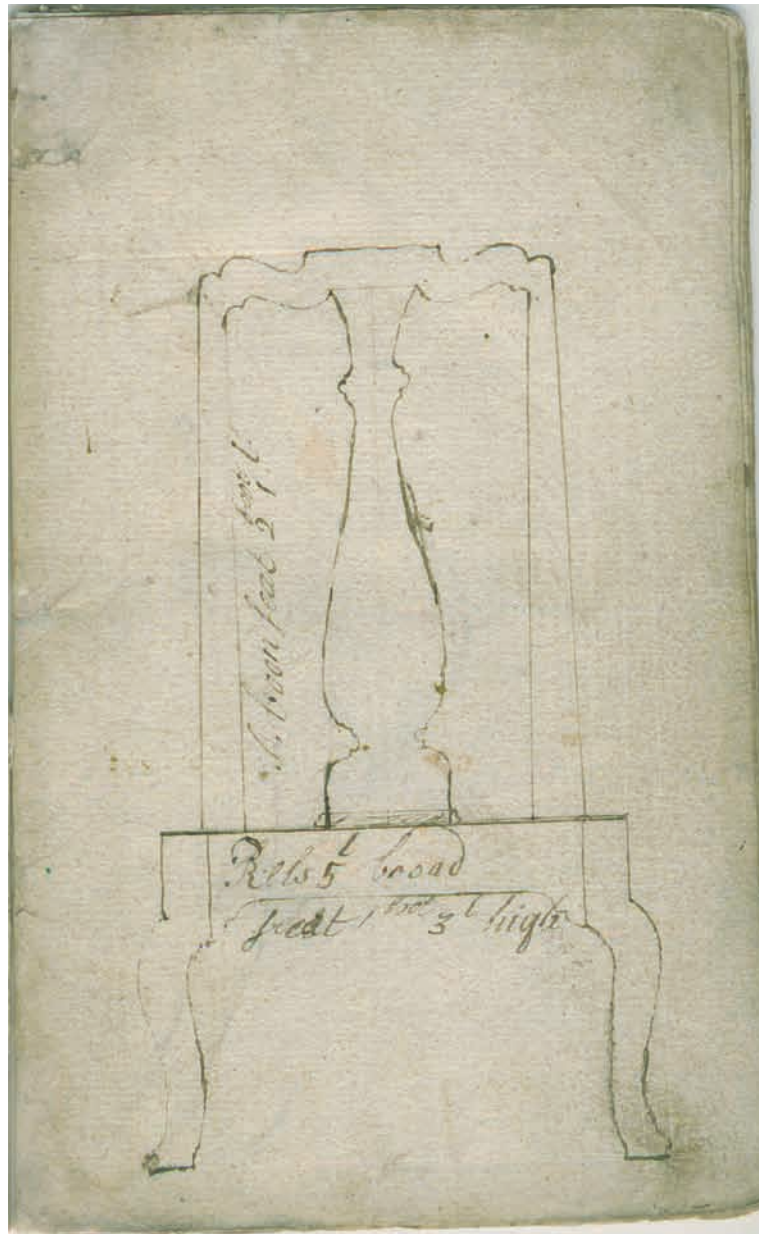

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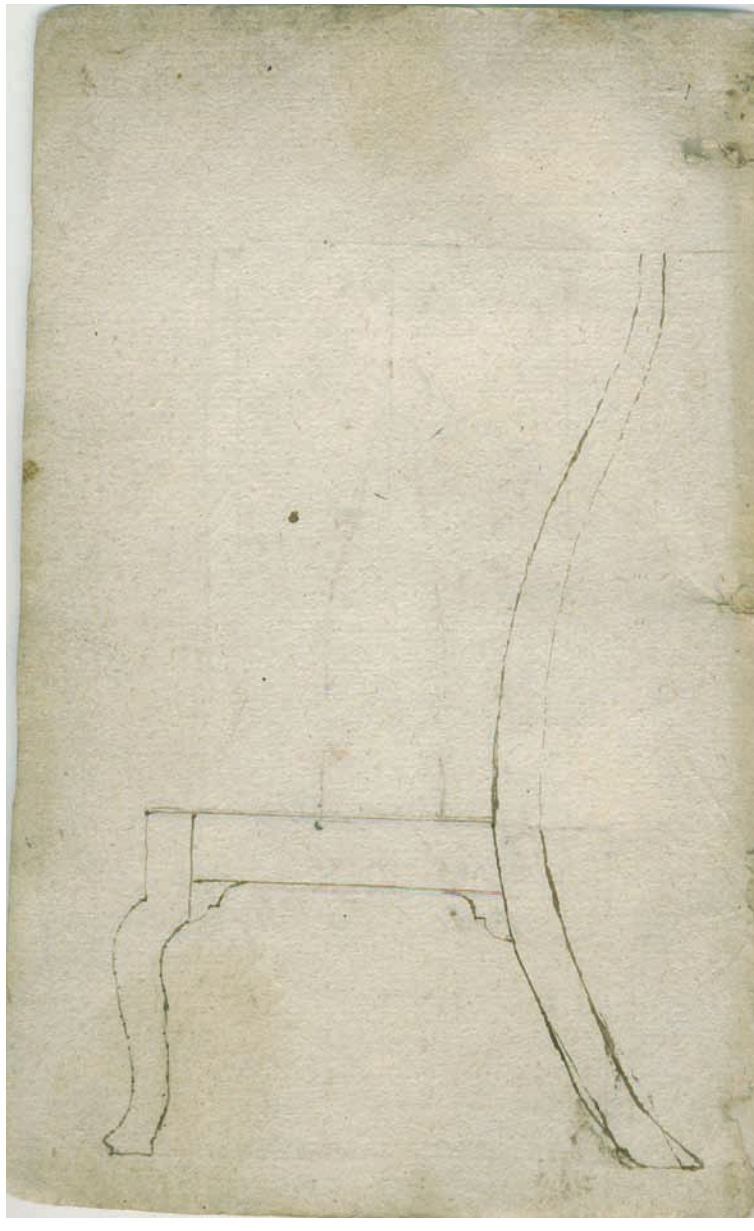

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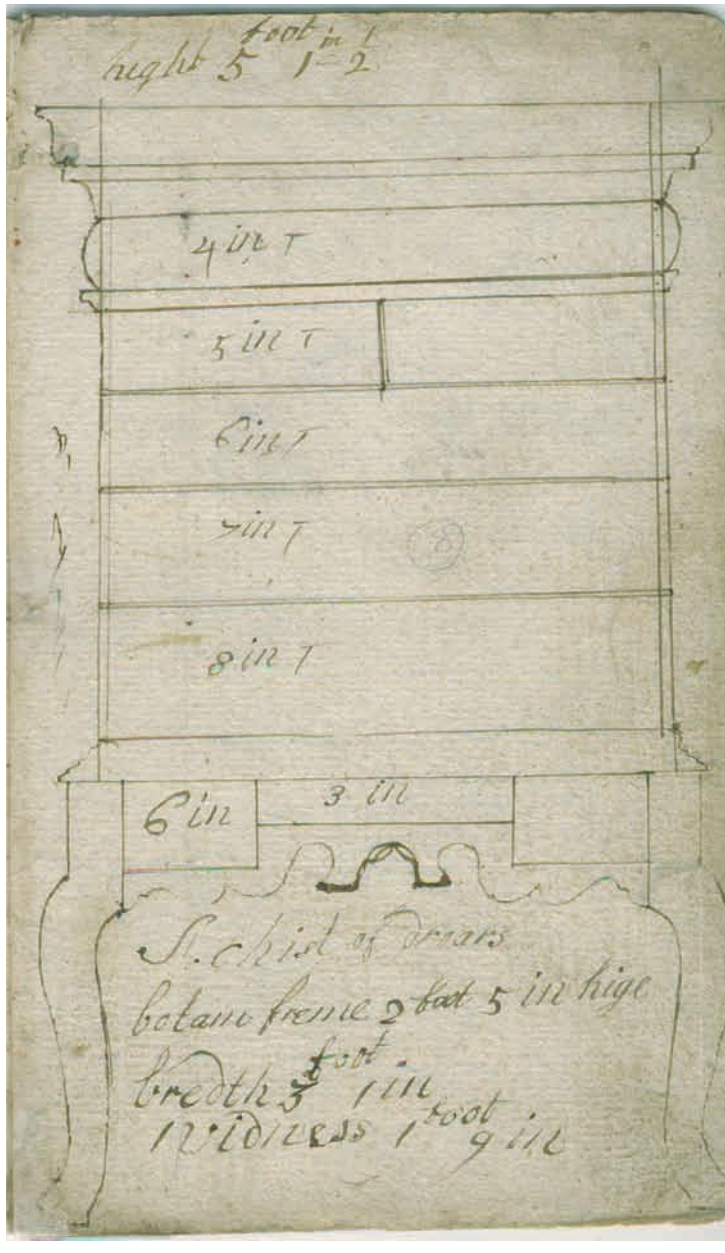
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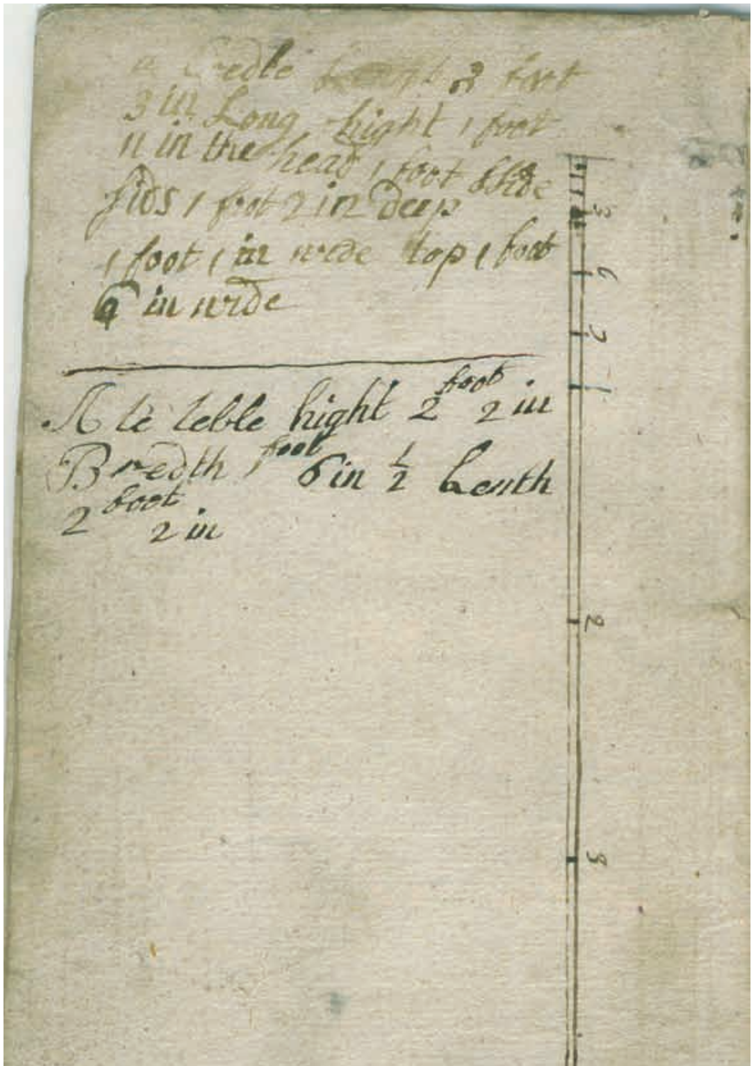

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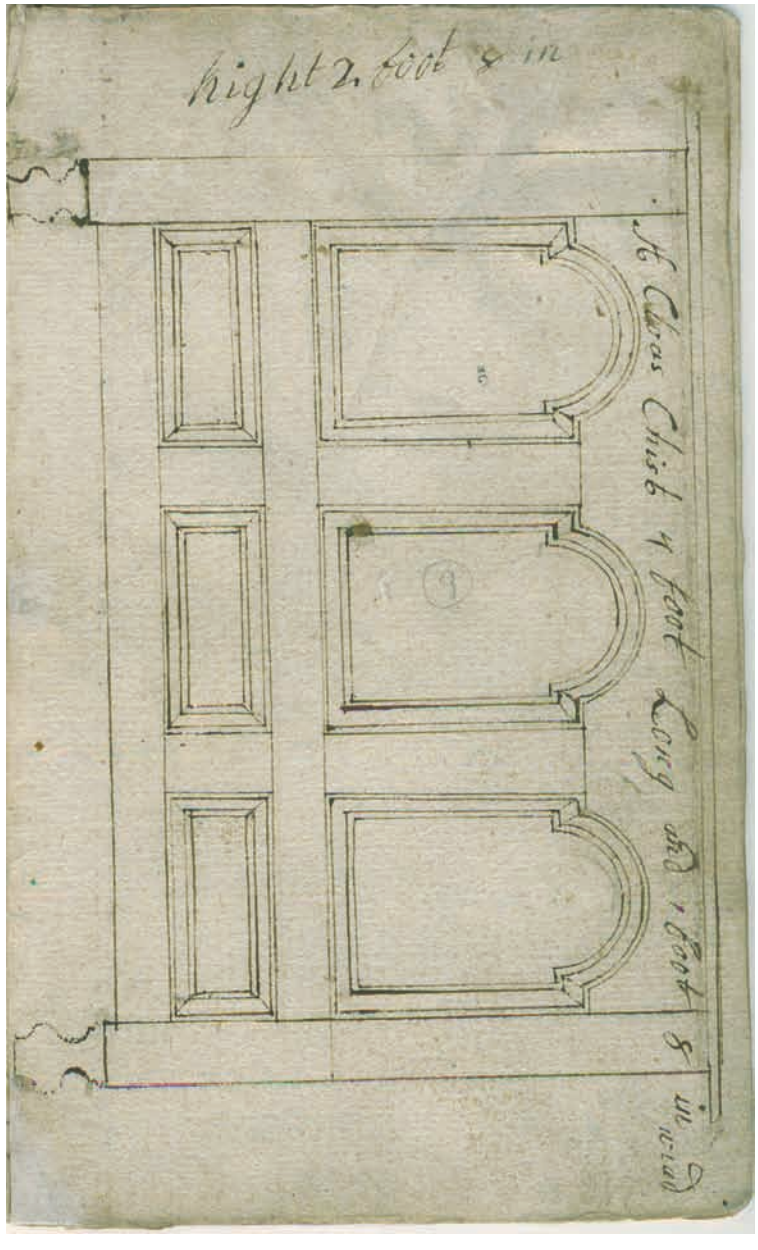

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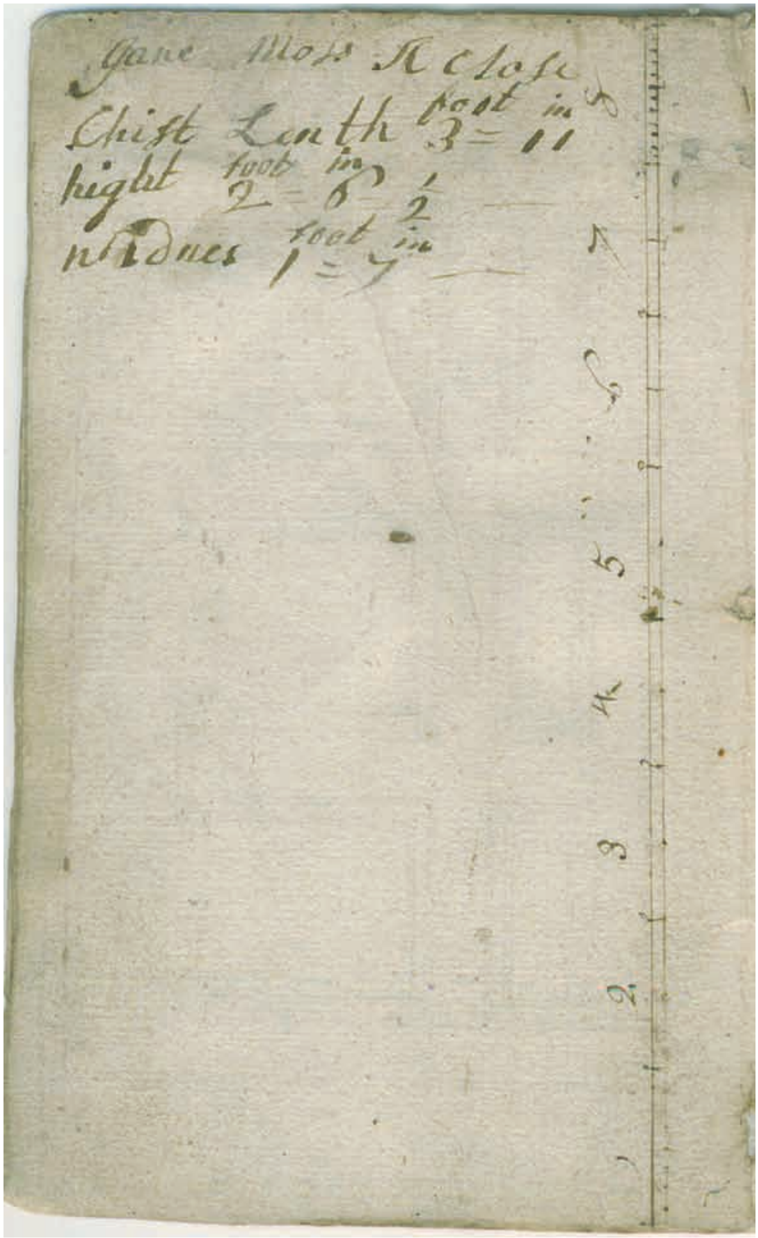

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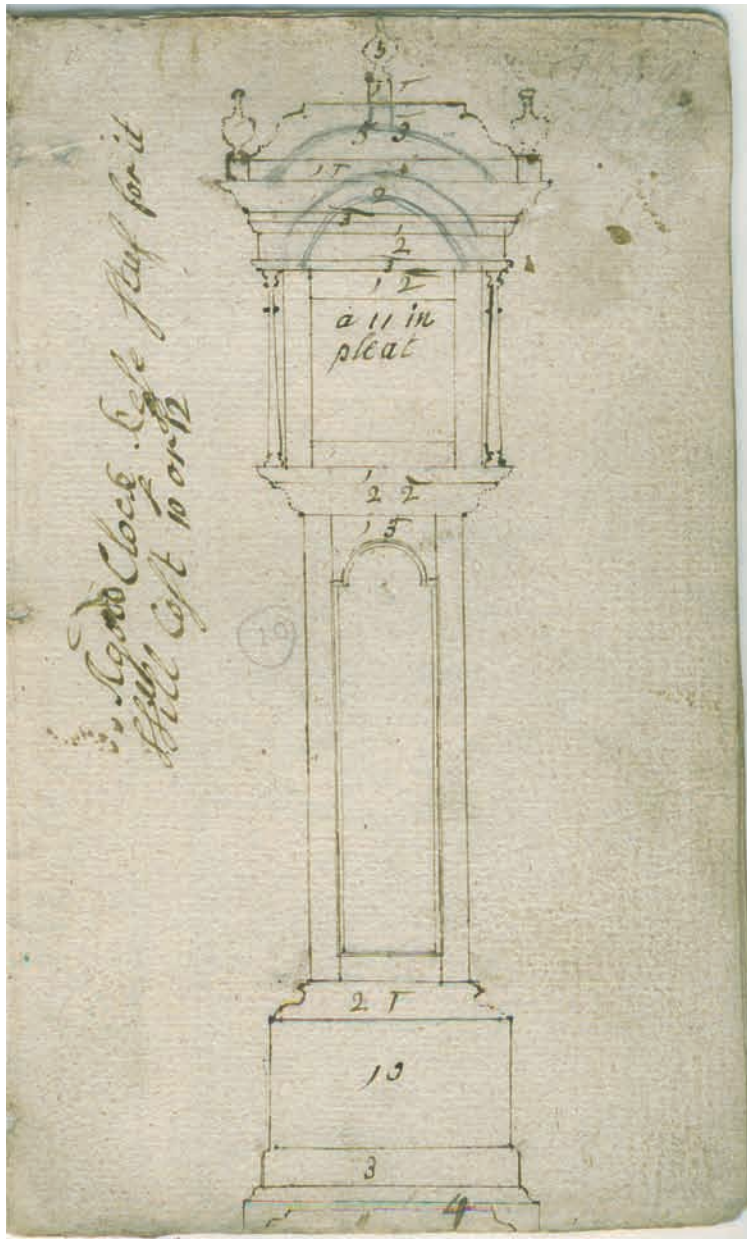

