

# **Excavations at Parham House, Storrington, Nr Pulborough, West Sussex:**

## **An interim report on the May 2009 excavations**



**Figure 1 Members of WAS excavating Trench L**

**Worthing Archaeological Society**  
May 2009

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## Summary

In 2006, at the invitation of the Parham Estate, the Worthing Archaeological Society (WAS) undertook excavations to try to establish the position of the medieval village of Parham. The excavations were located based on a resistivity survey and report conducted by Southampton University (October 2006). These excavations found no archaeological features of note, certainly no evidence of a medieval village. A WAS resistivity survey of the area south of the main house revealed further anomalies which were investigated in 2008 (Fig. 2). Again these revealed little in the way of archaeology other than a collection of largely residual artefacts. It became apparent that the subsurface geology (Upper Greensand with ferruginous layers) was affecting the resistivity results.

Desk based research produced a tracing made in 1898 of a map of the estate drawn in 1848 (see Fig. 3). This showed the presence of a parcel of glebe land to the east of the church. Further research showed that there had been a parsonage to the east of the church, separated from it by an orchard. Further documentary research produced an inventory of the rooms of the parsonage (see Appendix) and gave a date for its demolition in the period 1720-1750. A re-evaluation and analysis of the resistivity results indicated the presence of an anomaly in approximately the same area as the glebe land. It also showed a curvilinear anomaly leading from the graveyard to current roadway through the estate (see Figure 2).

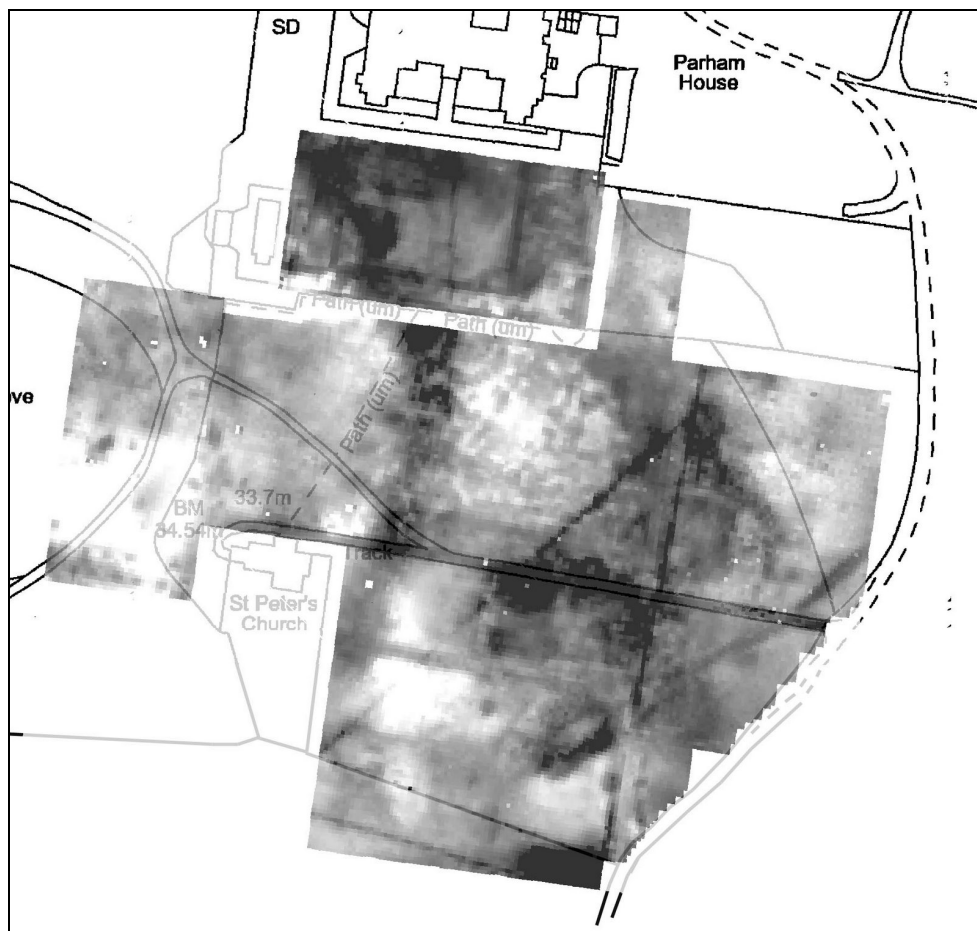


Figure 2 WAS Geophysics Results 2008

*Glabe Exchange*  
*Parish of Parham*  
~~1848~~ 28.2.1848  
 Charing 1898

# PARHAM COUNTY OF SUSSEX

6 chains = 1 inch

Scale of

0 10 20 Chains

Traced at the Board of Agriculture from a Map annexed to Award of Boscawen.

