



# Wilts Quarter Sessions

## Tidworth

1563 & 1574-1592

The courts of quarter sessions or quarter sessions were local courts traditionally held at four set times each year in the Kingdom of England (including Wales) from 1388 until 1707, then in 18th-century Great Britain, in the later United Kingdom, and in other dominions of the British Empire.

Quarter sessions generally sat in the seat of each county and county borough. The quarter sessions were named after the quarter days on which they met in England and Wales from 1388. These days were later settled as Epiphany, Easter, Midsummer, and Michaelmas sessions.

The quarter sessions generally heard crimes that could not be tried summarily by the justices of the peace without a jury in petty sessions, which were sent up by the process of indictment to be heard in quarter sessions.

The quarter sessions did not have jurisdiction to hear the most serious crimes, most notably those subject to capital punishment or later life imprisonment. These crimes were sent for trial at the periodic assizes.

The quarter sessions in each county were made up of two or more justices of the peace, presided over by a chairman, who sat with a jury. County boroughs entitled to their own quarter sessions had a single recorder instead of a bench of justices. Every court of quarter sessions had a clerk called the clerk of the peace. For county quarter sessions, this person was appointed by the *custos rotulorum* of the county – the justice of the peace for the county charged with custody of its rolls and records. There was a large fee income for the clerk, and he was usually a friend or relative of the *custos*. The clerk rarely discharged the duties of the office himself, but appointed a solicitor to act as his deputy in return for a share of the fees. After 1852, payment by salary was gradually brought in instead of fees.

Year	Date	Surname	Given Names	Abode	Details
1589	Epiphany	Wyls	Philip	Tidworth	Badger's recognizance entered during Epiphany sessions. **
1581/2	11-Jan	Brownejohn	William	Tydworth	Tithingman -Taxed by the court at 2 shillings for not punishing vagabonds
1583	02-Oct	Sheward	John	Tydworth	Husbandman – bound in 50 shillings and his sureties
1584	01-Oct	Seward	John	Tydworth Souch	Pleads not guilty to an indictment for extortion. Order for a writ of <i>venire facias</i> . Recepti 3 shillings and 3 pence. Struck out. <i>Finem fecit</i> .
1587	25-Apr	Hall	Robert	Tidworth	<i>Domus servicie</i> : Husbandman – admitted by the Court to keep an ale house etc and was bound in 100 shillings and his sureties.
1587	25-Apr	Seward	John	Tidworth	<i>Domus servicie</i> (ie Ale House): Husbandman – bound in 50 shillings.
1588	16-Apr	Maton	John (the elder)		One of the guardians of North Tidworth. Fines taxed by the Court: taxed at 3 shillings and 4 pence.
1588	16-Apr	Willis	Philip	North Tidworth	<i>Pro pace</i> : Yeoman, bound in 20 pounds and his sureties.
1588	16-Apr	Seward	John	Tidworth	<i>Pro pace</i> : Husbandman, bound in 10 pounds for his keeping the peace, particularly towards Henry Haule. <i>Comparuit et relaxatur</i> .
1590/1	07-Jan	Emans	William	North Tidworthe	Licence to erect a cottage

\*\* The compilation of the Register of Badgers is a direct result of the Statute 5 Elizabeth, c. 12. Badgers were persons licensed to buy corn and other victuals in one place and to carry them elsewhere to sell at a profit; they were exempt from the punishment laid down for engrossers.

The statute 5 and 6 Edward VI, c. 14, had entrusted their licensing to any three Justices of the Peace, but the Act of Elizabeth restricted this power to the Justices in Quarter Sessions. Applicants for licences had to be not less than thirty years of age, householders and married; the duration of the license was for one year and the badger was required to enter into bail for his compliance with the terms of the statute. The penalty for unlicensed trading was five pounds and the total bail of principal and sureties together or of the principal alone if no sureties were required amounted to not less than this sum. The Clerk of the Peace was directed to keep a register of persons licensed.

**Details Extracted from Records Held by the Wiltshire Record Society**