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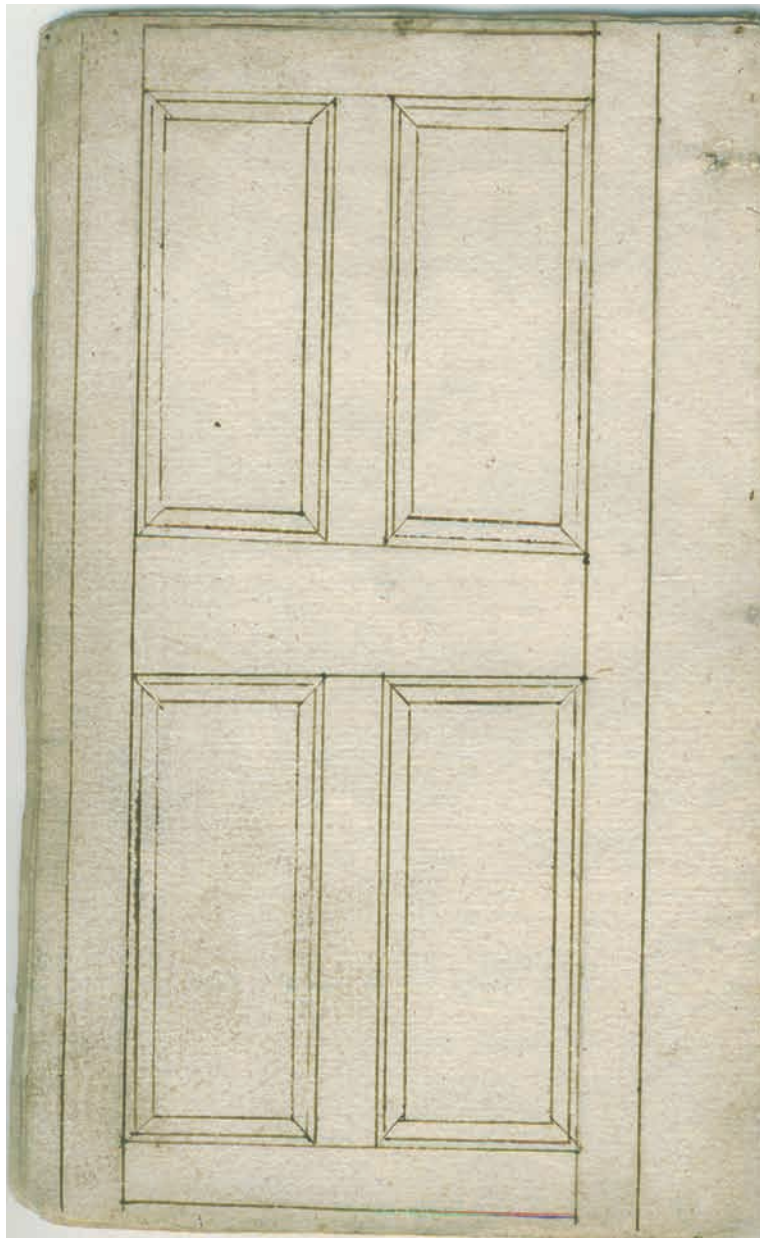

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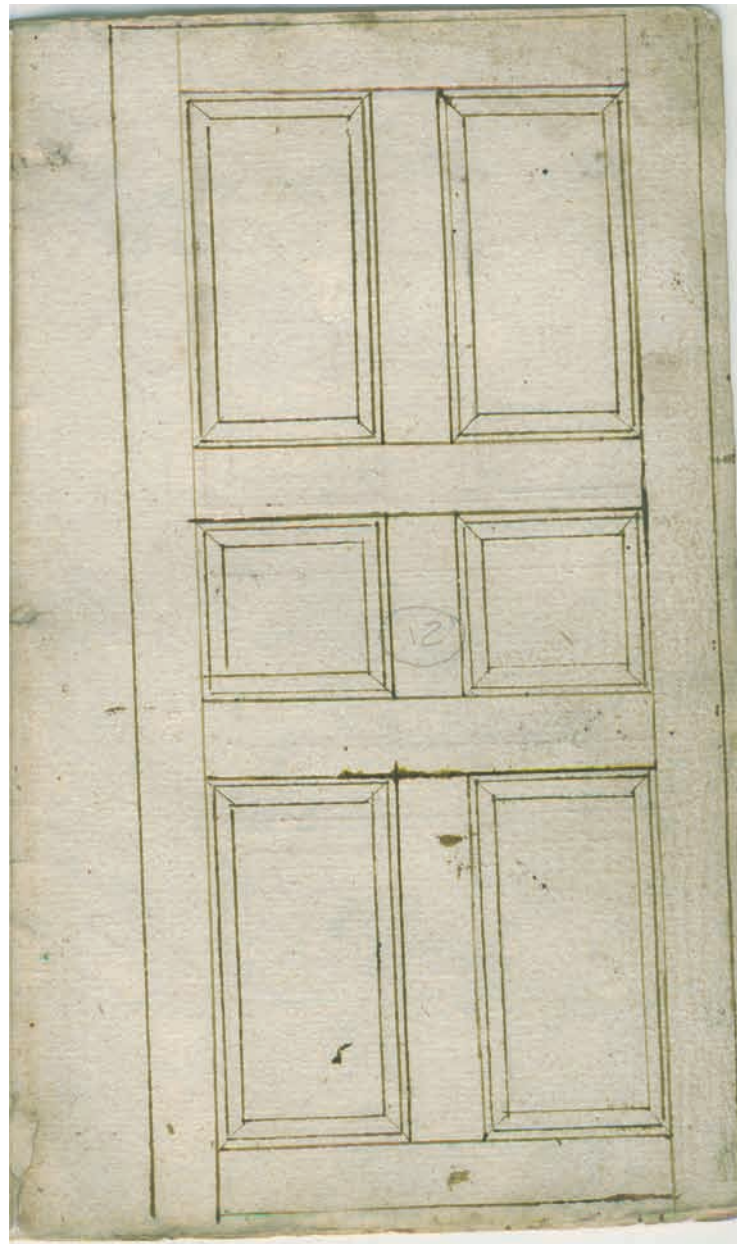

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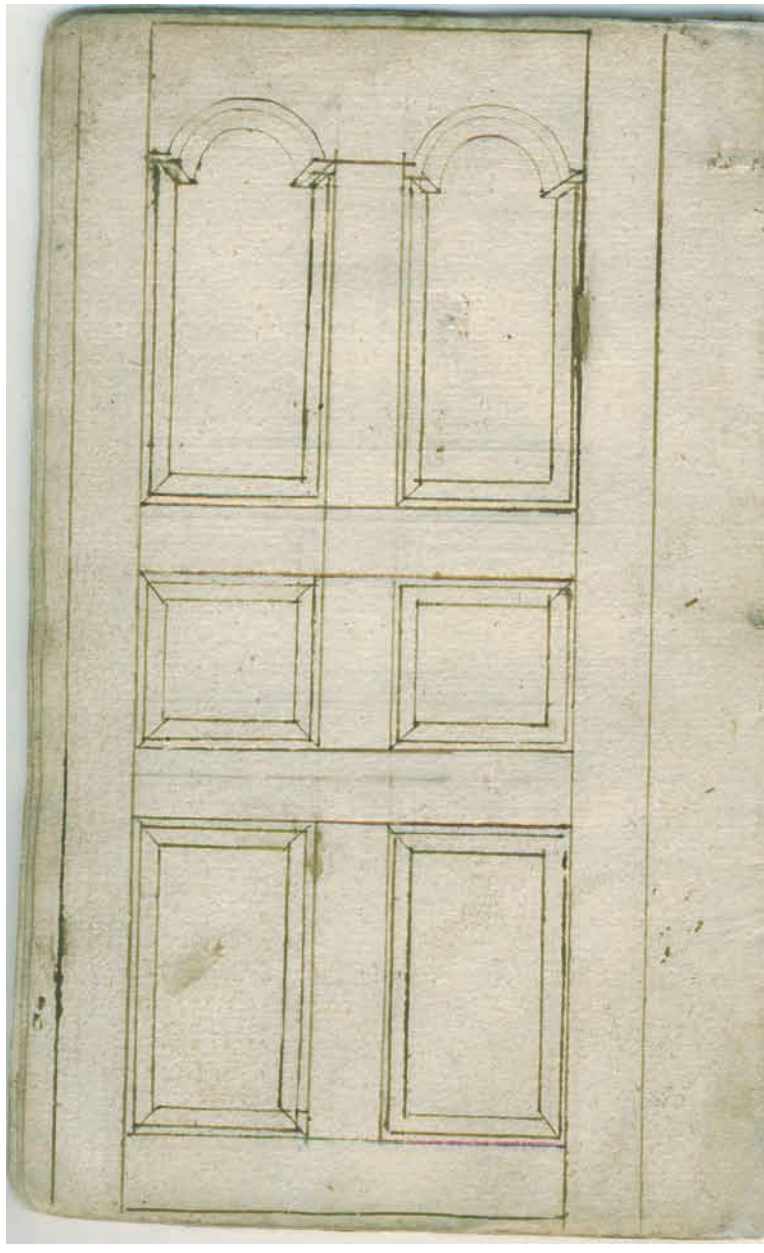

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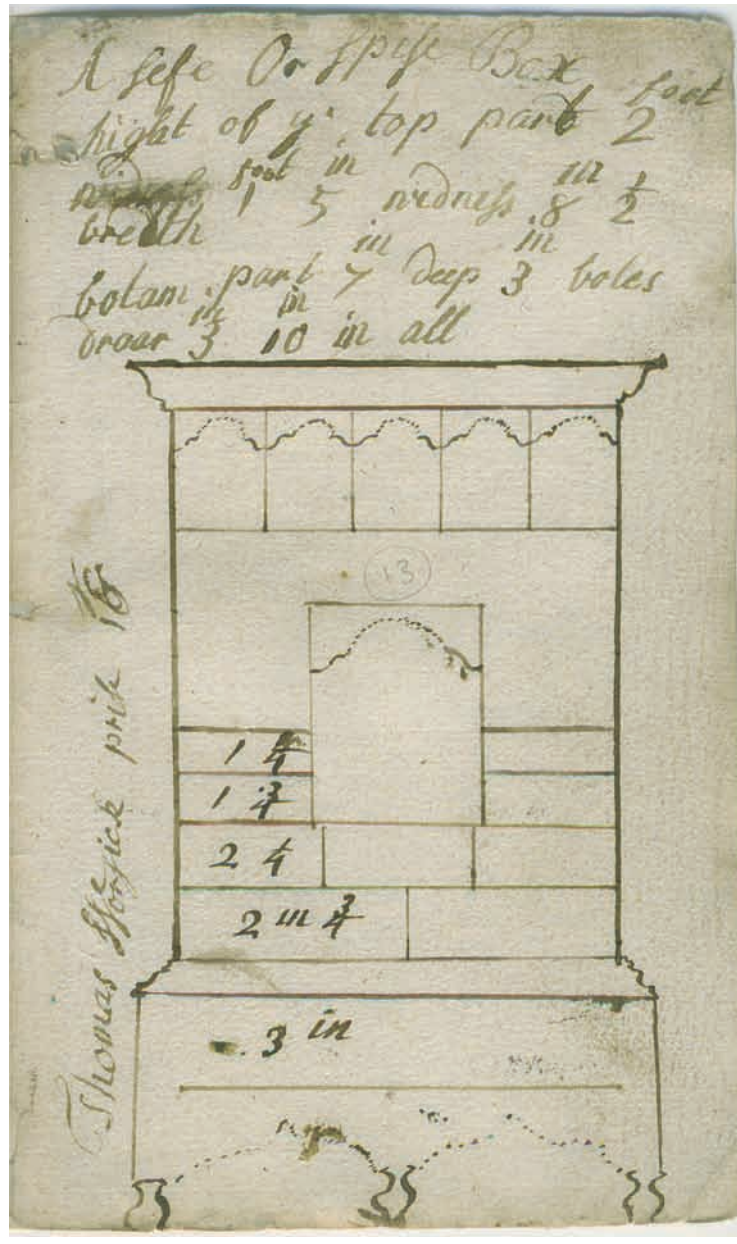

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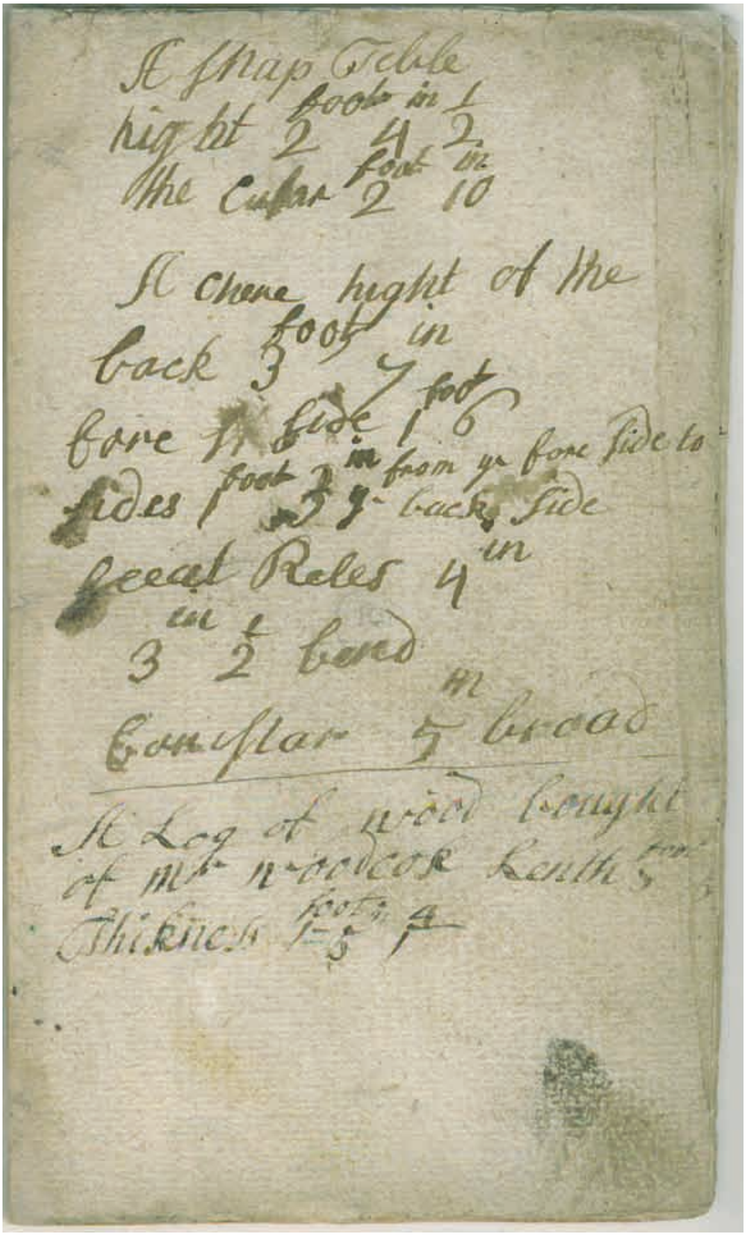

A Snap Table
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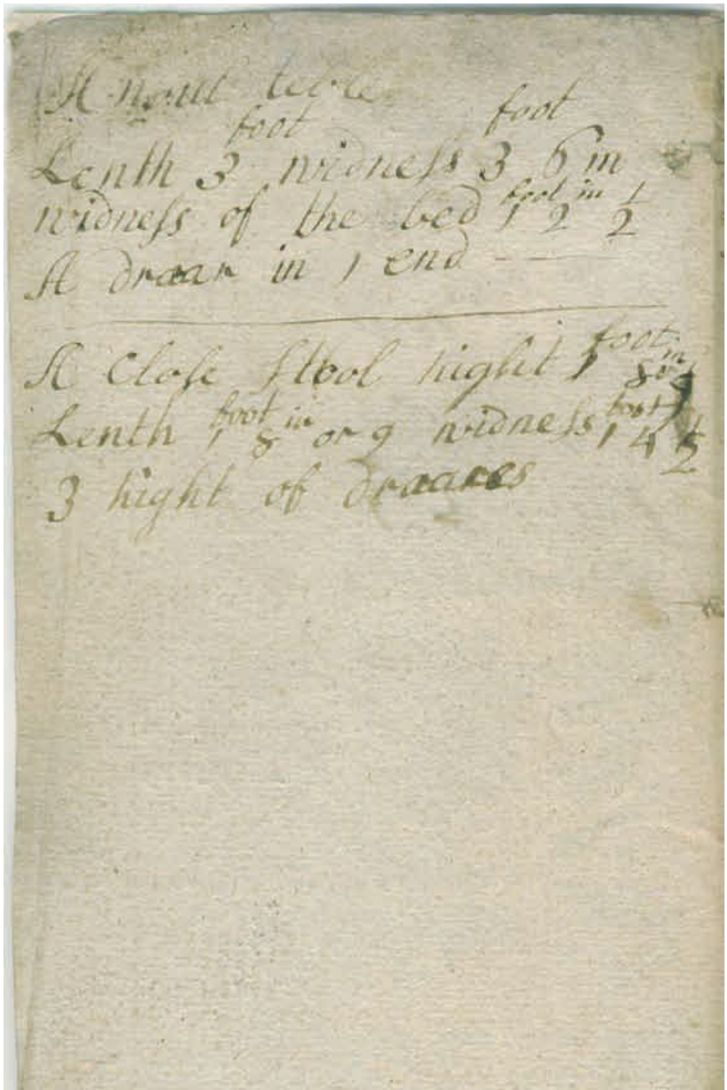
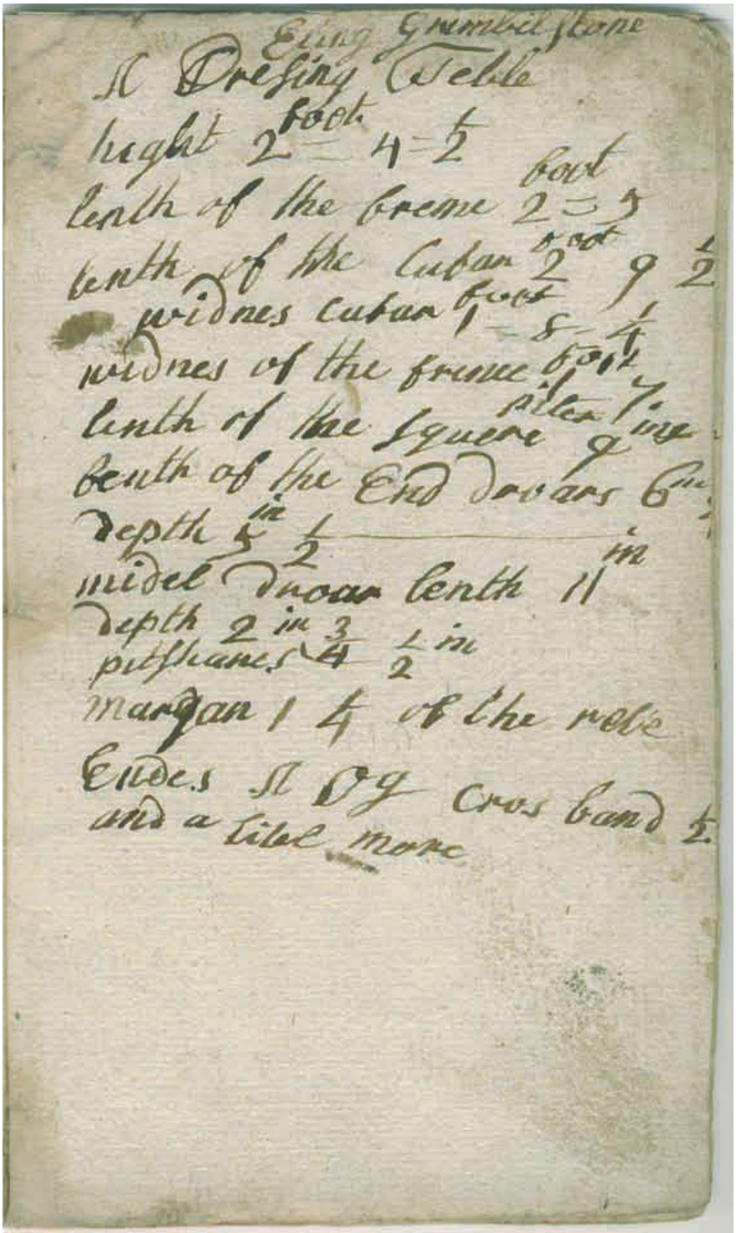
Thikness foot 1 5 4

