

# Dunster Inventories



Mary  
Markes  
1667

Katherine  
Long 1688

Inventories give  
valuable insights  
into people's lives  
and household  
activities

Silvester  
Allercott  
1669

The Old  
Priory 1705  
and 1816

# St Nicholas Priory

## Silvester Allercott's Inventory

Silvester Allercott d.1669 was a wealthy man. His main house included a Hall, a Kitchen, and 3 large upper chambers.

The chambers contained 2 standing bedsteads (4-post with a tester) and 2 half head bedsteads (4-post but with a small headboard) all with their feather beds (mattresses).

There were also 2 trundle bedsteads with flock or straw beds for the servants along with sheets, bolsters, blankets, covers and pillows



Bed and chamber in St Nicholas Priory, Exeter

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*Item In the kitchen chamber two standing bedsteads three  
feather beds two feather bolsters two feather pillows  
three covers of three payne of blankets two payne of sheets  
and other small things one table board two haybeds  
two coffers and two chests*

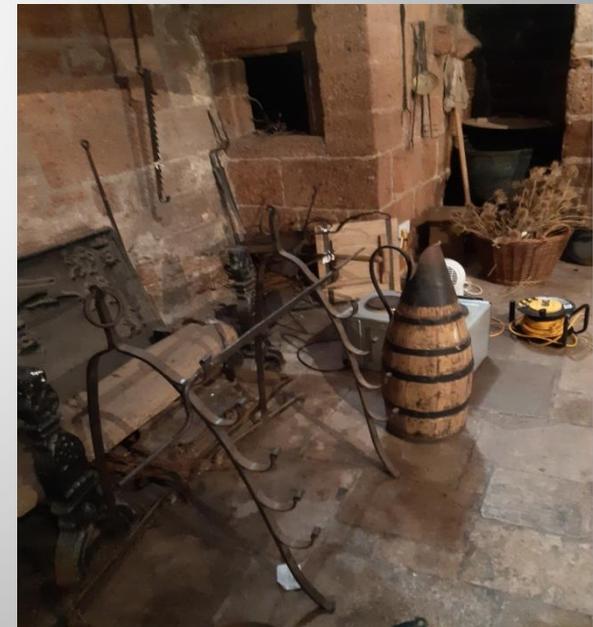
# St Nicholas Priory

**Cooking was done on open Fireplaces in the Hall or in the Kitchen**

Mr Allercott's hall must have had an open fireplace. The inventory records "two Iron Hooks, one chayne" (perhaps to hold a cauldron) "two spits, two pairs of Andirons, 3 hangers that belong to the barr and one dripping pan". Sufficient to create a feast!

The kitchen fireplaces at St Nicholas Priory, Exeter illustrate how these might have been used

Fireplace equipment in the kitchen at St Nicholas Priory, Exeter



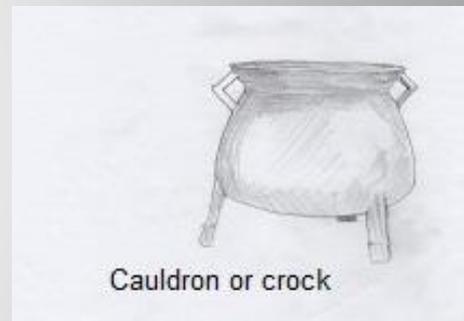
# St Nicholas Priory

## Silvester Allercott's kitchen

This was well supplied with pots and pans for heating liquids. The inventory records: 7 brass pans, 4 brass pots and a brass skillet.

Posnets, skillets, crocks and chafers are often recorded in early inventories. They have 3 legs and stand in the hot ashes on the hearth of an open fireplace.

Bronze (brass) or bell metal items were usually made by bell founders to supplement their income .



Hanging cauldron in Kitchen at St Nicholas Priory, Exeter

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*Item In the Kitching one Table board one Furne one roffer  
two Chasses three pewter dishes one Plagon one fauldr  
two Chaudrestubs one of for small pewter flower brass  
potts one brass Skillet seven brass pannes one brass  
Chaudrestub and one Skillet*

## Eating and Drinking

Earthenware jugs held liquids, earthenware cups were used for drinking and both earthenware and pewter plates were used for eating.

Mr Allercott's inventory included 30 pewter dishes, a flagon and a tankard along with two candlesticks and other small pewter. He seems to have entertained large numbers of people.

## St Nicholas Priory



Domestic items in the kitchen at St Nicholas Priory, Exeter

Somerset Heritage Centre DD/L/2/31/2 part 1

Item In the hall one Table boord and ffoure two furred one  
tupboord one chest two Joyne stools one effayre wood  
spitts two payre of Andirons ffoure hanging of the long to 3  
the beam and one dripping pan

## Brewing

Mr Allercott had “4 brewing vats, 2 wort troughs and 3 wood tubs” as well as “3 hogsheads, 23 barrells, and several flagons”. Home brewing was common in Dunster but he was clearly doing so on an industrial scale sufficient for one or more taverns or inns.