22<sup>a</sup>

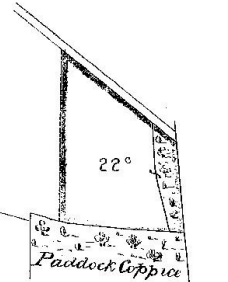
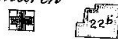
14/11/98.

Parham House



Parham Park

Church



Parham  
 Glabe Land 1848

First Schedule above refers to:

- 22b Near the church 0-2-14
- 22c Paddock Coppice 4-2-4
- 51b Part of Coppice field 3-0-35
- 59b Part of Black field 10-31

2nd Schedule A.R.P.

- 546b Line with field 10-21
- 63b Coppice in do. 0-3-9
- 61b 1-3-4
- 62b { Part of East  
12 here field 4-0-31  
2 Coppice in do. 0-1-0

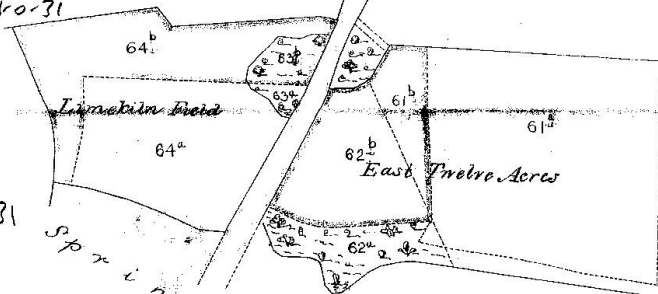


Figure 3 Tracing made in 1898 of a map (1848?) showing the glebe land to the east of the Church.

## Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the excavations in May 2009 were: -

1. To confirm the presence of an earlier track way leading to the graveyard;
2. To investigate the mound area;
3. To try to locate the position of the parsonage.

## Methodology

Between Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2009, 32 members of WAS were involved in the excavation of 3 trenches and 8 test pits. All were deturfed by hand, and then excavated by trowel or mattock.

In addition WAS ran 6 tours of the site for the general public. These included displays of the archaeology of Parham Estate as well as visits and talks on the dovecote and church. There was also the opportunity for members of the public to participate in various aspects of the excavation including finds washing and towelling in the test pits.