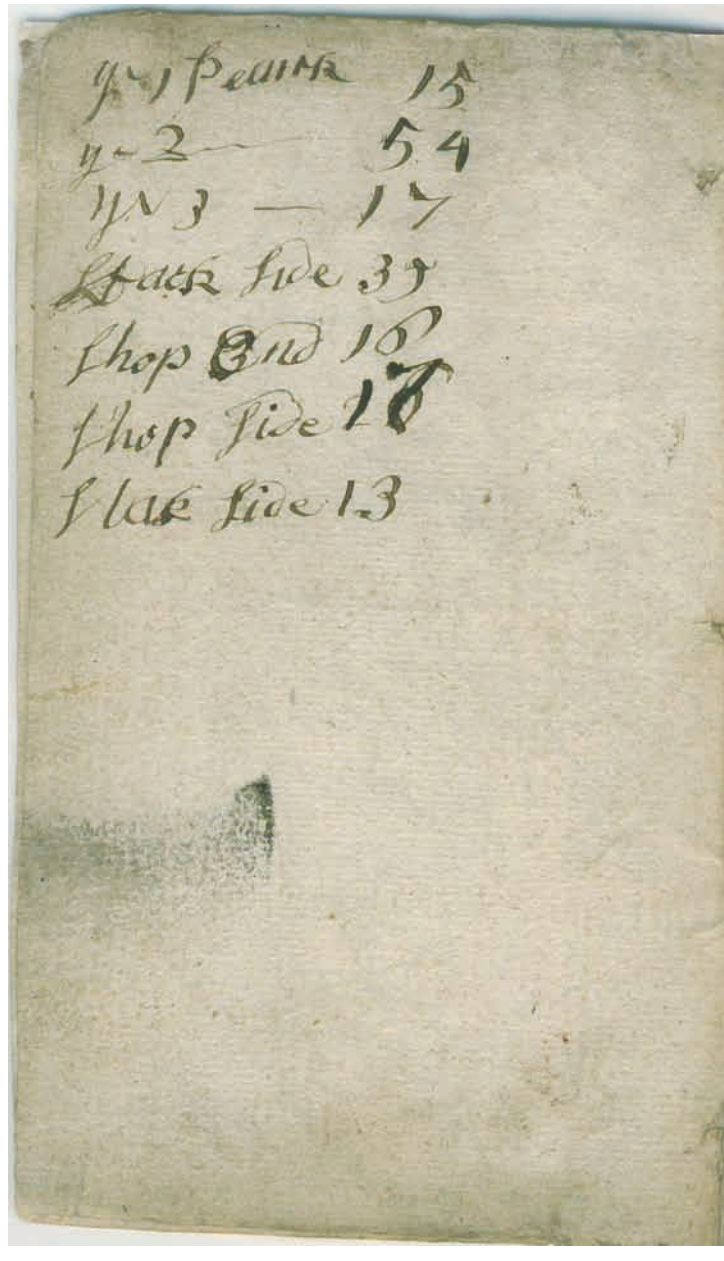
Page 28


A Nigtt tebe
Lenth 3 foot nidness 3 foot 6 in
nidness of the bed 1 foot 2 in 1/2
A draar in 1 end
A Close stool hight 1 foot 8 in
Lenth 1 foot 8 in or 9 nidness 1 foot 4 1/2
3 hight of draaes

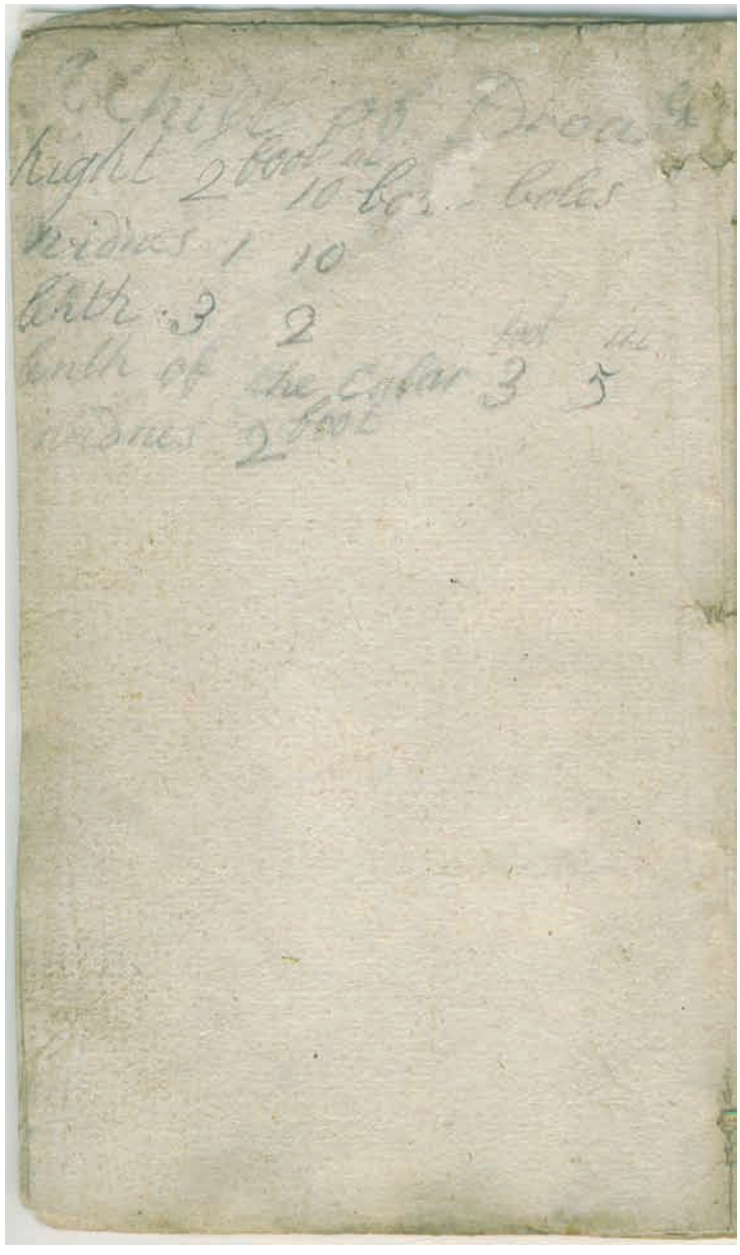
Page 29


Eling Grumbil stone
A Dresing Teble
hight 2 foot 4 1/2
lenth of the breme 2 foot 3
lenth of the Cuban 2 foot 9 1/2
widnes cuban 1 foot 8 1/4
widnes of the freme 1 foot 7
lenth of the squere 9 ine
lenth of the End droars 6 in
depth 5 in 1/2
midel droar lenth 11 in
depth 2 in 3/4
pitshanes 4 1/2 in
margan 1 4 of the robe
Endes A Og cros band 1/2
and a litel more

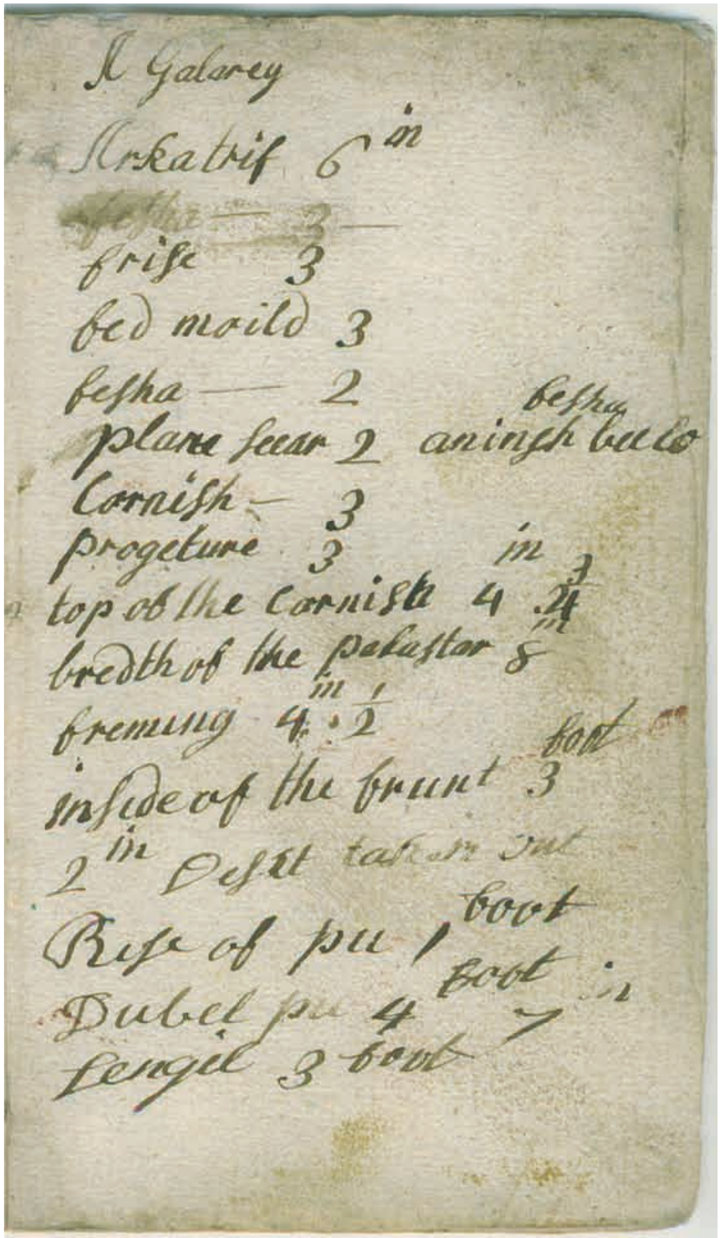
Page 30



Page 31 (Page 32 is blank)

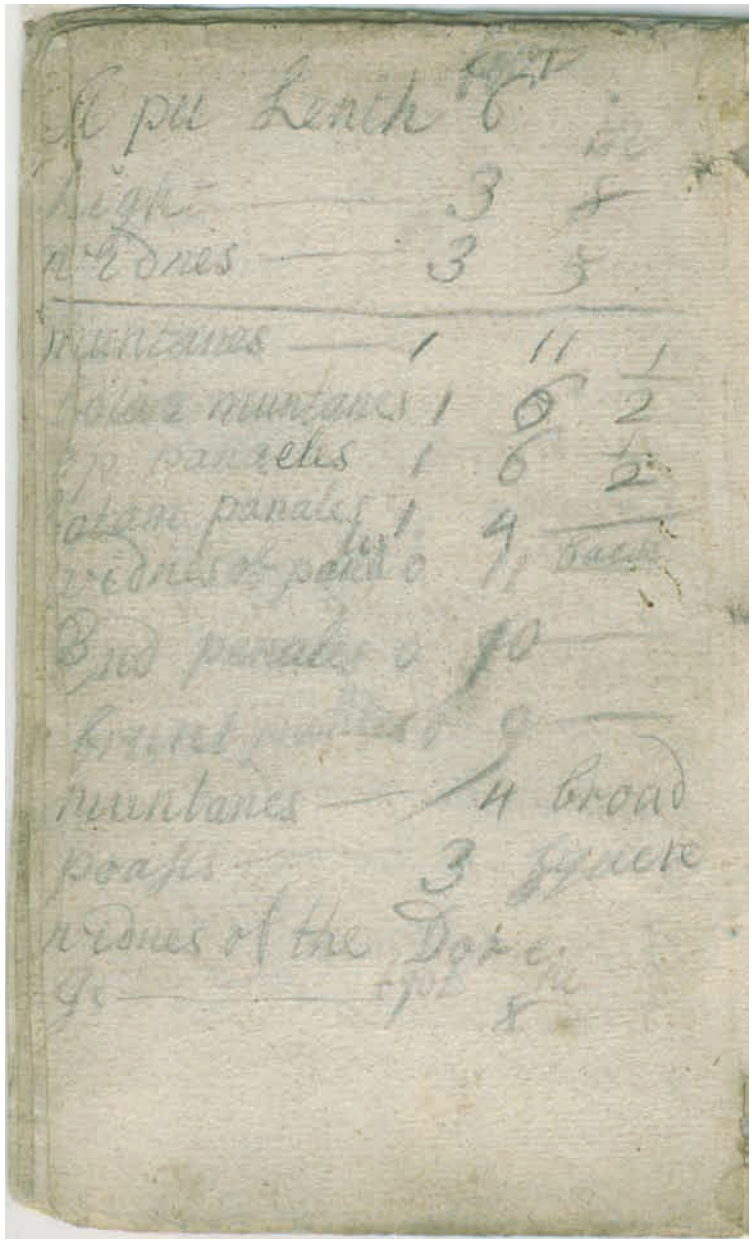


Page 33

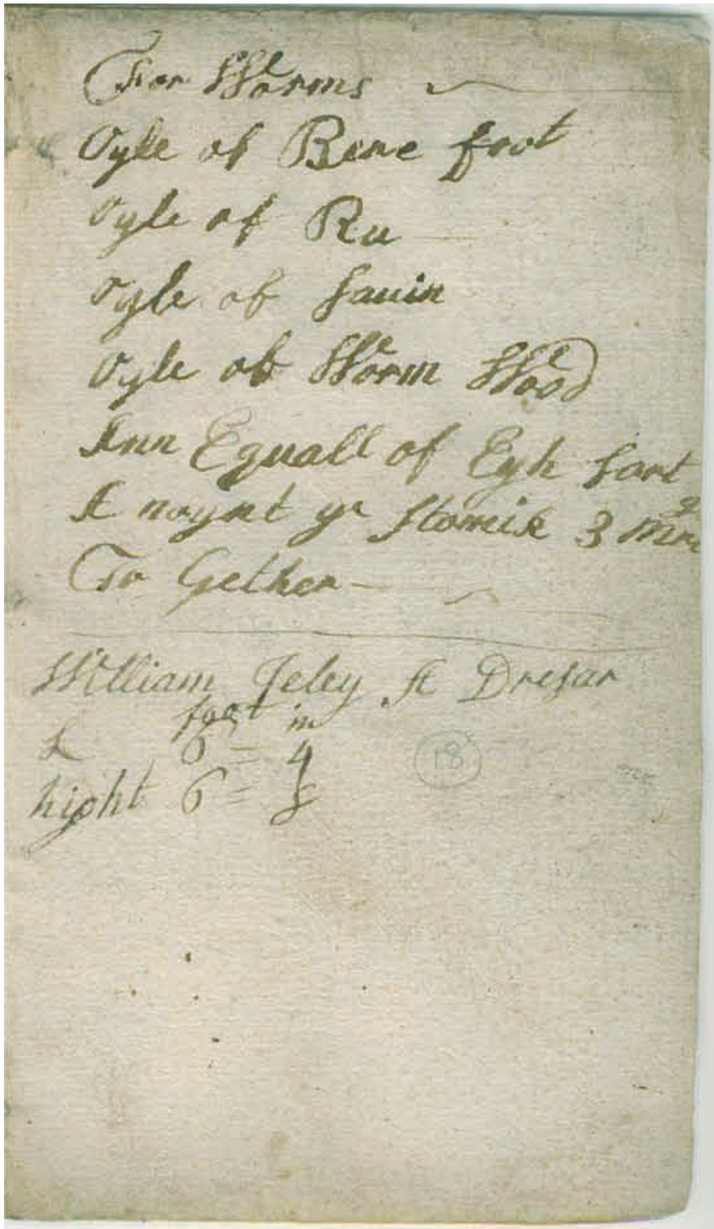


A Galarey
Arkatrif 6 in
[illegible] 2
frise 3
bed moild 3
fesha — 2 fesha
plane fecar 2 aninch bello
Cornish — 3
progeture 3 in
top of the Cornish 4 3/4
bredth of the palastar 8 in
freming 4 1/2 in
inside of the brunt 3 foot
2 in pesit taken out
Rise of pu 1 foot
Dubel pu 4 foot 7 in
Sengel 3 foot

Page 34

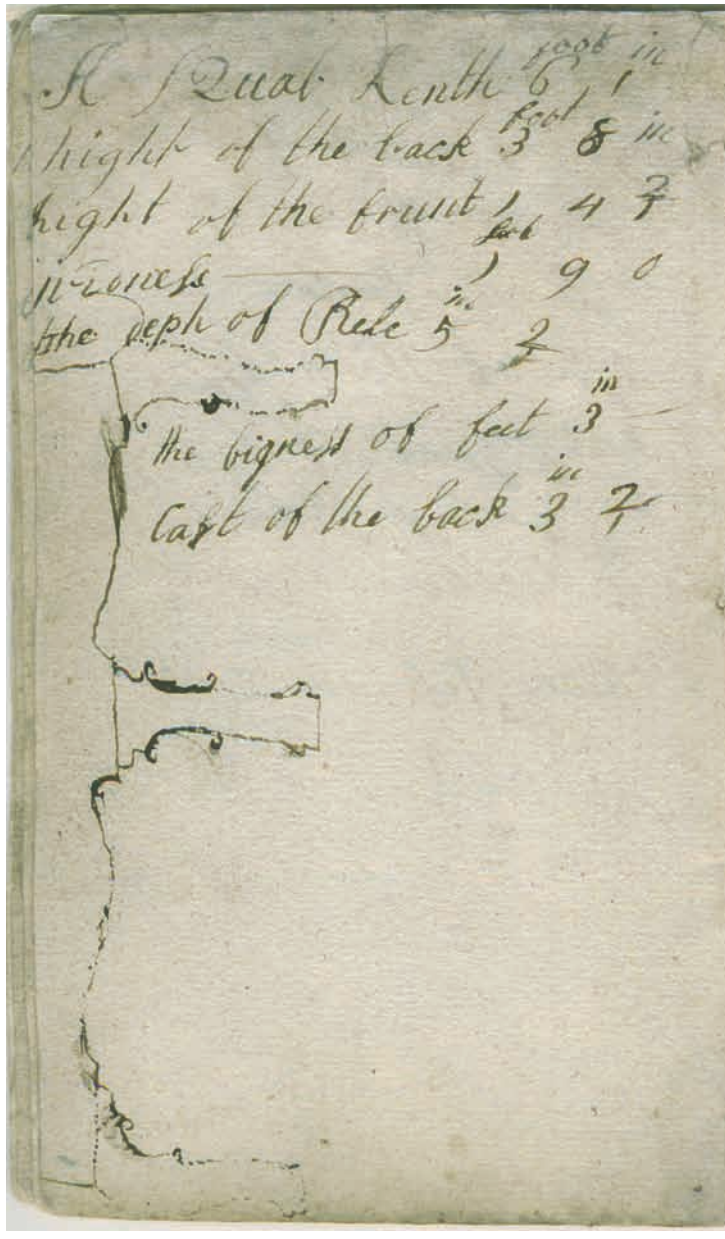


Page 35

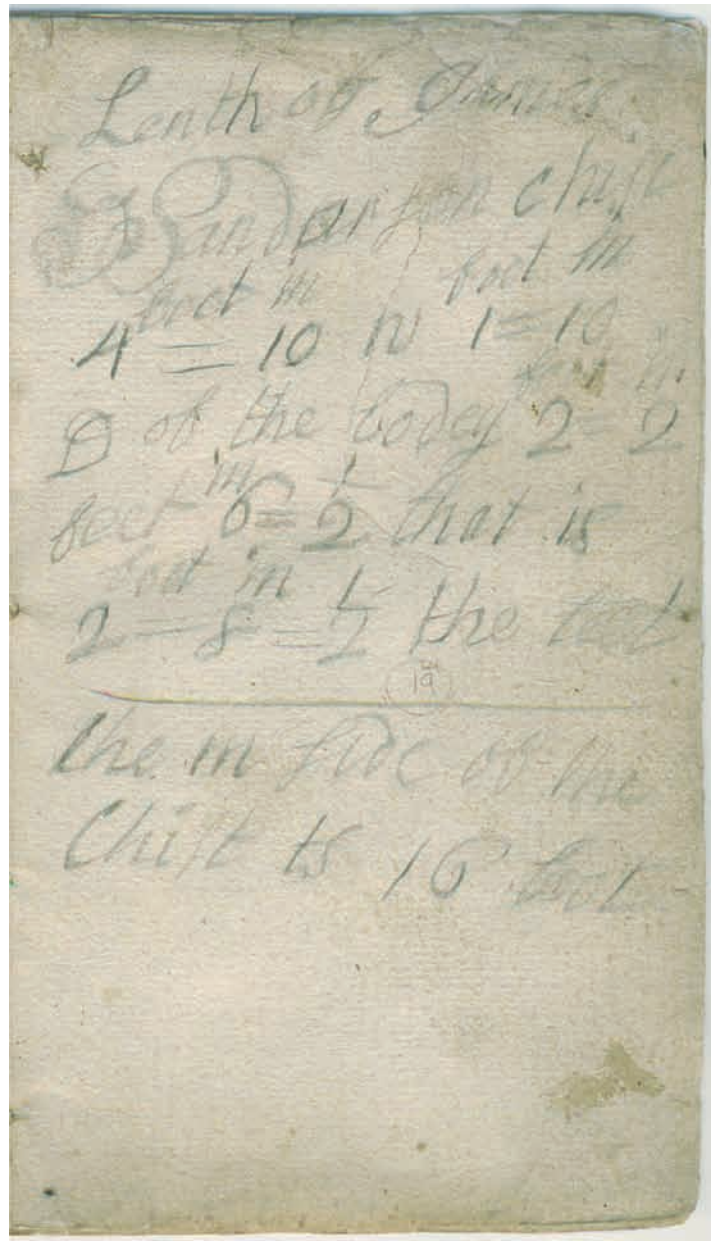

For Worms
Oyle of Bene foot
Oyle of Ru
Oyle of Savin
Oyle of Worm Wood
Ann Equall of Eych sort
& noynt ye Stomick 3 more
To Gether