Sometimes large copper pans holding 8 gallons or more were used. These prestigious items were often bequeathed in wills such as that of Thomas Mackenees in 1652



‘Woman Brewing’

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_brewing#/media/File:Woman\\_brewing\\_beer.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_brewing#/media/File:Woman_brewing_beer.jpg)

“I Give and Bequeath unto my said sonne George my greatest or biggest brasse panne being about eight Gallons and one brasse Crocke about twoe Gallons” The National Archives, Thomas Mackenees, 1652 PROB11/223/152

## Brewing to cheesemaking

Farms sometimes had their own malt kilns and in 1781 a Memorandum about Priory Farm records an “Old Malthouse”, belonging to the Priory.

By 1816 this was a Cider House while a Brewhouse was actually full of cheese making equipment:

a Butter Churn & three Cheesewrings, nine Cheesevatts four Milk pails, a Cheese Tub, two Vatts & three small Tubs two brass kettles a Brake board, a peck & ½ peck wooden Measures, a Milk Stove, four bucketts ... Two long Chimney Crooks & two Jibbs\*



Priory Farm, N elevation, T. Harding © “Early Dunster” 2020

\*a Jibb is an Iron stand

Somerset Heritage Centre DD/L/1/30/28B 1-4

*In the Brewhouse  
a Butter Churn & three Cheesewrings, nine Cheesevatts  
four Milk pails, a Cheese Tub, two Vatts & three small Tubs  
two brass kettles a Brake board, a peck & ½ peck wooden Measures  
a Milk Stove four bucketts and one spail, two long Chimney Crooks & two Jibbs*

## Old Priory and Priory Farm Inventory of 1705

### Inventories can show the history of use of a building.

After the Priory was dissolved in 1539 the building became a Dairy Farm. A 1705 Inventory lists an Inner and Outer Dairy along with a hall, a kitchen and a chamber with a bed for the Bayliff

In the Priory.

In the Kitchen, 1. Dubble, 1. Forme, 1. Presse.

In the Hall, 2. Dubble.

In the inner-Dairy, 1. Salting-Drough, 1. wooden Kerse for Curvels,

In the outer-Dairy, 5. Shelves, 2. Cheese wrings, 1. Cheese-Dalter, 1. old Dubble, 1. old Jack to turn spittes.

In the Bayliffes Chamber, 1. Bedstead.

However it was no longer a working farm because everything portable, including all the cooking equipment such as brass pans, kettles, crooks for the chimney and fire tongs, as well as old wooden milk potts and butter churns had been moved out and was in storage in Dunster Castle Gatehouse.

The house was now simply the Bayliff's sleeping quarters and only a few large items remained in the house such as tables, a presse, some tubbs, cheese wrings and an old Jack to turn spittes

Brought to y<sup>e</sup> Gatehouse, from the Priory.

1. Pewter-Distill head, and his botteme Sead.

2. Brass-panns.

1. Gridiron.

1. Brass-pott.

4. Iron Crookes for y<sup>e</sup> Chimney.

1. paire of Fire-Dough.

1. Brass-Kettle.

4. old wooden Milk-potts, 2. butter pottles, Churnes, 1. Churning-stir.

## Priory and Priory Farm Inventory of 1816

By 1816 however the farm was occupied and fully furnished.

There was no Hall but the Parlour had mahogany and oak dining tables as well as a fireplace with its grate, fireirons and fender. The Kitchen was well supplied with cooking equipment for an open fireplace and there were Delft ware plates and dishes for dining. Animals and crops are listed in the fields illustrating a thriving and successful farm.

*In the Kitchen*  
along the top table & two forms, a dresser and shelves  
on right side clock and case - a deal top sq. lead table  
a round stand wall nutt table, an arm'd settle  
sixish chairs, one arm'd D. a corner cupboard  
a shelf with some old books a Bacon rack & a small quantity of Bacon  
hooking Chimney brooks, two shot crooks, one lead iron  
a pepper teakettle, a Roasting Jack fire and weight & two spits  
two pewster water plates, a bell mettle pestle & mortar  
a pair of Brass candlesticks, a fire shovel & Tongues  
one Copper & one Iron coffee pots, a Bag of flower dredge  
a Brass Ladle & Schemer, a pair of Bellows, five pewster Dishes  
one British mettle teapot, seven del plates, one Quort & one half pint Del  
one Butter trolly - a mirror & a rack



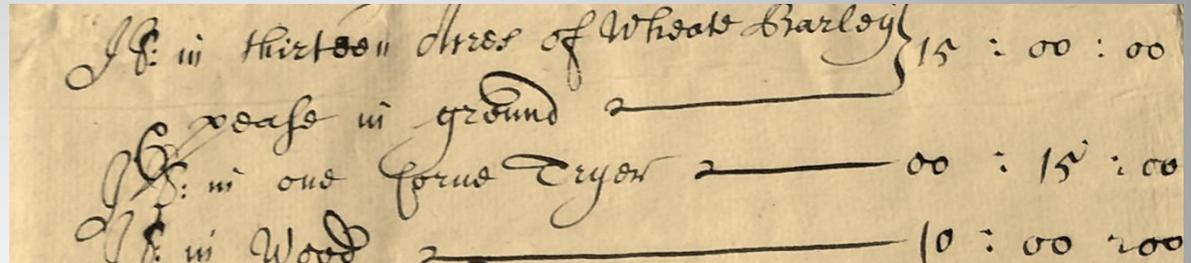
Old Priory Farm fireplace photo:  
T. Harding © "Early Dunster" 2020

## Katherine Long 1688

Sometimes other documents are attached to Inventories giving even more information.