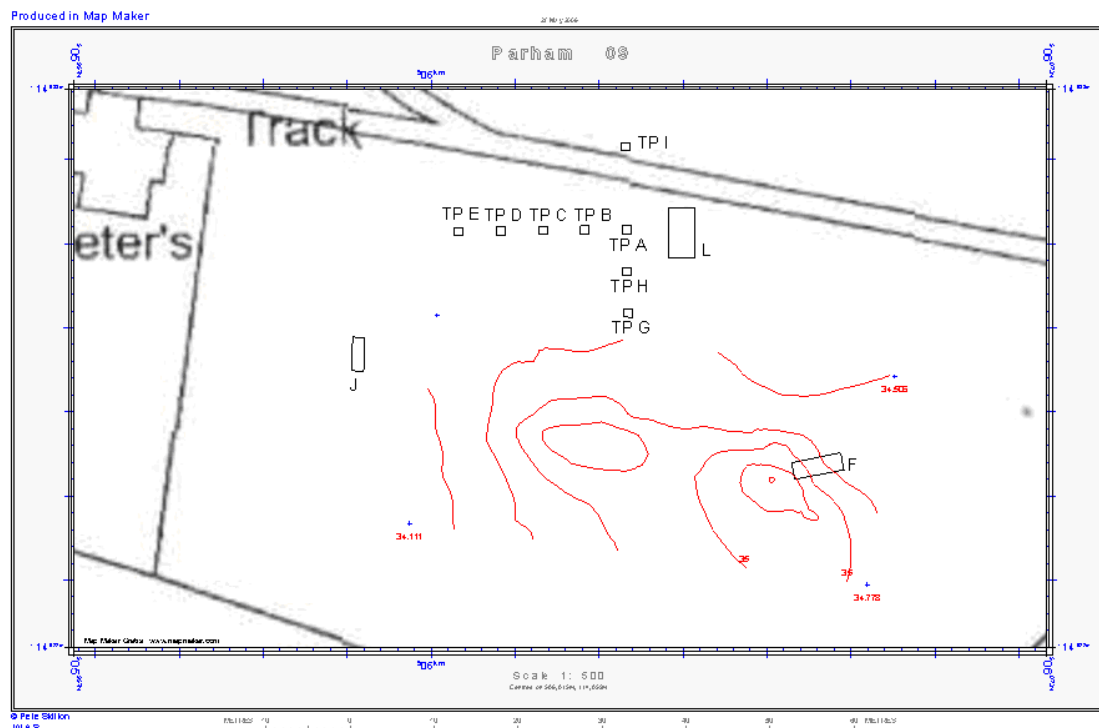


Figure 4 Plan of the trenches and test pits excavated May 2008, with results of the contour survey over the mound area

## Objective 1 The Track way

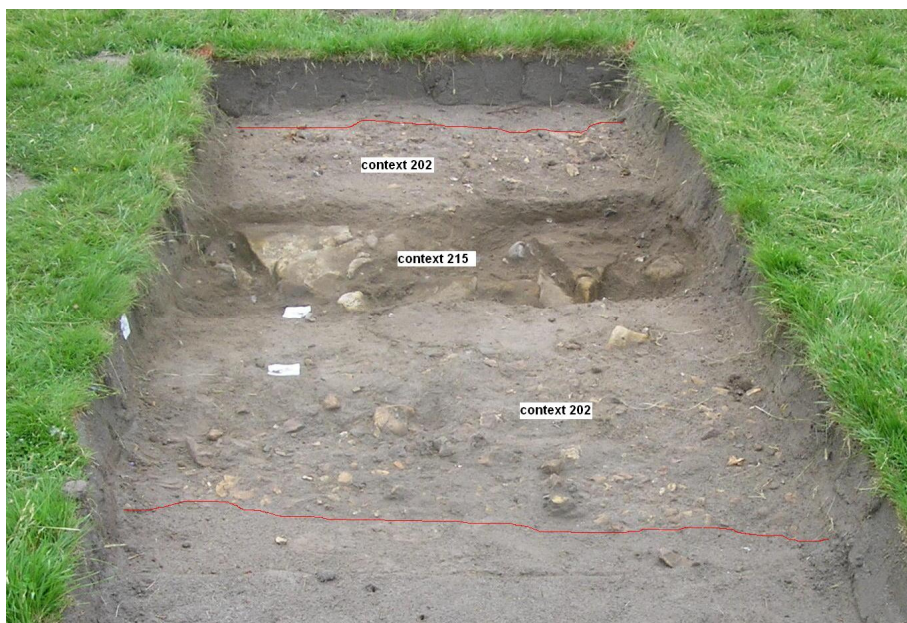
A re-evaluation of the resistivity results obtained revealed a curvi-linear anomaly leading from the eastern gate in the graveyard to the south of the church to the modern track way (see Figure 2). Two trenches were located to cut this feature.

Trench J (4m x 1.5m, see Figure 4) was located 15m from the current eastern boundary of the graveyard (see Figure 3). Immediately below the topsoil was a gravel spread 220cm wide and extending roughly east-west across the trench (context 202, see Figure 5). The gravel consisted primarily of yellow-brown stained, water worn flints (size range 0.5 to 13cm), with small amounts rounded ironstone and a few fragments of CBM. This spread formed a layer c.8cm thick and lay above a layer from large blocks (largest seen was 26 x 23 x 7 cm) of sandstone (context 215, see Figures 5 & 6). This sandstone is very similar to that seen in the quarry to the east of the main house. The blocks fit together and therefore appear to have been laid rather than dumped.

**Trench F** (6m x 2m), located 42m further east, showed a spread of crushed and packed ironstone fragments in the north east corner. Time constraints prevented further investigation of what lay beneath this spread.

### Interpretation

The anomaly seen in the resistivity results represents a well made track way. Time and effort was put into its construction using the age-old technique of large blocks of material forming a stable base beneath a graded, finer surface. Given the sandy nature of the soil and underlying geology, it does not appear that drainage ditches either side of the track way were necessary. Unfortunately, no dating evidence was recovered; however, it is most likely that the track way was in use during the period that the Parsonage was occupied. It is also likely that the track way formed the southern boundary of the area occupied by the Parsonage.