William Jeley A Dresar
foot in
6 = 4
hight 6 = 3
(18)

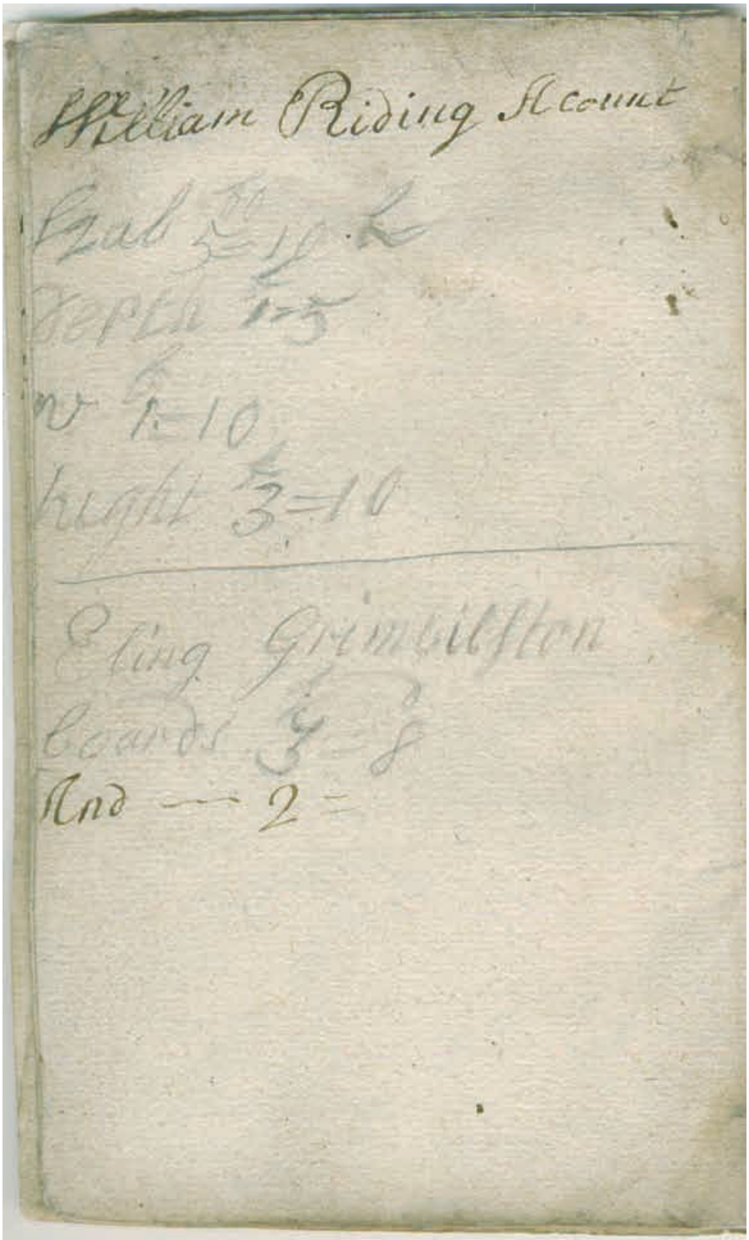
Page 36


Qual Lenth 6 foot 1 in
hight of the back 3 foot 8 in
hight of the front 1 foot 4 7
increase 1 9 0
the depth of Rele 5 in 2
the bigness of feet 3 in
Cast of the back 3 in 7

Page 37

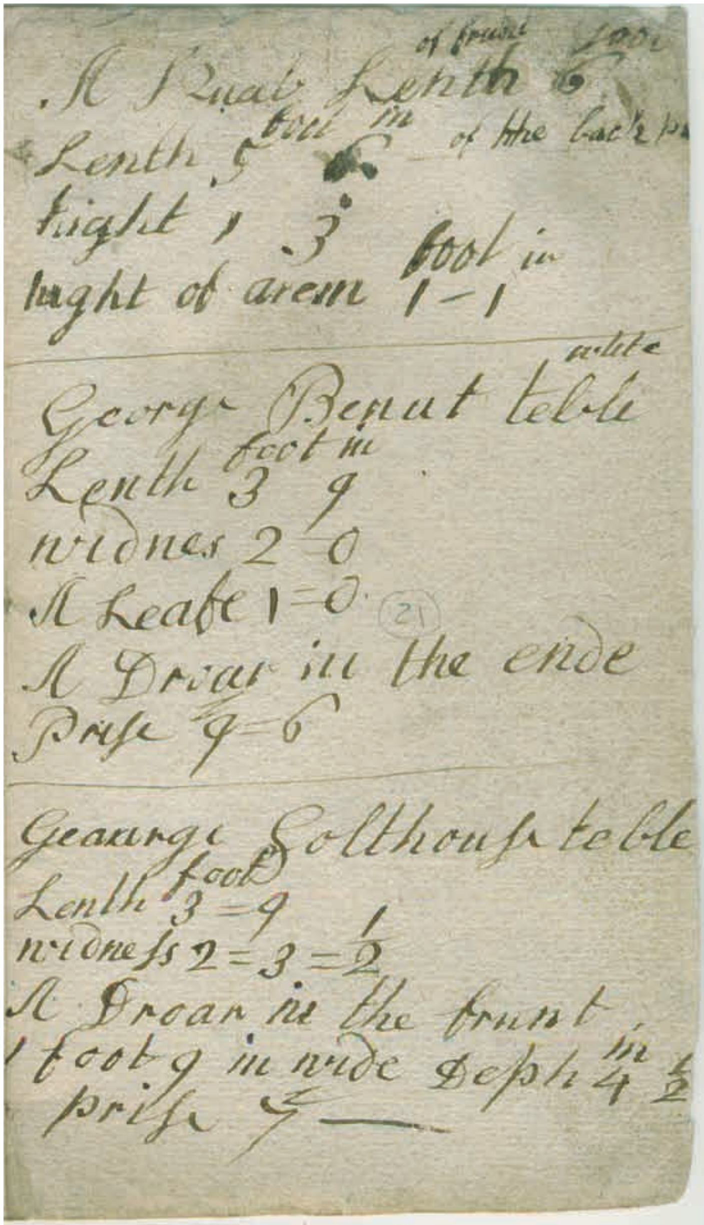


Page 38 (Pages 39 and 40 are blank)


William Riding Acount

And — 2 =

Page 41

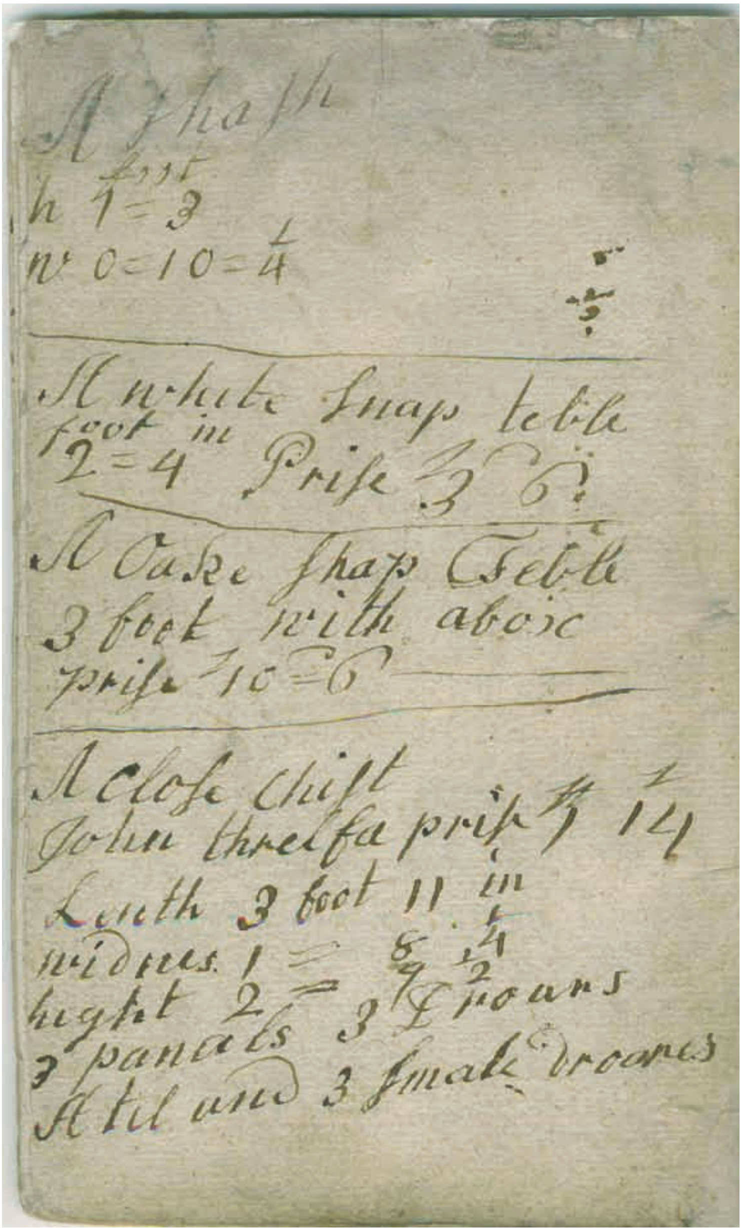


A Buat Lenth of frunt 6 foot
Lenth 5 foot 6 in of the back p
hight 1 3
hight of arem 1–1 foot in

George Benut teble white
Lenth 3 9 foot in
widnes 2–0
A Leafe 1–0 (21)
A Drwar in the ende
Prise 9–6

Geaurge Colthous teble
Lenth 3=9 foot
widness 2=3=$\frac{1}{2}$
A Droar in the frunt
1 foot 9 in wide depth 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in
prise 5 —

Page 42



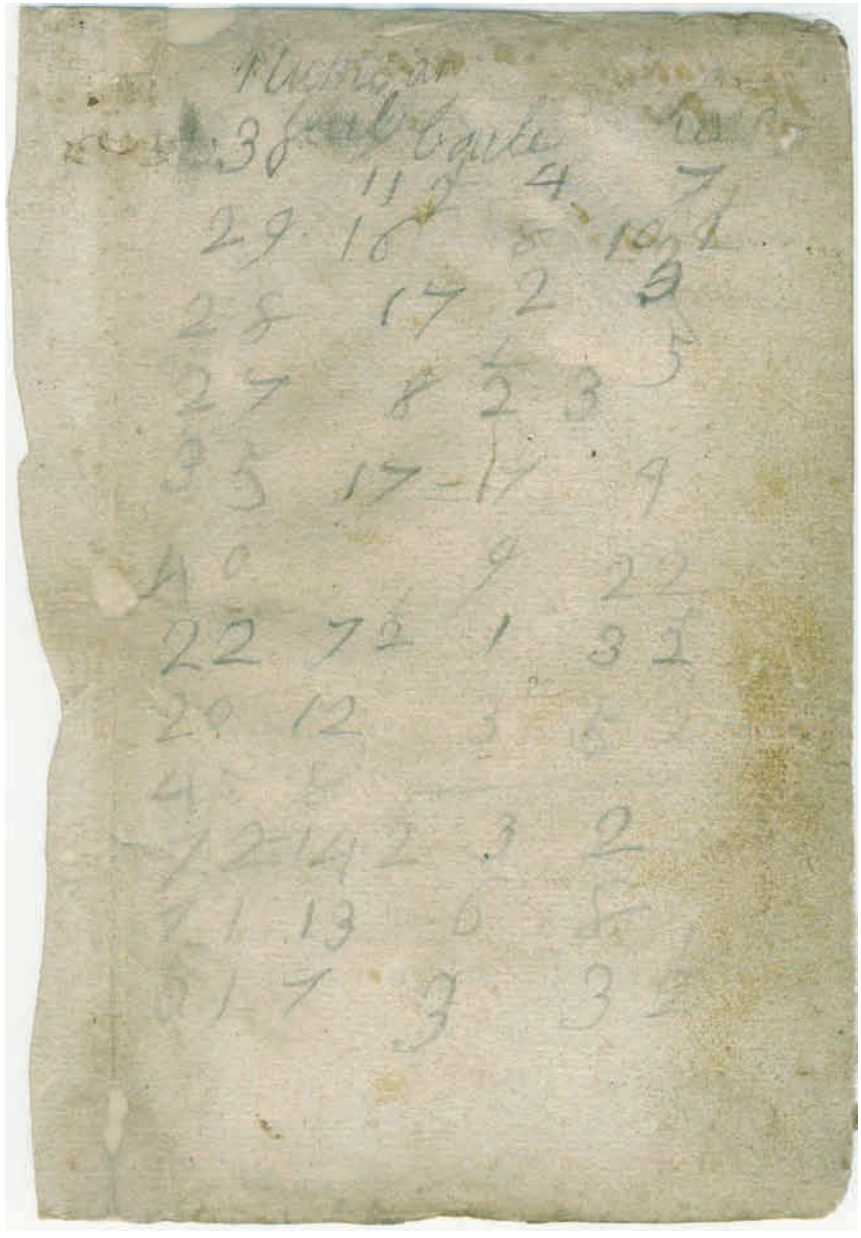
A shash
foot
h 1=3
w 0=10=1/4

A white snap teble
foot in
2=4 Prise 3 6

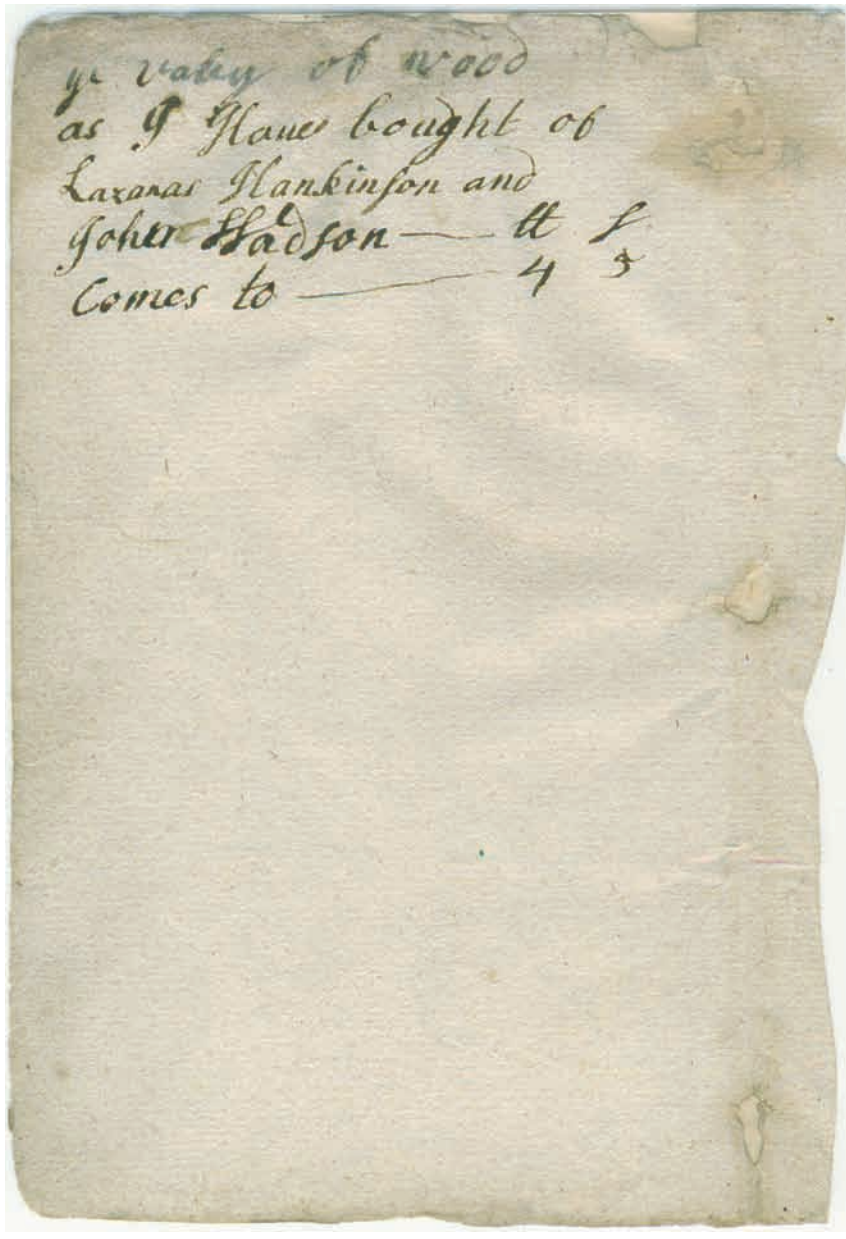
A Oake shap Teble
3 foot with aboic
prise 10=6

A close chest
John threlfa prise 1 14
Lenth 3 foot 11 in 1/4
widnes 1 = 8 1/2
hight 2 = 9 3 droours
3 panals
A til and 3 smale droores

