

Introduction

This dossier contains information concerning two Grade II listed buildings in the Parish of Preston in Hertfordshire. One is currently known as *Spindle Cottage*. The second is its associated **barn/garage**. It presents newly-discovered historical evidence of their national and county religious significance.

This information was a by-product of a local history talk I gave at the end of October 2025. I wanted to illustrate how manorial documents help explain details about local history. I had come across an allusion to Widow Heath and her cottage at Preston, Herts some years ago. I also knew she was mentioned in the Temple Dinsley manorial records, but that was the sum of my knowledge. I wondered if I could trace the location of her cottage.

Using the principles mentioned in the talk, it was surprisingly easy to pinpoint where the cottage was located - and to identify that, remarkably, it still stands today. But no-one was aware of its history - no-one had joined the dots.

What follows is a demonstration of how manorial records and wills can be used to trace the ownership of a cottage from the 17thC to 1816. Then, its location is revealed. This leaves only the consideration of the importance of Widow Heath's license application for her home to be used as a Nonconformist place of worship in 1672 - and what it tells us about her.

This is worthy of acknowledgement and celebration.

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