**Figure 5** Photograph of the northern end of Trench





**Figure 6** Photograph showing detail of context 215

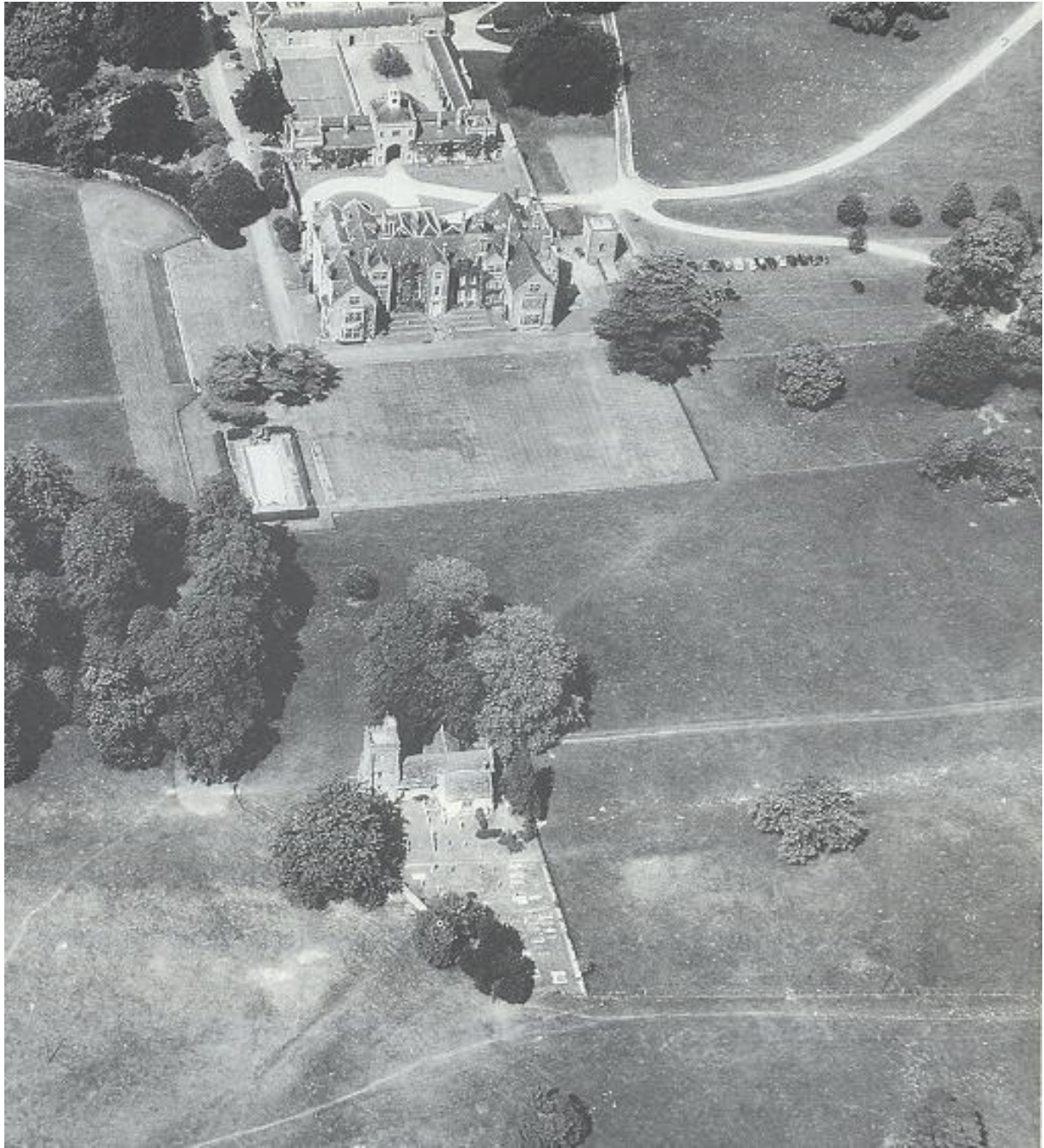
## Objective 2 The Mound

Since WAS started working on the Parham Estate there has been a lot of speculation over the origin of the mounds east of the church. In 2008, trench F was opened to investigate this area, but bad weather prevented all but deturfing. Trench F was therefore reopened and extended in order to investigate both the path and the mounds. A contour survey was carried out to establish the exact size and shape of the mound (see Figure 4 )

**Trench F** was located on the northeast corner of the mound area. Immediately below the topsoil was an unstratified layer (context 206) that thinned from 44cm in the western extreme of the trench, to nothing 2.1m from its eastern extreme. The context contained a wide range of finds, including a fragment of glazed medieval floor tile, large pieces of worked sandstone (max dimensions 35cm x 20cm x 12cm), sundry CBM and pottery sherds and a shotgun cartridge. Below context 206 at the western end of the trench was context 214, a mottled yellow brown sand/clay mix. At the eastern end of the trench context 206 butted over context 219, interpreted as the track way surface. The relationship between contexts 214 and 219 was not seen.