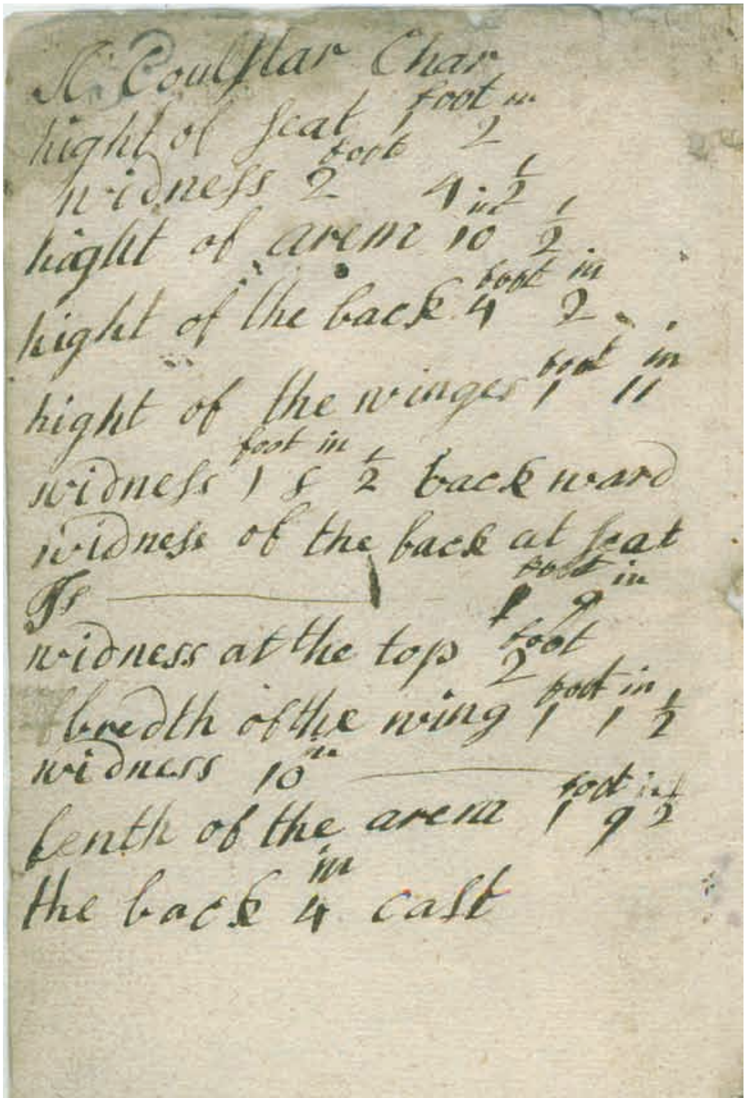
Page 43



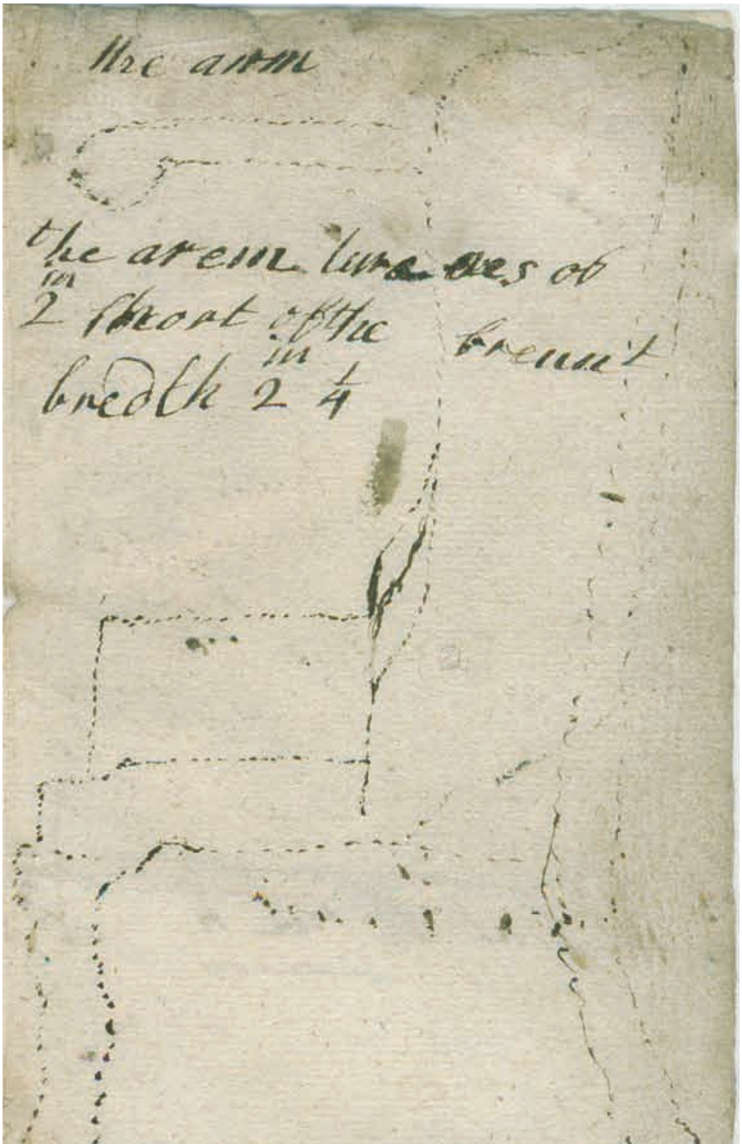
Page 44



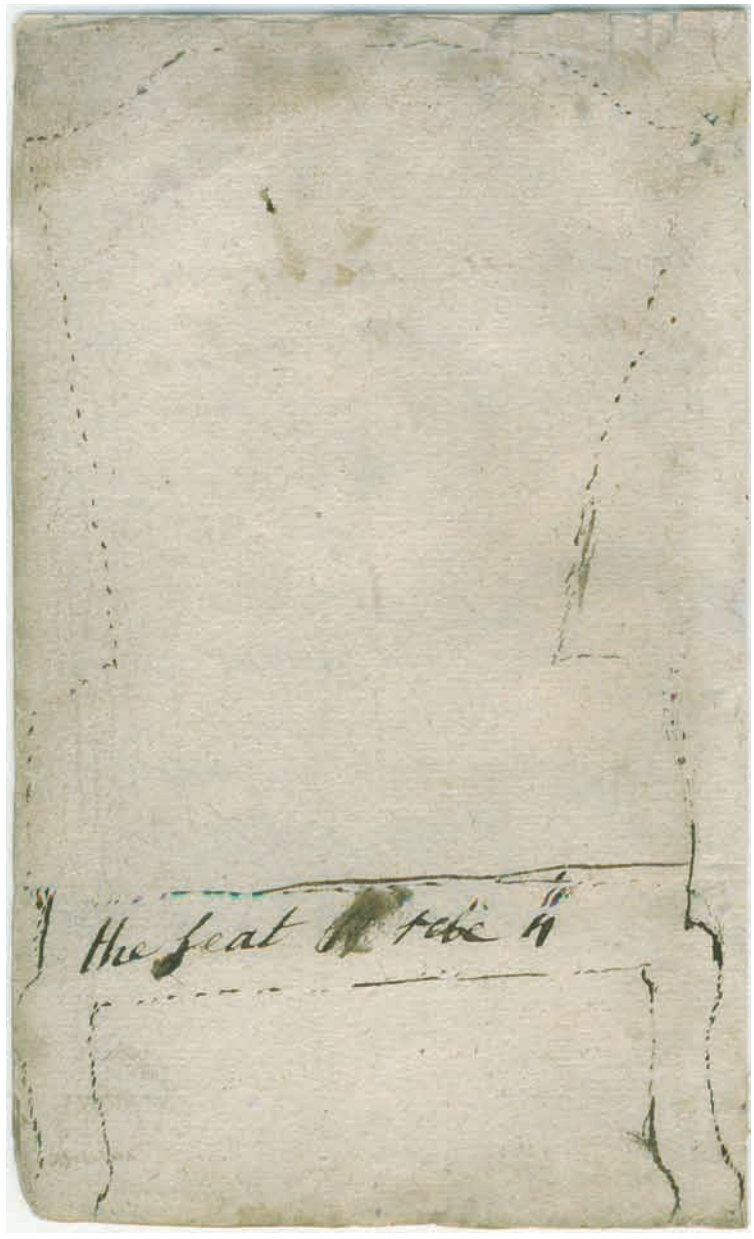
Page 45 (Page 46 is blank)


Mr Coulstar Char
hight of seat foot 1 in 2
widness foot 2 4 in 1/2
hight of arem 10 1/2
hight of the back foot 4 in 2
hight of the winges foot 1 in 11
widness foot 1 in 8 1/2 backward
widness of the back at seat
ffs ———— foot 1 in 9
widness at the top foot 2
bredth of the wing foot 1 in 1 1/2
widness 10 in ————
lenth of the arem foot 1 in 9 1/2
the back in 4 cast

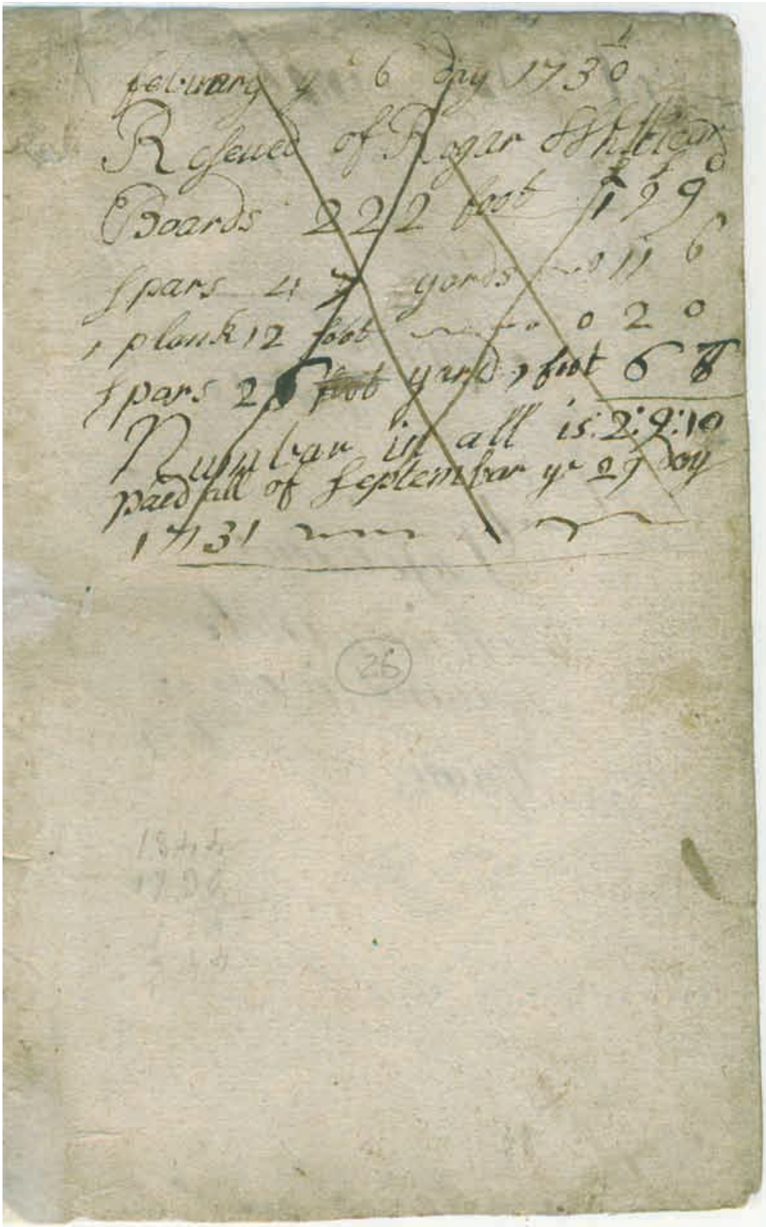
Page 47



Page 48

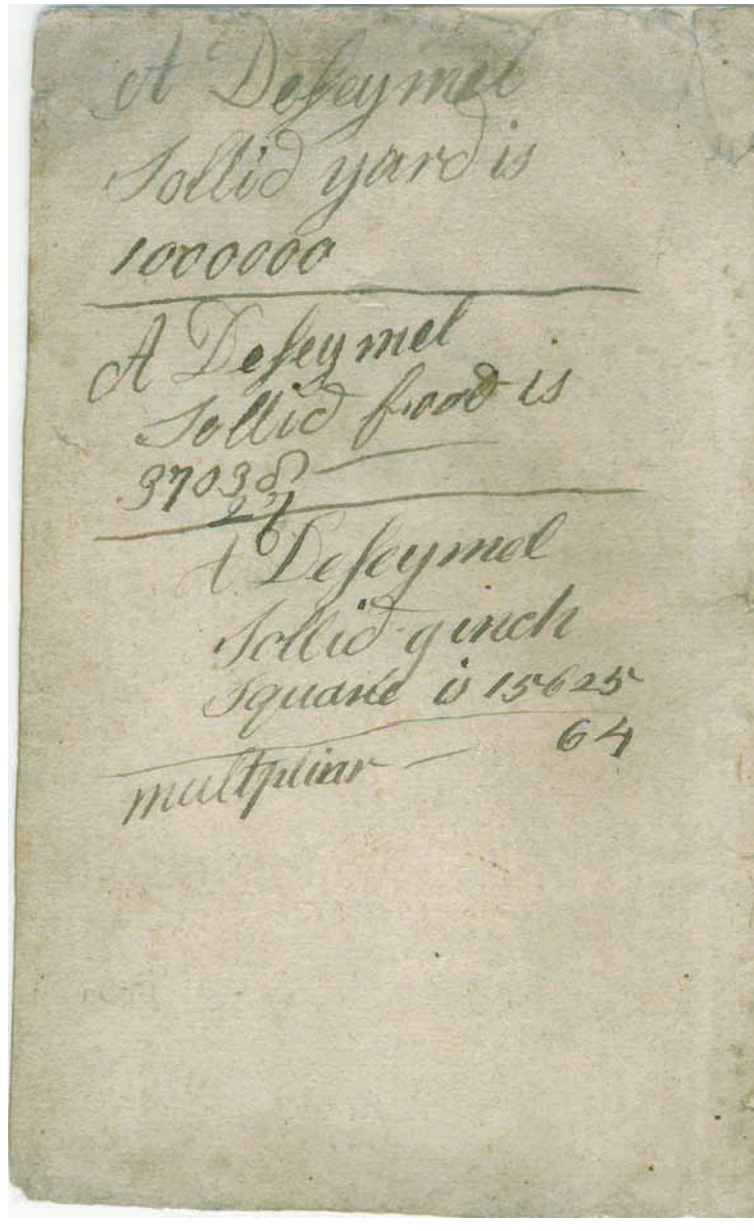


Page 49 (Pages 50 and 51 are blank)

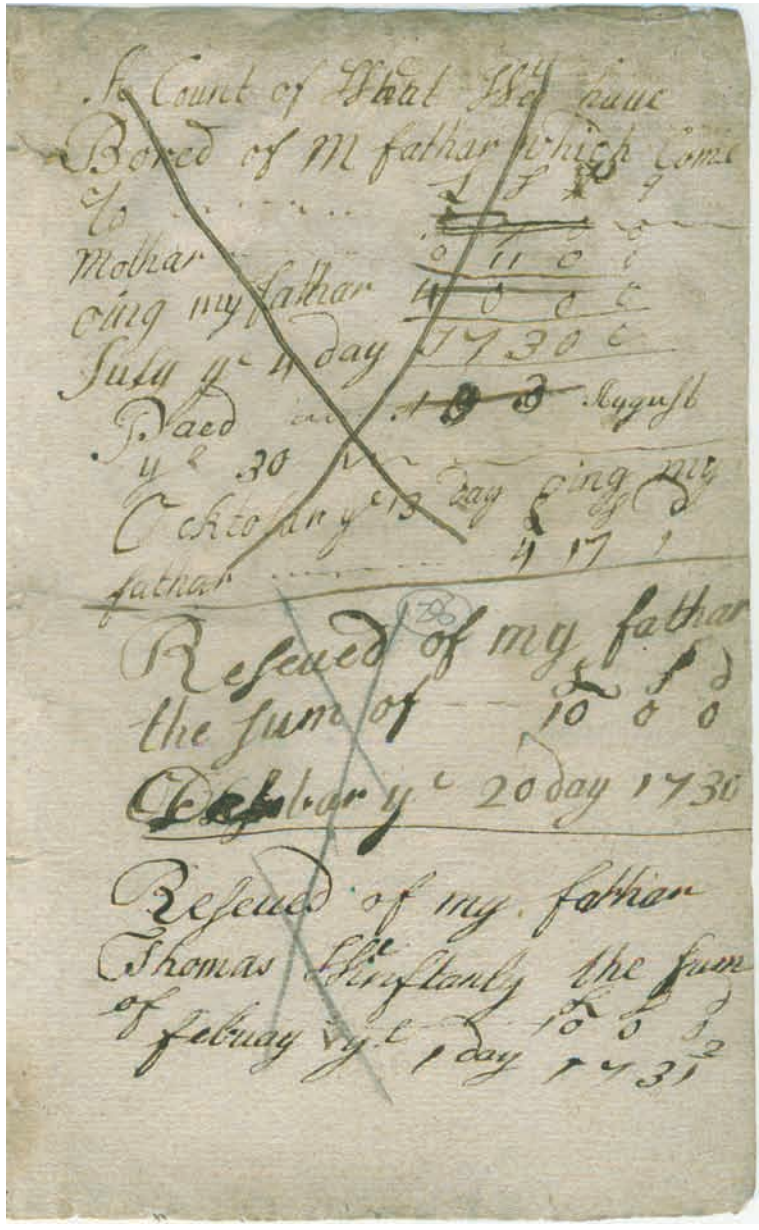


febuary ye 6 day 1730/1
Resewed of Roger [illegible]
Boards 222 foot 1 9 9
spars 4 7 yards 0 11 6
1 plank 12 foot 0 2 0
spars 2 foot yards 1 foot 6 8
Numbar in all is 2:9:10
paed full of Septembar ye 27 day
1731

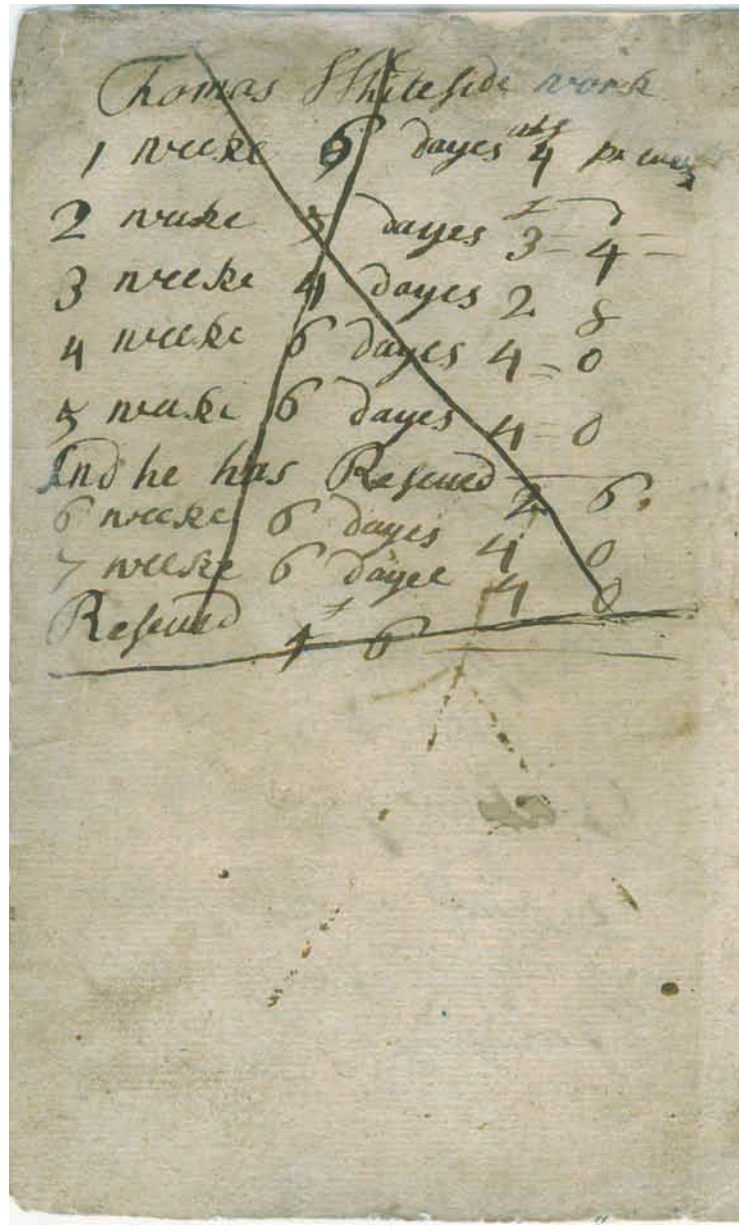
Page 52



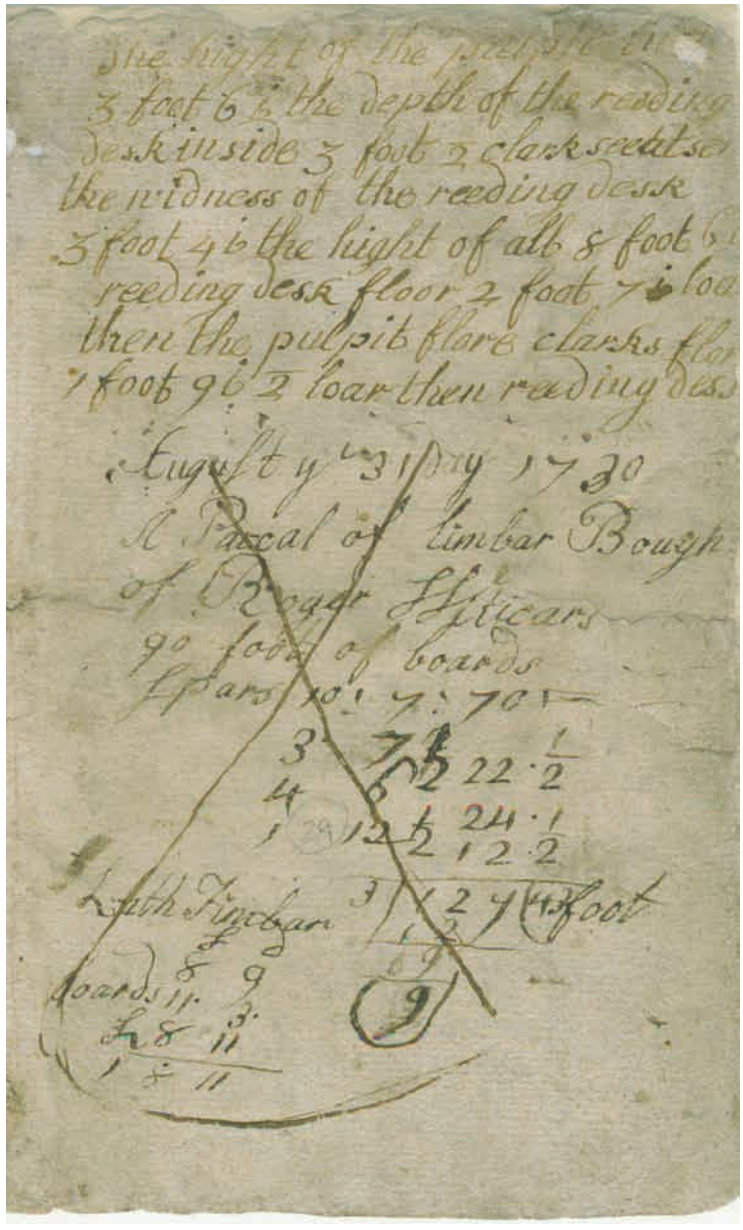
Page 53 (Pages 54 and 55 are blank)