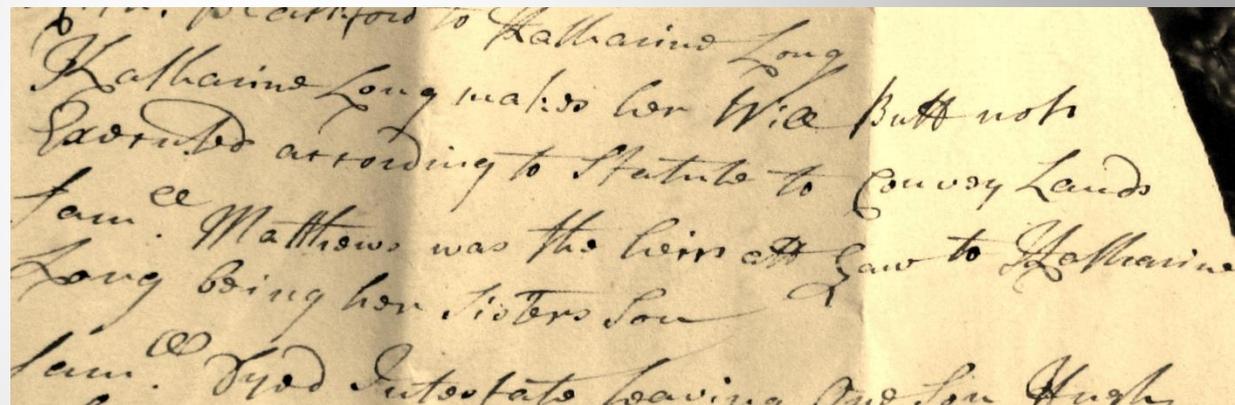
Katherine Long's 1688 Inventory shows she held a good-size farm when she died.

But folded inside was a list of subsequent possessors giving a complete ownership record up to about 1757.



Handwritten inventory list from 1688, showing items and their values:

16: in thirties of Wheat Barley	15	: 00	: 00
16: in one field			
16: in one field		00	: 15
16: in Wood		10	: 00



Handwritten ownership record, mentioning Katherine Long and subsequent possessors:

Katherine Long made her will her wife but not  
according to Statute to convey Lands  
Sam. Matthews was the heir at Law to Katherine  
Long being her sisters son  
Sam. Tynd Intestate leaving one son Hugh

Somerset Heritage Centre DD/L/2/31/3 part 2

Richard Cooksby conveyed it to John Templer by Lease and Release John Templer to John Hopour John Hopour to Richd Blackford Richd Blackford to Katharine Long Katharine Long made her will to Hugh Matthew but the heir by law was Samll Matthew her sister's son. He died intestate leaving one son Hugh who devised the house to his wife for her life with the remainder to his son Hugh

**Sometimes Inventories reveal complex family households and in combination with other records they can reveal a more detailed personal history.**

In 1667 Widow Mary Markes appears to have very few possessions with a table and cupboard in the hall, a standing bed in the parlour but no chairs, and no cooking equipment.

“Item in the hall one Table board & one Cubbard

Item in the Parlour one standinge bedstead and one Chest

Item one feather bed and boulster “

**Mary Markes  
1667**

But the Inventory also shows she shared the lease of a house with her son and daughter and the house had “appurtenances” (associated buildings) so was a good sized property.

“one house with thappurtences held by the grant of George Speke Esqr for a Certaine number of yeares determynable upon the deaths of Andrew Markes & Mary Markes sonne & daughter of the deceased Mary Markes

So her personal sleeping accommodation was in the parlour but she would have eaten and socialised with the rest of the family.

Contents belonging to other household members are not listed so Mary is probably a widow living very comfortably within her family.

Other records show Mary was the wife and executrix of John Markes d.1645 and that John had marr Mary Lindon in 1625.

# Acknowledgements

This section compiled by Jill Strobridge

Photographs by Tony Harding and Jill Strobridge © “Early Dunster” 2020 except for ‘Old Priory Fireplace’, *Dunster Church and Priory: Their History and Architectural Features*, F Hancock, Taunton 1905

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‘The Brewer’ source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:>

[The\\_Brewer\\_designed\\_and\\_engraved\\_in\\_the\\_Sixteenth\\_Century\\_by\\_J\\_Amman.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:The_Brewer_designed_and_engraved_in_the_Sixteenth_Century_by_J_Amman.png)

**Recommended reading:** *West Country Households 1500-1700* ed. Allan, Alcock and Dawson, The Boydell Press, 2015 (Society for Post Medieval Archaeology)

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