## Interpretation

A pre 1958 aerial photograph (see Figure 7) shows the track way as a parch mark. Context 206 extends over the context representing the track way (219). This means that the mound could not have been present in 1958. Its unstratified nature and 'jumble' of artefacts from different periods suggests it is a 'dump' deposit. It is therefore likely that the mound was formed by the material excavated in the construction of the ha-ha in (1972). This is further reinforced by the nature of the artefacts which bear a strong resemblance to those in the Parham collection (from the excavations of Ainsworth et al in the 1970s) and those recovered from the WAS excavation of the wall in 2008.



**Figure 7 Aerial photograph taken prior to 1958 showing the track way as a parch mark.**



### Objective 3 The Parsonage

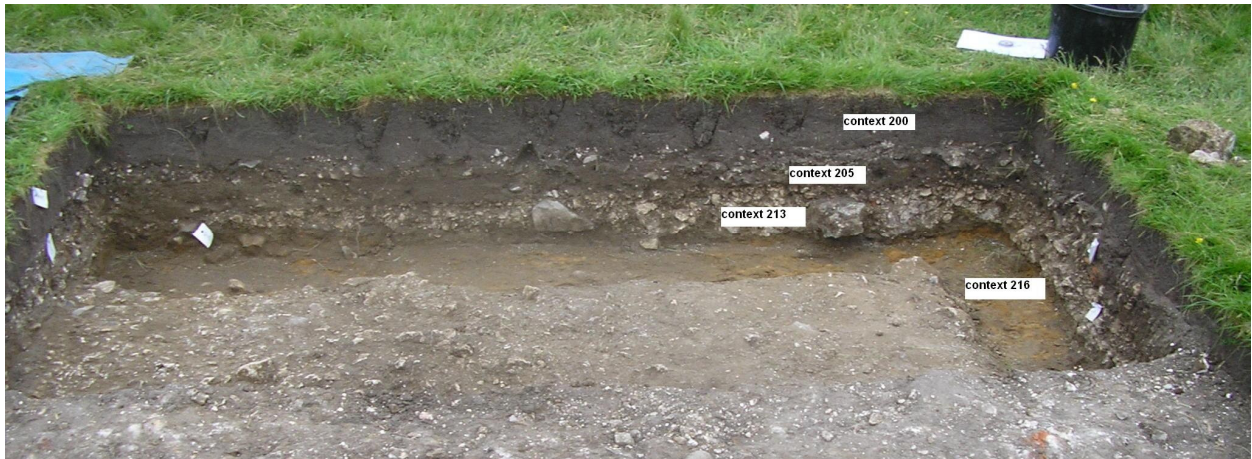
Documentary sources indicate the presence of a parsonage east of the church. The parsonage consisted of a house, barn and stables. Re-evaluation of the resistivity indicates a marked anomaly in this area.

**Trench L** (6m x 3m) was positioned to test the theory that the anomaly marked the position of the Parsonage. Removal of the turf revealed a chalk rubble surface (context 205) extending across the whole of the trench (see Figure 8). The context extended to a depth ranging between 180mm and 400mm and consisted of chalk rubble in a matrix of a dark, fine sand/clay. The chalk appears to form thin layers interspersed with thin layers rich in the darker matrix. The context was rich in artefacts including CBM, pottery (nearly all of which seems to date in the period 1600 to 1750), glass, bone, and metal objects (including a pair of scissors, possibly candle scissors, and a clothing stud).

Beneath 205 lay context 213, a layer of packed chalk, maximum thickness 210mm, which thinned towards the southeast corner of the trench (see Figure 9). The context also contained one large flint and a large block of what appears to be glass making slag (see Figure 9), however, no other artefacts were recovered from this context. This context was underlain by a mottled yellow, sandy layer (context 216), which was interpreted as disturbed natural. A few pieces of pottery and CBM were recovered from the interface of 213 and 216.