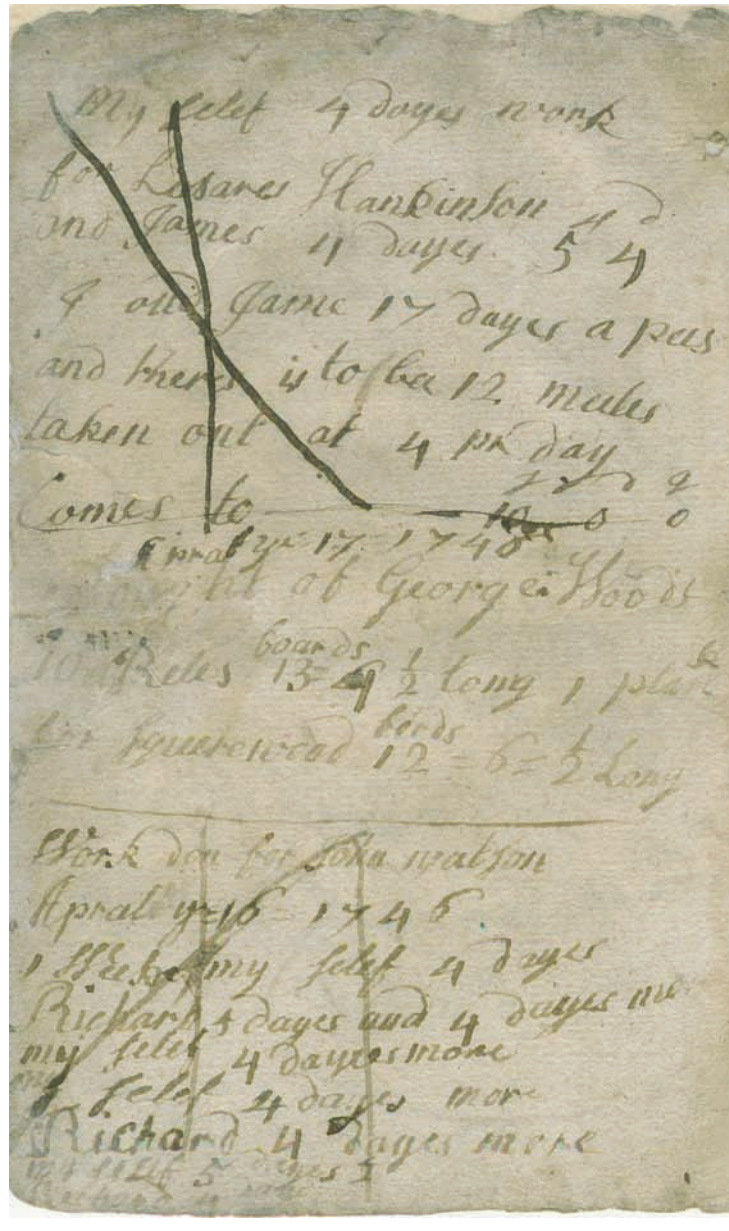
Page 56


Thomas Whiteside work
1 weeke 6 dayes
2 weeke 5 dayes
3 weeke 4 dayes
4 weeke 6 dayes
5 weeke 6 dayes
And he has Reseued
6 weeke 6 dayes
7 weeke 6 dayes
Reseued

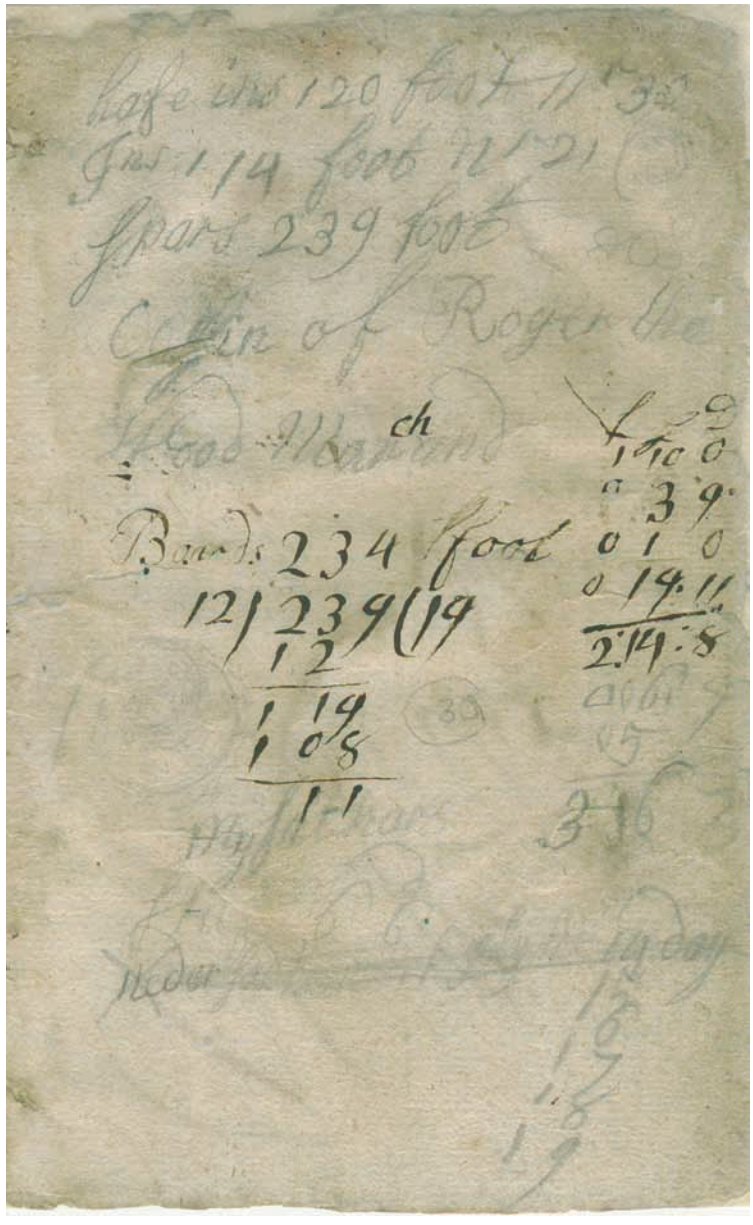
Page 57



Page 58

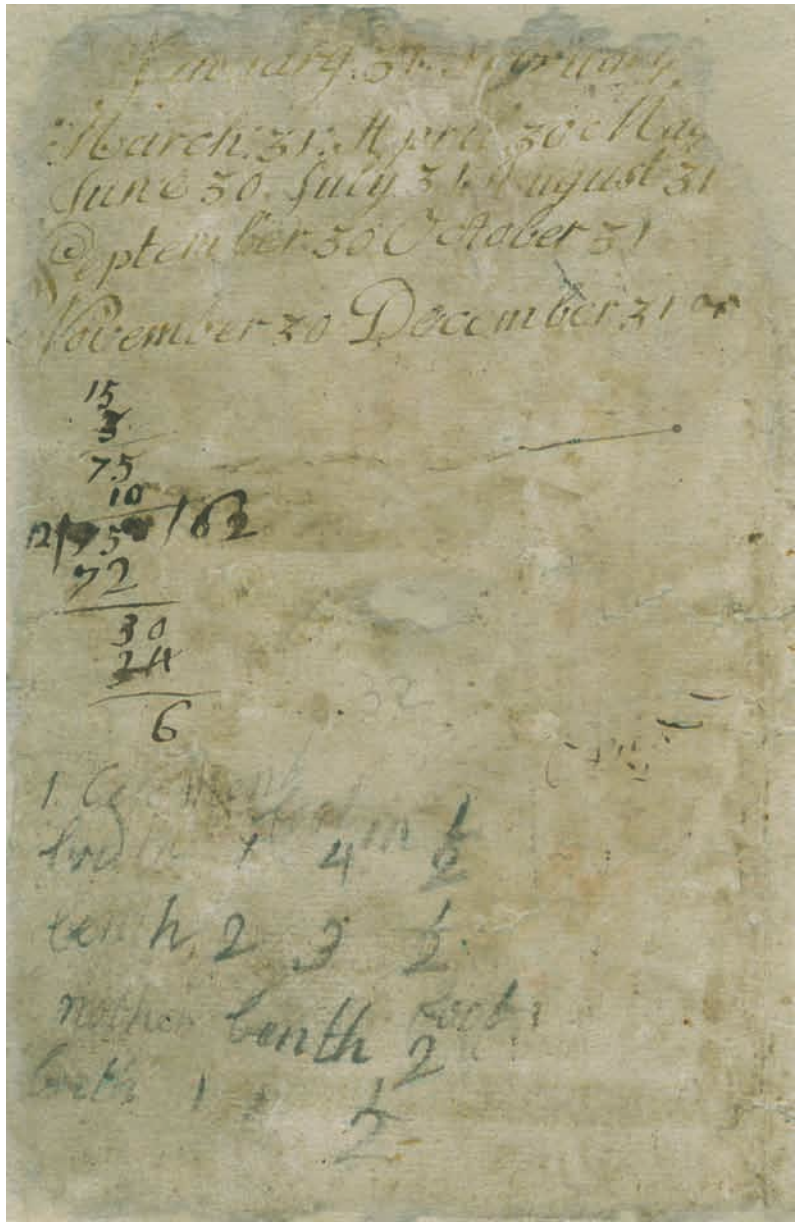


Page 59

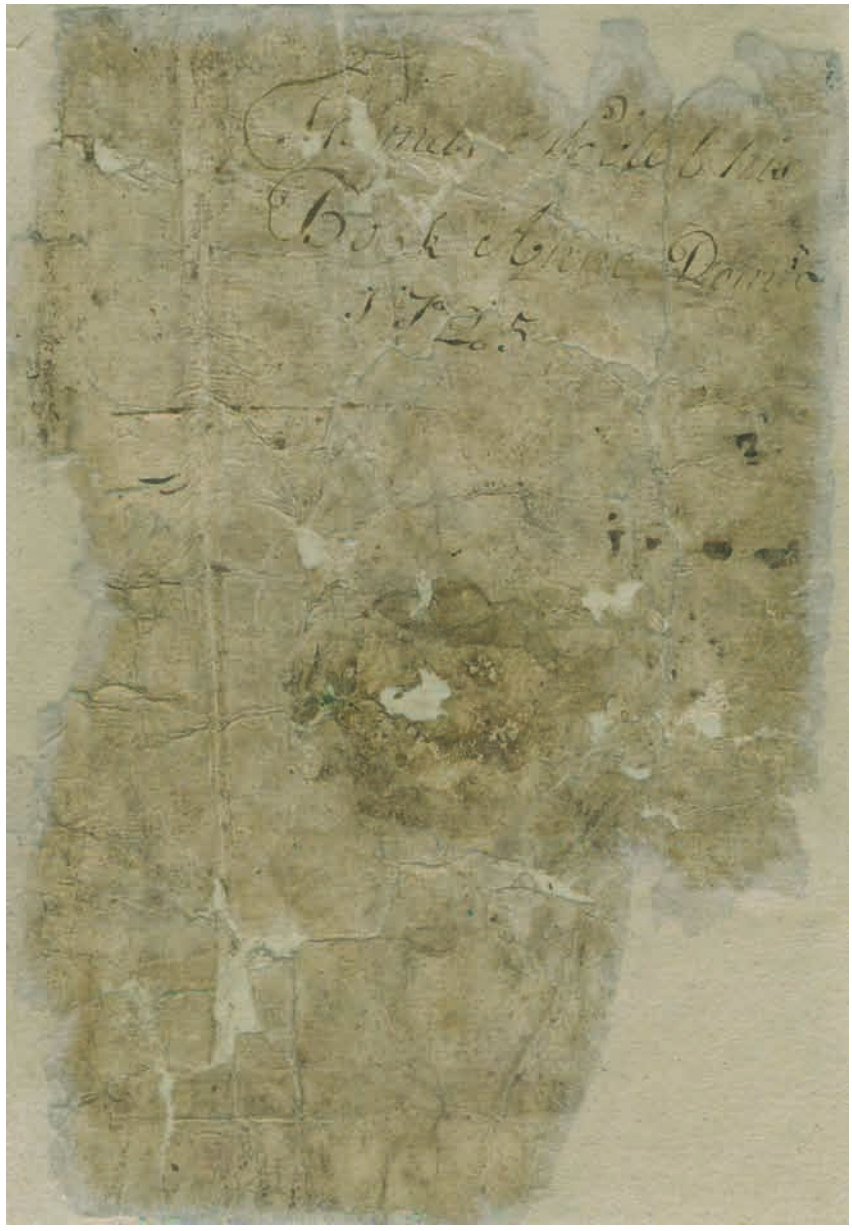


Page 60

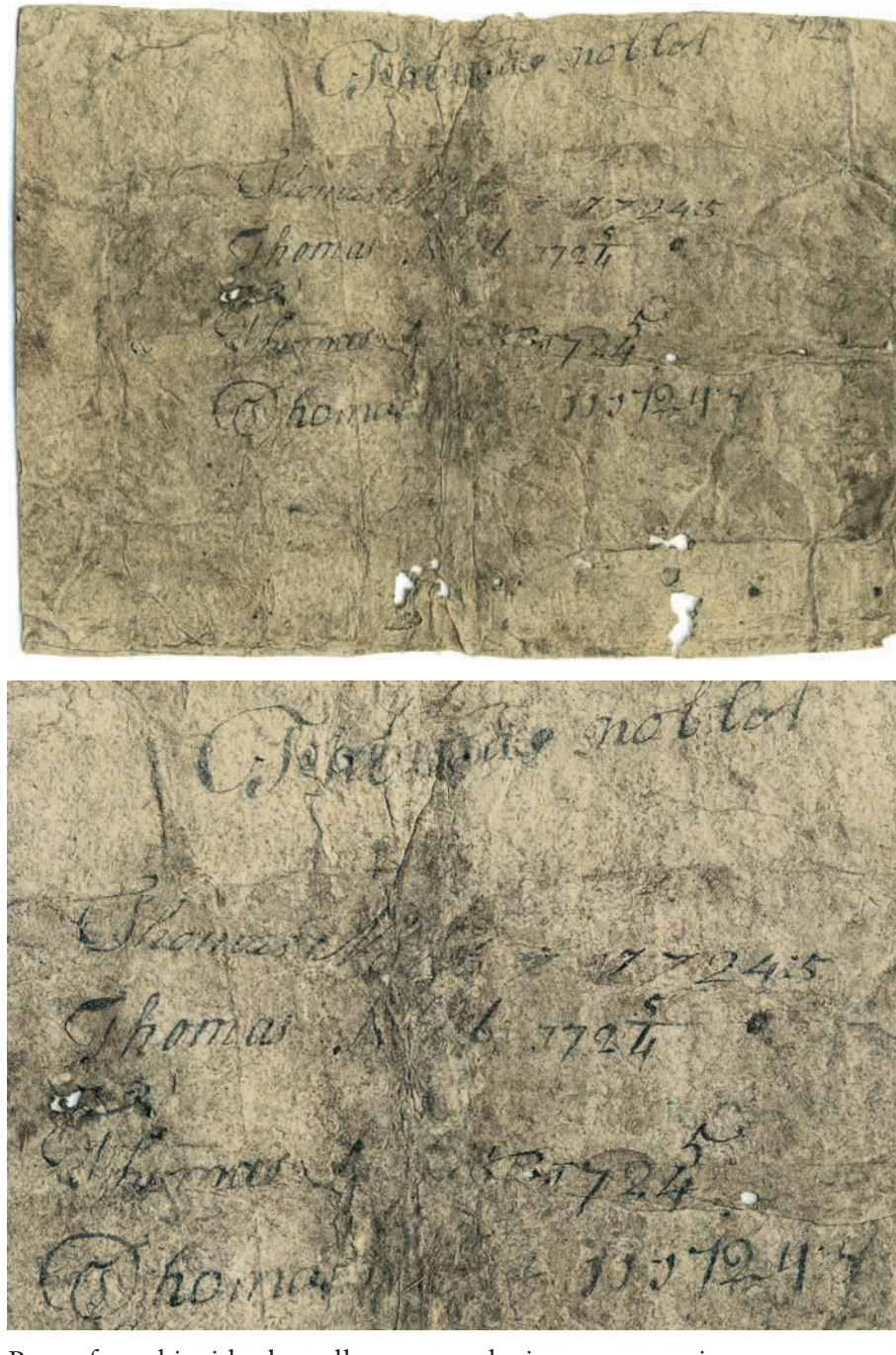
Page 61 (Page 62 is blank)



Page 63



Page 64



Pages found inside the vellum cover during conservation

Transcription and Commentary

Page 1

Thomas Noblet *his Book Anno* *Dom 1725*	Thomas Noblet his book, AD 1725
	Sundry sums and calculations

Page 2

The ferst page anoual teble	The first page, an oval table
asnoof box aclock cese 3 = 5	A snuff box, a clock case
Muldings a hafe round tebill	Mouldings, a half round table
Mrs Leuits	Mrs Lewtas
[Various sums and figures, Illegible jottings]	Various sums and figures, Illegible jottings
Fachs dresar 7 foot 10 in	Fachs(?) dresser 7 foot 10 inches
Hight 7 foot 2 in	Height 7 foot 2 inches
Plets 9 in 2/1 hi dishis 1 foot 5 in	Plates 9½ inches high, dishes 1 foot 5 inches
Big dishis 1 foot 7 in	Big dishes 1 foot 7 inches

This page appears originally to have been an index, beginning with the oval table and snuff box described on page four. This was abandoned and given over to miscellaneous sums, together with a specification for a dresser at the bottom of the page. Measurements for the height of the shelves are given, to accommodate various sizes of plates and dishes. 'Mrs Leuits' could be a mis-spelling of Lewtas, a common surname in the Fylde.

Page 3

A Count of what Jops			An account of jobs Thomas owes me for
Timas Ose me dresar of			Dresser of Drawers comes to £2 7s 0d
Droars coms to – – – –	*£2*	*7s 0d*	2 Locks 0 1s 0d
2 Locks – – – – – – –	*0*	*1 0*	Loss of 2 days [work] 0 2s 0d
Los of 2 days – – – – –	*0*	*2 0*	December 23 1730
Desember ye 23 day 1730			

(Page 3 continued)

Work for Josh February	Work for Josh February
Ye 23 day	23 [1] day
24 Tho Winstanley 1 day	24 Thomas Winstanley 1 day
25	25
26	26
27 In all – – – – – – – 5s 8d	27 In all 5s 8d

Work don for my fathar Apral ye 26	Work done for my father April 26
Found myself	Found myself [ie, at my own expense] 27
for Mr Vise 2 days 27	For Mr Vise 2 days
at my fathars house 4d Apral ye 28	At my fathers house 4d[ays] April 28
29	29
30	30
~~March~~ ye 1	~~March~~ [May?] 1
3 days more ~~march~~ ye 3	3 days more ~~March~~ [May?] 3
4	4
5	5

Bored money of my father 20s:6d	Borrowed money from my father 20s. 6d.
1 days Work at John Jonsons	1 day's work at John Johnsons
May ye 20 day 1731 I had meat	May 20 1731 I had meat
May ye 31 day 1731 Work don	May 31 1731 work done
For Mr John Bely at Hankla	For Mr John Birley at Hankla
6 dase Work at 1s 6d per day is 9s 0d	6 day's work at 1s 6d per day is 9s 0d
June ye 13 days 3 days more 4s 6d	13 June 3 days more 4s 6d
June ye 20 day 6 days more 9s 0d	20 June 6 days more 9s 0d
June ye 27 day 6 days more 9s 0d	27 June 6 days more 9s 0d
July ye 4 day 6 [illegible] *9s 0d.*	4 July 6 days more 9s 0d

These calculations for work done are difficult to reconcile with a consistent daily rate. At the top of the page, two days lost work is priced at 1s. per day, while the five days' work in February works out at just over 1s. per day. At the bottom of the page the rate is 1s. 6d. If this is a record of all the work Noblet did during this time he must have been hard pressed for money, which would account for the loan from his father-in-law and for the remark 'had meat' on 20 May. June seems to have been a better month.

'John Johnson' could have been a member of the same Johnson family which later married into the Jolly family. 'Mr John Birley' could be John Birley of Kirkham, or a member of that numerous Lancashire family, with diverse local landholdings and business interests, including manufacturing sail cloth. The Noblet/Jolly business was associated with the Birleys until at least 1850, at which time they were engaged to maintain looms at various locations around the Fylde.

Page 4

A nouall tebill coofer that	An oval table top that
will hould 6 foak makid	will hold 6 folk, made
3 foot 6 is broad long the bed	3 feet 6 inches broad, the bed
1 foot 4 is the lefe 1 5 is [doodle]	1 foot 4 inches, the leaf 1 foot 5 inches,
The freme 3 foot long and 1 foot	the frame 3 feet long and 1 foot
2 is broad flay feet 1 foot 8 is [doodle]	2 inches broad, fly feet 1 foot 8 inches
fose feet 5 is long [doodle]	Fose [false?] feet 5 inches long
the hight 2 foot 6 is	the height 2 feet 6 inches

This describes an oval table of gateleg type, 30″ high. The top is 42″ long and 50″ wide, comprising the centre or bed (16″) and two leaves (each 17″). The frame is 36″ long and 14″ wide, with the 'fly feet' or gates each 20″ long. The meaning of 'fose' feet is unclear, but 5″ would be about the right dimension for the distance between the stretcher and the floor, suggesting that these are the feet tenoned in below the stretcher at the point where the fly feet are pivoted.

DRAWING FOR A SNUFF BOX

Trow me dams widnes 2 in deph	Trou Madame width 2 inches, depth
2 in 2/1 the pillars 1 in 2/1	2½ inches, the pillars 1½ inches
VI:III:IX:IIII:XI:I:XII:II:X:V:	VI:III:IX:IIII:XI:I:XII:II:X:V:
VIII:VII	VIII:VII

This describes the dimensions of a Trou Madame frame of 12 arches, giving the width and height of the arches (2″ by 2½″), and the spaces between (1½″). The Roman numerals are the scores marked above the arches, from left to right.

Trou madame is a game of unknown origin and antiquity, similar to bagatelle. The table has a row of arches or pigeon holes placed across one end, and the object is to use a cue to hit balls from the opposite end through the arches, scoring according to the values inscribed above them. According to a letter in the Gillow archives, the rules of the game were not fixed, '… we believe it is played differently in different places …'.[1] A Gillows Trou madame table of the 1770s is in the collection at Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum, Kendal.

1 Quoted in Stuart (2008), I, p. 425.

Page 5

William Noblet Work		Work for William Noblet of Bryning	
Of Bring ye 1 Week	*1 day*	1st week	1day
ye 2 Week – – – – –	*2 day*	2nd week	2 days
ye 3 Week – – – – –	*4 day*	3rd week	4 days
ye 4 Week – – – – –	*3 day*	4th week	3 days
bed mending – – – –	*1 ½ days*	Bed mending	1 ½ days
and Wheel mending	*3 days*	And wheel mending	3 days
and a screen making	*2 ½ day*	And making a screen	2 ½ days

Reseved 1 winel of wheat 15s			Received 1 whindle of wheat	15s		
A Dele 2s 6d			A deal	2s	3d	
1 Load of wood			1 load of wood			
Liverd 1d Whipcarding [?]	*0s*	*1d*	*0q*	Delivered 1d [unclear]	0s	1d 0q
And 30L of Tregle ~~15½~~	*0*	*5*	*2*	And 30lbs of treacle [?]	0	5d 2q
Mary 1/8 L of Shag [?]	*0*	*1*	*2*	Mary 1/8L of shag [tobacco?]	0	1s 2q

William Noblet cannot have been Thomas's father because he died in 1725, so this must have been a relative. Bryning was a farm and manor close to Wrea Green. Perhaps some of the work Thomas did was paid in kind, hence the whindle of wheat, the deal and the load of wood. Whindle is an old English term for a measure of wheat which in Lancashire was equivalent to three or three and a half bushels, or 220lb. The last three entries are puzzling, and the transcriptions uncertain. These are all small sums of money, in shillings, pence and farthings.

Page 6

This drawing depicts an ambitiously styled pendulum clock case of about 1720–30, whose hood moulding sections are drawn on a larger scale on the following page. The oversized urns are perhaps not to scale. The double plinth is interesting, because these are often viewed with suspicion by present day collectors and dealers. The pillars on the hood presumably had turned wooden capitals and bases, unless Noblet had access to cast brass fittings for these parts. See also drawing on page 20.

Page 7

Scale drawings of mouldings for a long case clock hood relating to the drawing on page 6. Far left is the section through the uppermost moulding, called a 'caddy' top in the modern antiques trade. Below this is a 'cornish' [cornice] section and others. Bottom right is the cove moulding below the hood. Dimensions are given using Noblet's quarter fractions. The right hand moulding is inscribed *arch bes clok c mou*. Perhaps 'arch base clock cyma', referring to the cyma or ogee section of the base moulding.

Page 8

A clok case a 11 in	A clock case an 11 inch
plet midle part	plate, the middle part
12i³ the pedestal	12¾ inches, the pedestal
16i 2/4 deep the top	16½ inches deep, the top
part botam freme	part bottom frame
3q the dore 1i3q	3 quarters, the door 1 inch 3 quarters,
the top freme 2i broad	the top frame 2 inches broad
foreside the ends	foreside the ends
1i1q the patt a boon	1 inch 1quarter the patt a boon [?]
the fram 5i broad [doodle]	the frame 5 inches broad
bols 4 i/2	balls 4½ inches

This describes a case for a long case clock with an 11″ dial. The trunk is 12¾″ wide, the base 16½″; the frame of the hood is ¾″, the door frame 1¾″. The latter part of the description is difficult to interpret, although the size of the balls finials is 4½″. This description probably relates to the drawing on page 6, and to the left and above are further sections of mouldings.

A hafe round teble	A half round table
the hight 2 foot 4i /2	the height 2 feet 4½ inches
the bols 4i the half round	the balls 4 inches, the half round
freme 1i thick bredth 2i /1	frame 1 in thick, breadth 2¼ inches
the garth 5i /1 the	the girth 5¼ inches, the
length 3 foot /1q I the	length 3 feet ¼ inches, the
back rele 4i /2 broad	back rail 4½ inches broad,
thicknes 1i /3 posts 1i /3	thickness 1¾ inches, posts 1¾ inches
flay feet 1 foot 7i /2 broad	fly feet 1 foot 7½ inches broad,
the botam 3 foot 2i /1 long	the bottom 3 feet 2¼ inches long

This describes a half-round table with folding top. Although the top is not described, the 'fly' foot is presumably to support the open leaf. The 'posts' or legs are 1¾″ square, probably turned for decoration, with ball feet 4″ high, and the whole table is just over three feet wide.

Page 9

A bogfat stull the	A buffet stool, the
hight 1 foot 5 in the	height 1 foot 5 inches
bredth 1 foot 6 in /2 widness	breadth 1 foot 6½ inches
1 foot 3 in /2 from the top	width 1 foot 3½ inches
of the pillar to the square	from the top of the pillar to the square
5 in /2 pillar 2 in /2 square	5½ inches
glude pieces of inside	pillar 2½ inches square
3 moulding 2 in /3	glued pieces of inside ¾ inch

(Page 9 continued)

thick og shahle plene	moulding 2¾ inches thick
heuing 1 /1 dep in freme 1 in thick	ogee shallow [?] plane
wanting /1 of an in round	having 1½ inches deep in
	frame 1 inch thick wanting ½ of an inch
	round

'Buffet' is an old English term for a stool. Some of the description is obscure, but the stool has modish cabriole legs, described as 'pillars', which are cut from wood 2½″ square, with additional glued elements for the brackets. The frame is 5½″ deep, with an ogee cut into it 1½″ deep.

A chist bed the hight 3 foot 6 in	A chest bed, the height 3 feet 6 inches,
widness 1 foot 11 in taking foreside	width 1 foot 11 inches, taking foreside
out length 3 foot 8 in moulding top	out, length 3 feet 8 inches, moulding top
and	and
botam 1 in /2 squere a plene hollo 4 in	bottom 1½ inches square, a plain hollow 4″
from the ground to the mouding	from the ground to the moulding
beetwene droyars 1 in /3 ends 1 in /3	between drawers 1¾ inches, ends 1¾ inches
botam droar 8 in 7 in /1 6 in /3 5 in /3	bottom drawer 8 inches, 7½ inches, 6¾
top droar divided in two	inches, 5¾, top drawer divided in two
length 5 foot 10 in sides 3 in and	length 5 feet 10 inches, sides 3 inches and
2 in /1	and 2½ inches

This is a fold-out chest bed, made to look like a four-height chest of drawers with a sham front. It is 3′6″ high, 3′ 8″ wide and 1′ 11″ deep. The sham drawers are graduated in depth from 8″ at the bottom to 5¾″ at the top; when extended the bed is 5′ 10″ long.

Page 10

A dressing teble wich is thought more	A dressing table which is thought more
proper widness 1 foot 8 in 2 foot 6 in	proper, 1 foot 8 inches wide, 2 feet 6 inches
long pillars 3 ins squere gluid pices	long, pillars 3 inches square,
inside	glued pieces inside 1½ inches,
1 in /2 cufer 2 foot 10 in /2 long bredth	cover [top] 2 feet 10½ inches long, breadth
1 foot 10 in	1 foot 10 inches

(Page 10 continued)

length 2 foot 6 in poosis 1 in /3	length 2 feet 6 inches, poosis [?] 1¾ inches
length 6 in /3 midl droyer 1 foot	length 6¾ inches, middle drawer 1 foot
the ends a plene og bredth of end rele	the ends a plain ogee, breadth of rail 9½
9 in /2 wanting half a qua hight 2 foot	inches
5 in /2	less a half a quarter [⅛″]
bredth 1 foot 6 in /1 bredth of back	height 2 foot 5½″
post 2 in	breadth 1 foot 6¼ inches, breadth of back
end was lngth 2 foot 9 in /2 of the cufer	post 2 inches
bredth 1 foot 7 in /3	end was length 2 foot 9½ inches of the cover
fidar banded round the ibbe beads	[top], breadth 1 foot 7¾″
gluud pises of pilar 1 in	feather banded round the ibbe [?] beads,
/3 quar inside thickness 1 /1	glued pieces of pillar 1¾″,
	inside thickness 1 ¼″

A design for a dressing table in the latest 'proper' style, 33½″ wide by 29¾″ deep and 29½″ high. The top overhangs the case by almost 2 inches at the front and sides and it has ogee arches cut in the sides. The drawers are feather banded around the edges. Additional measurements are given on the drawing for depth of drawers and parts of the kneehole arch.

Page 11

An arm kene cheare top rele1 foot	A cane armchair, top rail 1 foot 5½ inches
5 in /2 bredth 7 in	[wide], breadth 7 inches,
botam rele 4 in backs 1 in /3, between	bottom rail 4 inches [deep], back posts 1¾
back and sle 1 in /1 sle 2 in	inches, between back post and sle [?] 1¼
seat rele 2 in turned reles 1 in /3 fore	inches, sle [?] 2 inches,
rele 2 in /1 feet 2 in,	seat rail 2 inches, turned rails 1¾ inches,
foreside 1 foot 10 in /1 sids 1 foot 5 in	fore rail 2½ inches, feet 2 inches,
from the seat to the top	front 1 foot 10 inches, sides 1 foot 5 inches,
of the arm 9 in 2 in /2 tride up and	from the seat to the top of the arm 9 inches,
1 in /3 wrought	[arms] 2½ inches tried up and 1¾ inches
	wrought.

The drawing shows a moulded top rail for a cane chair, of a design fashionable in London about 1715–30. Sections through the mouldings are also given, as well as two arm profiles in plan. The measurements give broad seat dimensions of 22″ wide and 17″ deep. Two measurements are given for the stock used to make the arms, 'tried up' and 'wrought', i.e., before and after working. Stretchers are called 'turned rails' and the front stretcher is the 'fore rail'.

Page 12–14

DRAWINGS OF A BANISTER BACK CHAIR IN FRONT ELEVATION AND IN PROFILE

This style of 'banister-back' chair was fashionable from *c.* 1720. It appears to be intended for a rush seat, because a thin slip is drawn on the top of the seat rails to retain it. The deep seat rails are typical of many provincial chairs of this date and certainly make them very robust. The phrase 'A boon seat', inscribed by the left hand back post, appears to relate to the measurement for the height of the back. The baluster is drawn correctly, from an architectural point of view, but in fact most banister-back chairs had the baluster reversed, which gives a more aesthetically pleasing result. Perhaps this is a local preference, or perhaps Noblet has not properly understood the design.

The following page gives the side view of the same chair, showing a stylish rake to the back legs and a deeply curved back.

Facing this is the drawing of a moulding profile inscribed 'a base for a roum'. This appears to be a profile for a surbase or dado rail.

Page 15 is blank

Page 16

DRAWING OF A CHEST OF DRAWERS

A chist of droars	A chest of drawers
botam freme 2 foot 5 in hige	bottom frame 2 feet 5 inches high
bredth 3 foot 1 in	breadth 3 feet 1 inch
widness 1 foot 9 in	width 1 foot 9 inches

In the eighteenth century no distinction in terminology was made between an ordinary chest of drawers and a high chest of drawers on a frame. This design, with a heavy cornice and pulvinated frieze, is rather old fashioned by London standards but occurs commonly in the regions. Measurements for overall height (5′ 1½″) and for the drawer heights are inscribed on the plan. The latter are graduated from top to bottom in one inch increments. The height of the lower part ('bottom frame') approximately corresponds to that of the dressing table (page 10), as do the sizes of its drawers. The curious hooked profile of the apron could be a local design.

Page 17

A Credle Length 3 foot	A cradle, 3 feet
3 in Long hight 1 foot	3 inches long, height 1 foot
11 in the head 1 foot wide	11 inches at the head, 1 foot wide
sids 1 foot 2 in deep	sides 1 foot 2 inches deep,
1 foot 1 in wide top 1 foot	1 foot 1 inch wide, top 1 foot
6 in wide	6 inches wide.
Ale teble hight 2 foot 2 in	Ale table, height 2 feet 2 inches,
Bredth 1 foot 6 in ½ length	1 foot 6½ inches wide,
2 foot 2 in	2 feet 2 inches long.

The cradle could be of either joined or boarded construction. It has a 'head' or hood, and the body is tapered, being 1′ 1″ wide at the bottom and 1′ 6″ wide at the top.

The ale table has a rectangular top and is relatively low, at 26″.

The scale at the right hand side relates to the drawing of a clothes chest on the facing page, and the scale is 1¼ inches to 1 foot.

Page 18

DRAWING OF A CLOTHES CHEST

A Cloas Chist 4 foot Long and 1 foot	A Clothes Chest, 4 feet long and 1 foot
8 in wiad	8 inches wide,
hight 2 foot 8 in	height 2 feet 8 inches

This form of joined chest is common throughout the north of England, particularly in the northwest. The raised and fielded panels appear to be either feather- or cross-banded. The turned feet are unusual, since on most of these chests the feet were made by running the stiles to the floor. Here the three lower panels could be fixed or they could be drawers, as in the case of many surviving examples. In the eighteenth century these chests were almost invariably made of oak, but from *c.* 1750 onwards many were crossbanded with mahogany, and sometime had quarter-column corners. The form continued to be made into the early nineteenth century, by which time they were often partly or wholly of mahogany; in addition, the lidded compartment tended to become shallower, with at least two rows of drawers below.

Page 19

Jane Moss	[For] Jane Moss
A Close	
Chist Lenth 3 foot 11 in	A Clothes Chest
hight 2 foot 6 in ½	3 feet 11 inches long
widnes 1 foot 7 in	2 feet 6½ inches high
	1 foot 7 inches wide

This specification for a chest is almost identical to the one on the previous page. The rule on the right hand side of the page relates to the drawing of a clock case on the facing page.

Page 20

A good Clock kese Stuff for it	A good clock case, the materials for it
Will cost 10s or 12s	will cost 10s or 12s.

This is an ambitious, high-style design, something over eight feet high if the finials are included. It is almost identical to the one on page 6, but more finely drawn. The hood is made for an eleven-inch dial or 'plate', and the design has been overdrawn in pencil to show an arched plate and conforming hood in place of the original stepped 'caddy' top. This change reflects contemporary trends in dial and hood design. Arched plates first appeared on Lancashire clocks about 1720–30, and hoods followed suit.[2] Noblet here adapts his usual design to take account of changing fashions. It is not clear, however, whether Noblet has fully understood the implications of the arched dial, since the base of his arch is the full width of the dial, whereas in fact the base of the arch should be stepped in so that it has a smaller diameter than the dial proper.

Page 21 is blank

Pages 22–25 inclusive

DESIGNS FOR PANELLED DOORS,
arranged in order of increasing complexity and, presumably, cost.

2 We are grateful to Susan Stuart for her comments on these drawings. See also Susan E. Stuart, 'Clockmaking in North Lancashire and South Westmorland 1680–1880', unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Salford (1989).

Page 26

A Sefe Or Spise Box	A safe or spice box
hight of ye top part 2 foot	height of the top part 2 feet
~~*widness*~~ *bredth 1 foot 5 in wideness 8 in ½*	breadth 1 foot 5 inches, width 8½ inches
botam part 7 in deep 3 in boles droar 3 in 10 in in all	bottom part 7 inches deep, 3 inches balls drawer 3 inches, 10 inches [deep] in all
Thomas Worsick prise 18s	[For] Thomas Worsick [Worswick] price 18s.

This is the only known contemporary drawing of this familiar item of small furniture, and it confirms its use as a spice box. Some were apparently wall-mounted but most, as here, were intended to stand on a table, dresser or chest. The drawing does not include a door, but its presence must be assumed, because surviving examples all have doors. Moreover, one of the primary functions of a spice box was to keep its precious contents secure, so a lockable door was obligatory. The interior is conceived as a cabinet or scriptor in miniature, with pigeon holes along the top and small drawers about a central cupboard.

There were numerous members of the Worswick family in this part of Lancashire. One Thomas Worswick (1730–1804), a watchmaker from Singleton near Wrea Green, married Alice, the eldest daughter of Robert Gillow, in 1746. Robert Gillow was born in Singleton and left to train as a joiner in Lancaster in 1720–21. In 1728 Robert Gillow founded the famous furniture-making firm of Gillow. It is possible that the Thomas Worswick for whom Noblet made this spice box was the father of Thomas Worswick, the husband of Alice Gillow. However, there were probably other Thomas Worswicks to whom this page could refer. In 1741 another Thomas Worswick was recorded building a house in Poulton le Fylde.[3]

Page 27 is blank

Page 28

A Snap Table	A Snap Table
hight 2 foot 4 in ½	height 2 feet 4½ inches
the cufar 2 foot 10 in	the cover [top] 2 feet 10 inches
A Chere hight of the back 3 foot 7 in	A Chair height of the back 3 feet 7 inches
fore Side 1 foot 6	fore side 1 foot 6 inches
side 1 foot 3 in from ye fore side to ye back side	side 1 foot 3 inches from the front to the back
seat Reles 4 in	seat rails 4 inches
3 in ½ bend	3½ inches bend
banistar 5 in broad	banister 5 inches broad.

3 John Porter, *History of the Fylde in Lancashire* (W. Porter & Sons, 1876), p. 294.

(**Page 28 continued**)

A Log of wood bought	A log of wood bought from Mr Woodcock
of Mr Woodcok Lenth 5 foot	Length 5 feet
Thickness 1 foot 5 in 4/1	Thickness 1 foot 5¼ inches

'Snap table' was a common name for the pillar-and-claw or tripod table with a hinged top. It is not clear in this case whether the top was square or circular.

The chair has a bended back, hence the measurement for the depth of the bend. 'Banister' was the usual name for what is now called the splat. In common with Noblet's other chair specifications, it has deep seat rails for strength.

Page 29

A noul teble	An oval table
Length 3 foot widness 3 foot 6 in	Length 3 feet, width 3 feet 6 inches
widness of the bed 1 foot 2 1/2 in	width of the bed 1 foot 2½ inches
a droar in 1 end	a drawer in 1 end
A Close Stool hight 1 foot 8 in	A Close Stool, height 1 foot 8 inches
Lenth 1 foot 8 in or 9 widness 1 foot 4 ½	Length 1 foot 8 or 9 inches width 1 foot 4½ inches
3 hight of droares	3 heights of drawers

The oval table is a small drop-leaf table, 3′ 6″ across when open, with a central section (the 'bed') 1′ 2½″ wide. It is slightly smaller than the one described on page 4, so probably intended to hold just four people.

The close stool described here is a relatively common type, box-like in form, and conceived as a small chest of drawers with sham drawers and a hinged lid.

Page 30

Eling Grimbildstone	[For] Eling [Eileen?] Grimbildstone
A Dresing Teble	A Dressing table
hight 2 foot 4 ½	height 2 feet 4½ inches
lenth of the freme 2 foot 5	length of the frame 2 feet 5 inches
lenth of the Cufar 2 foot 9 ½	length of the cover [top] 2 feet 9½ inches
widnes cufar 1 foot 8 ¼	width of the cover [top] 1 foot 8¼ inches
widnes of the freme 1 foot 7	width of the frame 1 foot 7
lenth of the squere piler 9 ins	length of the square pillar 9 inches
lenth of the End droars 6 in	length of the end drawers 6 inches
depth 5 in ½	depth 5½ inches
midel droar lenth 11 in	middle drawer length 11 inches
depth 2 in ¾	depth 2¾ inches
pitshanes ½ in	pitchings [?] ½ inch
margan 1 ¼ of the rele	margin of the rail 1¼″
Endes A Og Cros band ½	Ends OG, cross band ½ inch
and a litel more	and a little more

(Page 30 continued)

This dressing table appears to be very similar to the one drawn on page 10, both in size and configuration. It has a rectangular top and three drawers, the central one wide and shallow, the two end drawers narrower and deeper. This implies an arched shape to the centre of the front rail, and the ends are cut to an OG shape. The length of the square section of the 'pillars' or corner posts is given as 9″, which implies that below that point the legs were either turned or cabriole-shaped. The top and perhaps the drawers are cross banded just over ½″ wide. The meaning of 'pitshanes' is unclear.