Figure 8 Trench L looking south showing the spread of context 205 across its surface



**Figure 9 Trench L. Showing the stratigraphy in the southern face of the trench**

## Interpretation

This feature appears to be a yard. It was originally constructed by putting down a thick layer of packed chalk. As time passed there was wear in some areas, whilst debris accumulated in others. More, thinner chalk layers were then added to maintain levels and keep it clean. Until a more detailed study of the pottery may allow more precise dating, but the excavators have provisionally dated the feature to 1600-1750.

In order to help ascertain the size of the footprint left by the parsonage, test pits A to I were excavated. Test pits A, B, G and H all revealed evidence of a built area. Test pits C, D and E all contained artefacts, mainly pottery consistent with that found in context 200 within trench L. It is thought that these may well represent manuring of the orchard. A small copper alloy bell was recovered in test pit E, possibly a hawking bell.

## **Conclusion**

The excavations were successful. The weather was good, allowing three full days of excavation. All of our objectives were achieved, and the test pits (which were not part of the original project design) will allow us to target further excavations more precisely.

## **Acknowledgements**

The excavations would not have been possible without the kind permission of Parham Estate, and we would like to express our gratitude for their support of our work.

We would also like to thank the residents and staff of the House for their interest in the excavations. Special thanks to Lady Emma and Mr Barnard, Richard Pailthorpe and Sue Martin.

We also take this opportunity to thank Reverend David Farrant for allowing access to the church throughout the duration of the excavation.

## APPENDIX

### Parsonage Inventory 21 April 1666

**Probate Inventory of Richard Lewes, Minister of Parham,**  
**dated 21 April 1666.**

**Document held at West Sussex Record Office. Reference: STC1/23 folio 307.**

Richard Lewes was rector between 1625 and 1666.

A true inventory of ye goods and chatts ..... Lewes late of Parroin deceased made by ..... Willott and John Harwood the one & ..... day of April Anno Dni 1666

Item for his wearing apparel & mony in his purse  
Item for 1 bed and bedstead & chests and ..... and other things in his living chamber  
Item in the ye next chamber for sheets and .....and other linan  
Item in ye same chamber 2 beds and bedsteads with chestes and other things  
Item for corn & other things in ye corn Loaft  
Item in ye little Loaft atope of ye stares 1 still and other things  
Item in ye pallor 1 table and stor..... and ..... with other things  
Item in ye hall 1 table 1 form with brass and pewter and other things  
Item in ye kitchen barrels and ..... with other things  
Item for 6 working cattell  
Item for 3 cows and other young .....  
Item for 14 ..... of corn  
Item for hogs and 4 sheepe  
Item for a ..... and a plow and .....  
and chains and other .....  
Item for husbandry ..... And other lomber

John Willit  
ye mark of  
H  
John Harwood



# Parsonage Inventory 2 December 1708

## Probate Inventory of William Brown, Minister of Parham, dated 2 December 1708.

Document held at West Sussex Record Office. Reference: STCIII/M folio 83.

A true & pfect inventory of all and singular the goods chatts & credits of William Brown late minister of Parham in the county of Sussex decd taken & appraised the second day of December Anno Dni 1708:

	li	s	d
Impris his money in purse & wearing apparel	04	00	00
In the Kitchen			
Item one table one sideboard wth drawers & one jack wth other small things	01	10	00
In the Brewhouse			
Item one ffurnace one brewing vate two tubs two kivers wth some other small things	01	15	06
In the Back roome			
Item one old cubbord two kettles three potts wth other small things	01	00	00
In the Seller			
Item six barrells & two strands	00	14	00
In the little roome			
Item 7 dishes of pewter & 3 dozen of plates wth some other small things	01	05	06
In the Parlor			
Item two tables one clock one dozen of chaires with other small things	04	10	00
In the study			
Item books one table one trunk & one box with some other small things	08	10	06
In the parlour chamber			
Item one bed wth all things thereunto belonging one dozen of chaires one sideboard table one pair of broad ?rors wth some & other small things	03	10	00
In the Kitchen Chamber			
Item two beds with all things thereunto belonging one box of drawers & trunk wth some other small things	06	05	10
In another chamber			
Item one bed wth all things thereunto belonging & ffive chaires & some other things of small value	04	09	06
In another chamber			
Item two boxes of linen	04	00	00
	38	08	10

George Streeter (his marke) } Appraisors  
Richard Lockyer }