Page 31

Ye 1 p….k	*15*	the 1 p….k [?]	15
ye 2 –	*54*	the 2 ditto	54
ye 3 –	*17*	the 3 ditto	17
Stack [slak?] side	*35*	Stack side	35
Shop End	*16*	Shop end	16
Shop side	*17*	Shop side	17
Stack [slak] side	*13*	Slack side	13

These are presumably measurements, but what they relate to is unclear.

Page 32 is blank

Page 33

A Chist of Droars	A chest of drawers
hight 2 foot 10 in b[…] *boles*	height 2 feet 10 inches [without?] balls
widnes 1 10	width 1 foot 10 inches
lenth 3 2	length 3 feet 2 inches
lenth of te cufar 3 foot 5 in	length of the cover [top] 3 feet 5 inches
widnes 2 foot.	width 2 feet

This is largely self-explanatory, but it is interesting that at this date (after 1726), Noblet is still making chests with ball feet rather than brackets.

Page 34

A Galary		A Gallery	
Arkatrif	*6 in*	Architrave	6 inches
fesha	*3*	fascia	3 "
frise	*3*	frieze	3 "
bed mould	*3*	bed mould	3 "
fesha	*2*	fascia	2 "
plane seear	*2 an insh fesha bulo*	planseer [sofit]	2 " an inch fascia below

(**Page 34 continued**)

Cornish 3	cornice 3 "
projecture 3	projection 3 "
top of the Cornish 4 in ¾	top of the cornice 4¾ inches
bredth of the palastar 8 in	breadth of the pilaster 8 inches
freming 4 in ½″	framing 4½ inches
inside of the frunt 3 foot	inside of the front 3 feet
2 in Des . . ? taken out	2 inches Des..? taken out
Rise of the pu 1 foot	Rise of the pew 1 foot
Dubel pu 4 foot 7 in	Double pew 4 feet 7 inches
Lengil[?] *3 foot.*	Lengil? 3 feet.

This is a specification for the front of a gallery for a church, probably very similar to the one at Pilling in Lancashire. Most of the dimensions are for the different sections of moulding. The front of the gallery rises 3 feet high and is panelled with 4½″ framing. It is punctuated at intervals with pilasters which continue the line of the supporting columns below. The top rail or cornice projects 3″ and is 4¾″ broad on top. The pews (perhaps two rows?) rise by 1 foot, one behind the other.

Page 35

A pu Lenth 6 foot	A pew length 6 feet
hight 3 8 in	height 3 feet 8 inches
widnes 3 5 in	width 3 feet 5 inches
muntanes 1 11	muntins 1 foot 11 inches
botam muntans 1 6½	bottom muntins 1 foot 6½ inches
top panaeles 1 6½	top panels 1 foot 6½ inches
botam panales 1 4	bottom panels 1 foot 4 inches
widnes of panels 0 11 back	width of panels 11 inches back
End panales 0 10	end panels 10 inches
frunt panales 0 9	front panels 9 inches
muntanes 4 broad	muntins 4 inches broad
poasts 3 square	posts 3 inches square
widnes of the Dore ye 1 foot 8 in	width of door 1 foot 8 inches

This is a specification for a box pew 6 feet long and 3 feet 5″ deep. The front and sides are panelled in two tiers, the lower panels being shorter than the upper. Corner posts are 3″ square, and one side or end has a door. Panels of different widths are used for the back, front and sides.

Page 36

For Worms	For worms
Oyle of Bere foot	Oil of Bear's Foot
Oyle of Ru	Oil of Rue
Oyle of Savin	Oil of Savin
Oyle of Worm Wood	Oil of Wormwood
Ann Equall of Eyh sort	An equal [amount] of each,
A noynt ye Stomik 3 Mngs	Anoint the stomach 3 mornings
To Gether	successively

The operative principle of this medicine appears to be that any substance noxious to humans must be equally so to their intestinal worms, ergo, the more noxious the ingredients, the more efficacious the remedy. Bear's Foot is *Helleborus foetidus*, also called stinking hellebore and dungwort, because of its offensive odour. It is an irritant when taken internally and was widely used as a vermifuge. It grows wild in many parts of Britain. Ru is *Ruta Graveolens*, or common rue. It is native to the Balkans but has been widely cultivated throughout Europe for its medicinal properties. Like Bear's Foot it has a powerful and disagreeable odour, and was used to treat a wide variety of ailments. Oil of Savin was obtained from *Juniperus sabina*, a variety of juniper native to southern Europe. It is a powerful irritant when taken internally. Wormwood is *Artemisia absinthium*, the principal flavouring in the drink absinthe. It is native to southern Europe and the Mediterranean littoral, and has been widely cultivated elsewhere. Its most common use in medicine was as a vermifuge.

It is unlikely that Noblet was able to undertake much work during three days of self-administering this explosive mixture.

William Jeley A Dresar	[For] William Jolly a dresser
L 6 foot 4 in	Length 6 feet 4 inches
Hight 6 foot 8 in.	Height 6 feet 8 inches

It is unfortunate that Noblet's specifications for dressers are so brief, since it would be very useful to know whether there was a specific Fylde design for this important piece of household furniture.

Page 37

A Squab Lenth 6 foot 1 in	A squab [settee], length 6 feet 1 inch
hight of the back 3 foot 8 in	height of the back 3 feet 8 inches
hight of the frunt 1 foot 4 2/1	height of the front 1 foot 4½ inches
widness 1 foot 9 0	width [seat front to back] 1 foot 9 inches
the deph of the Rele 5 in 2/1	depth of seat rail 5½ inches
the bigness of feet 3 in	size of feet 3 inches
Cast of the back 3 in 2/1	Cast [rake] of the back 3½ inches

(**Page 37 continued**)

A squab is usually defined as a long stool or couch, but the specification indicates that this has a back, which is not shown in the drawing. It is presumably an upholstered settee, the line of the upholstery being indicated by dotted lines at the tops of the legs. The seat rails are unusually deep to allow the bold curves of their lower edges.

Page 38

Lenth of James	Length of James
Sandarson chist	Sanderson's Chest
4 foot 10 in w 1 foot 10 in	4 feet 10 inches, width 1 foot 10 inches
D of the bodey 2 foot 2 in	D[epth] of the body 2 feet 2 inches
feet 6 in ½ that is	feet 6½ inches that is
2 foot 8 in ½ the feet.	2 feet 8½ inches including the feet
the in side of the	the [volume of the] inside of the
Chist is 16 foot	Chest is 16 [cubic] foot

This is probably a framed and panelled chest with a hinged lid, and either stile or bracket feet.

Pages 39 and 40 are blank

Page 41

William Riding Acount	William Riding's Account
Sqab 5 fo 10 L	Squab 5 feet 10 inches L[ength]
depth 1 f 5	depth 1 foot 5 inches
w 1f 10	width 1 foot 10 inches
hight 3 f 10	height 3 feet 10 inches
Eling Grimbilston	Eling [Eileen?] Grimbilston
boards 3s 8d	boards 3s 8d.
And … 2s	And [boards?] 2s

Despite the title 'Account', the first of these is not a bill but the specification for another squab or settee, slightly smaller than the one on page 37. The second entry relates to Eling [Eileen?] Grimbilston for whom the dressing table on page 30 was made. It is not clear whether the money is owed by Eling to Noblet or vice versa.

Page 42

A SQab Lenth of frunt 6 foot	A Squab, length of front 6 feet
Lenth 5 foot 6 in of the back p…	Length of the back p[?] 5 feet 6 inches
hight 1 3	height [of seat] 1 foot 3 inches
hight of arem 1 foot 1 in	height of arm 1 foot 1inches

(Page 42 continued)

George Benat teble white [?]	George Benet, a white [?] table
Lenth 3 foot 9 in	Length 3 feet 9 inches
widnes 2 = 0	width 2 feet
A Leafe 1 = 0	A Leafe 1 feet
A Droar in the ende	A Drawer in the end
Prise 9s = 6	Price 9s 6d.

Gearge Solthouse teble	George Salthouse, a table
Lenth 3 foot = 9	Length 3 feet 9 inches
widness 2 = 3 = ½	Width 2 feet 3½ inches
A Droar in the frunt	A drawer in the front
1 foot 9 in wide Deph 4 in ½	1 foot 9 inches wide, 4½ inches deep
Prise 7s –	Price 7s.

These are specifications for a settee and two tables. One table has a single drop leaf, presumably supported on a hinged gate; the leaf hangs to the front, requiring the drawer to be fitted into one end. The second table has no leaf and a wide drawer in the front rail.

Page 43

A shash	A Sash
h 1 foot = 3	h[eight] 1 foot 3 inches
w 0 = 10 = ¼	w[idth] 10¼ inches

A white snap teble	A white Snap Table
2 foot = 4 in Prise 3s 6d	2 feet 4 inches Price 3s 6d.

A Oake snap Teble	An oak Snap Table
3 foot with a box	3 feet with a box,
Prise 10s = 6d	Price 10s 6d

A close Chist	A Clothes Chest
John threlfa prise 1£ 14 s	[for] John Threlfall, price £1 14s.
Lenth 3 foot 11 in	Length 3 foot 11″
widnes 1 = 8¼	width 1 foot 8¼″
hight 2 = 9½	height 2 foot 9½″
3 panals 3 Droars	3 pannels, 3 drawers
A til and 3 small droars	A till and 3 small drawers

The ‘sash’ is a frame of some kind, from the French *chassis*. This is perhaps for a sash window, although the dimensions are small. ‘Snap’ tables are pillar-and-claw tripod tables with tilt-tops. One is ‘white’, probably meaning white deal (Norway spruce, *Picea abies*), but possibly of a local white wood such as sycamore (*Acer*

(**Page 43 continued**)

pseudoplatanus). The oak snap table has a 'box' on top of the pillar to allow the table to pivot as well as tilt. On more fashionable mahogany tables the box usually takes the form of a platform with turned pillars, which modern dealers and collectors call a 'birdcage'.

The clothes chest is of a familiar type, with three panels to the front and three drawers in a row underneath. Inside is a small lidded compartment or till, with three small drawers below it.

Page 44

A range of numbers in columns whose meaning is unclear.

Page 45

Ye valey of wood	The value of wood
as I have bought of	I have bought from
Lazarus Hankinson and	Lazarus Hankinson and
John Wadson – – – – £ s	John Watson
Comes to – – – – – – 4 5	Comes to … £4 5s.

This is self explanatory. Since Noblet seems mostly to have used oak it is likely that most of his wood was bought locally.

Page 46 is blank

Page 47

A Poulstar Chair	An Upholstered Chair
hight of seat 1 foot 2 in	height of the seat 1 foot 2 inches
widness 2 foot 4½	width 2 feet 4½ inches
hight of arem 10 in ½	height of arm 10½ inches
hight of the back 4 foot 2 in	height of the back 4 feet 2 inches
hight of the winges 1 foot 11 in	height of the wings 1 foot 11 inches
widness 1 foot 8 in ½ backward	width front to back 1 foot 8½ inches
widness of the back at seat	width at the back of the seat is
Is – – – – – – 1 foot 9 in	1 foot 9 inches
widness at the top 2 foot	width at the top [of the back] 2 feet
bredth of the wing 1 foot 1 in ½	breadth of the wing 1 foot 1½ inches
widness 10 in	width [of the wing] 10 inches
lenth of the arem 1 foot 9 in ½	length of the arm 1 foot 9½ inches
the back 4 in cast	The back is raked by 4 inches

Page 48

the arem	the arm
the arem turns of 2 in short of the freunt	the arm turns 2 inches short of the front
bredth 2 in ¼	breadth [of arm] 2¼ inches

This is probably the earliest known drawing and specification for an easy chair, and probably the earliest known reference to the 'wings', which London upholsterers called 'cheeks'. The drawing gives further measurements and detail; it shows a fashionable easy chair with rolled arm terminals, cabriole legs and a raked back. The word Noblet uses for the rake is 'cast', or out of true.

Page 49

Another detail of the easy chair, showing the back view and specifying a 4″ seat rail.

Pages 50 and 51 are blank

Page 52

Febuary ye 6 day 1730/1
Reseved of Rogar Whiticar

£	*s*	*d*
Boards 222 foot	*1*	*9* *9*
Spars 47 yards	*0*	*11* *6*
1 plank 12 foot	*0*	*2* *0*
Spars 26 ~~foot~~ yard 1 foot		*6* *7*
Numbar in all is:	*2:*	*9:* *10*

Paed all of September ye 29 day 1731

February 6 1730/1
Received of Roger Whittaker

£	s	d
Boards 222 foot	1	9 9
Spars 47 yards	0	11 6
1 plank 12 foot	0	2 0
Spars 26 ~~foot~~ yard 1 foot		6 7
Total	£2	9s 10d

Paid in full 29 September 1731

This appears to be a receipt for a sale of wood by Noblet to Roger Whittaker. However, another entry on page 58 shows Noblet buying wood from Whittaker, so perhaps this is not a receipt but a bill. Alternatively, Noblet and Whittaker might both have bought and sold wood from and to each other on occasion.

The boards and the plank are probably oak; the measure is in superficial feet (12″ × 12″ × 1″) and the price about 2d per foot. The spars are priced in yards, at about 3d per yard. 'Spar' was the term usually given to poles or other small round timber, usually under six inches in diameter.

Page 53

A Deseymel	A decimal
sollid Yard is	cubic yard is
1000000	1,000,000

(Page 53 continued)

A Deseymel solid foot is 37038 27	A decimal cubic foot is 37,038 27
A Deseymel solid 9 inch square is 15625	A decimal cubic 9 inch square is 15,625
multiplier 64	multiplier 64

This extraordinary piece of mathematics seems to be a purely abstract calculation, since decimal numbers were not generally used in measurement in England until the late twentieth century. Among English craftsmen, cubic volumes were calculated in cubic feet and inches. The only decimal system in use in Europe in the early eighteenth century was the Russian monetary system introduced by Peter the Great in 1704.

The basis of the calculation is the division of a linear yard into 100 units, so that a cubic yard is 1,000,000 cubic units. Since there are 27 cubic feet in a yard, the cubic decimal foot is 1,000,000 divided by 27 = 37,038 (actually 37,037.037). The 9 inch cube is arrived at by dividing 36 (inches in a yard) by 4: 4 cubed is 64. Hence 1,000,000 divided by 64 gives 15,625 decimal units.

Pages 54 and 55 are blank

Page 56

A Count of What We have Bored of M fathar which Coms To…	£	*s*	*d*	*q*	An account of what we have borrowed from M[y] father which comes to …	£	s	d	q
Mothar	*0*	*11*	*0*	*0*	Mother	0	11	0	0
Oing my fathar	*4*	*0*	*0*	*0*	Owing to my father	4	0	0	0

July ye 4 day 1730 Paed	*1*	*0*	*3 August ye 30*	4 July 1730 Paid	1	0	3	30 August
Ocktobar ye 13 day oing to my				13 October owing to my				
	£	*s*	*d*		£	s	d	
fathar …..	*4*	*17*	*1*	Father …..	4	17	1	

Reseved of my fathar				Received from my father			
	£	*s*	*d*		£	s	d
The sum of	*10*	*0*	*0*	The sum of	10	0	0
Desembar ye 20 day 1730				20 December 1730			

(Page 56 continued)

Reseved of my fathar Thomas Winstanley the sum Of febuay ye 1 day	£	*s*	*d*	Received from my father Thomas Winstanley the sum of 1 February 1731/2	£	s	d
	10	*0*	*0*		10	0	0
	1731/2						

It is difficult to reconcile these sums exactly, but they appear to be personal loans from Noblet's parents-in-law, the Winstanleys. It was usual at this time to use the terms 'father' and 'mother' for both sets of parents to a married couple.

Page 57

Thomas Whiteside work			Thomas Whiteside work		
1 weeke 6 dayes	*4s pr weeke*		1st week 6 days @ 4s pr weeke		
	s	*d*		s	d
2 weeke 5 dayes	*3*	*4*	2nd week 5 days	3	4
3 weeke 4 dayes	*2*	*8*	3rd week 4 days	2	8
4 weeke 6 dayes	*4*	*0*	4th week 6 days	4	0
5 weeke 6 dayes	*4*	*0*	5th week 6 days	4	0
And he has Reseved			And he has received		
	2	*6*		2	6
6 weeke 6 dayes	*4*	*0*	6th week 6 days	4	0
7 weeke 6 dayes	*4*	*0*	7th week 6 days	4	0
Reseved	*4*	*6*	Received	4	6

This is an account of work done and payments owing to a labourer or journeyman, paid at the rate of 8d per day or 4s per week of 6 days. Whiteside was a common name in this part of Lancashire. Between *c.* 1800 and *c.* 1850 Gillows employed at least fourteen men called Whiteside, so it is likely that this Thomas Whiteside was part of a longstanding Lancashire woodworking dynasty.

Page 58

The hight of the pulpit 11[?] *foot 3 foot 6 i the depth of the reeding desk inside 3 foot ½ clark seeatse the widness of the reeding desk 3 foot 4 i the hight of all 8 foot 6 i Reeding desk floor 2 foot 7 i loar then the pulpit flore clarks flor 1 foot 9 i ½ loar then reeding desk*	The height of the pulpit is 11[?] feet 3 feet 6 inches is the depth of the reading desk on the inside. 3 feet ½ inch is the clerk's seat. The width of the reading desk is 3 foot 4 inches. The height of all is 8 foot 6 inches. The reading desk floor is 2 feet 7 inches lowerthan the pulpit floor. The clerk's floor is 1 foot 9½ inches lower than the reading desk floor

(Page 58 continued)

This is a specification for a 'three-decker' pulpit, comprising pulpit, reading desk and clerk's desk on three levels. It was a common design for pulpits in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but most have been altered and reduced in height.

August ye 31 day 1730

A Parcel of timbar Bough
of Roger Whiticars
90 foot of boards
Spars 10 7′ 70
3 7½ 22½
4 6 24
1 12½ 12½

Lenth Timbar *3)127 (43) foot*
12
9
9
s d
8 9
Boards 11 3
£ 8 11
1 8 11

31 August 1730

A parcel of timber bought
from Roger Whittaker
90 foot of boards
Spars 10×7′ 70
3×7½′ 22½
4×6′ 24
1×12½′ 12½

Total length of timber 127 foot, divided by 3 is 43 yards.
12
9
9
s d
8 9
Boards 11 3
8 11
£1 8 11

A bill for wood bought from Roger Whittaker. The boards are priced at 1½d per foot. The spars have been measured for length in feet (127), then converted to yards (43). See also commentary for page 52. The total cost is £1 8s 11d.

Page 59

My selef 4 days work
For Lasares Hankinson
and James 11 days 5s 4d
I and James 17 dayes a pees
and there is to be 12 meeles
taken out at 4 pr day
Comes to 10s 0d 0q
Apral ye 17 1740
Bought of George Woods
10 Reles 13 boards 4 ½ long 1 plank
For squerewood 12 bords 6 ½ Long

For myself 4 days' work
for Lazarus Hankinson
and James 11 days 5s 4d
I and James 17 days each
and there are 12 meals
taken out at 4[d] per day
Comes to 10s 0d
17 April 1740
Bought from George Woods
10 rails, 13 boards 4½ feet long, 1 plank
for squarewood, 12 boards 6½ feet long.

(Page 59 continued)

Work don for John Watson	Work done for John Watson
Apral ye 16 1746	16 April 1746
1 Week my selef 4 dayes	1st week myself 4 days
Richard 5 dayes and 4 dayes more	Richard 5 days and 4 days more
my selef 4 dayes more	myself 4 days more
my selef 4 dayes more	myself 4 days more
Richard 4 dayes more	Richard 4 days more
my selef 5 ½ dayes	myself 5½ days
Richard 4 dayes	Richard 4 days

It is difficult to reconcile these figures with a set daily rate of pay, and the allowance of meals complicates matters further. Presumably James and Richard were two of Noblet's workmen, who would have been paid at a lesser rate than their master.

Page 60

hafe ins 120 foot Nr 30	half inch 120 feet N[umber] 30
Ins 114 foot no 21	1 inch 114 feet n[umber] 21
Spars 239 foot	Spars 239 feet

Cosin of Roger the
Wood Marchand

£	*s*	*D*
1	*10*	*0*
0	*3*	*9*
0	*1*	*0*
0	*19*	*11*
2	*14*	*8*

Boards 234 foot

12/239)19
12
114
108
11

(**Page 60 continued**)

These are sundry jottings and sums connected with the purchase of timber, together with other calculations in pencil. Noblet bought 30 half-inch and 21 one-inch boards. The total length of boards purchased is 234 feet (120 + 114), but it is not clear whether this relates to the long division below, which is 239 pence divided by 12, arriving at 19s. 11d. There are other jottings and sums in pencil, including some relating to his father-in-law.

Page 61

Upside down title page?

Page 62 is blank

Page 63

This page begins with a record of the number of days in each month. A long sum follows, with a record of measurements for a casement at the bottom of the page.

Page 64

Thomas Noblet his	Thomas Noblet his
Book Anno Dom 1725	Book AD 1725