

Today, the front of Spindle Cottage displays (in crude iron characters) the letters and numerals “E” and “S”; “1717” (see below). These evidently relate to Edward Swain’s occupation and/or ownership of the cottage. Three generations of Swains (Edward, John and William) were blacksmiths.



Spindle Cottage, Preston c.2020

Edward Swain bequeathed Spindle Cottage to his son, John Swain.

Edward Swain bequeathed his freehold cottage in Ippollitts parish to his son, John Swain in his will (1757): ‘...I give...my freehold messuage...in the parish of Ippollitts...in the occupation of Henry Merritt...unto my son John Swayne’.

A copy of Edward Swain’s will is at Appendix B: pages 1 to 3

Henry Merritt was the woodman at nearby Wain Wood. He married Hannah Heath at Lilley, Herts on 9 December 1732. The Merritt family were Congregationalists. They had strong connections to Hitchin’s Back Street Independent Chapel.

Reference: The will of Edward Swain, (1757): 15 HR 545 Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), Hertford.

John Swain bequeathed Spindle Cottage to his son, William Swain.

John Swain, bequeathed his ‘freehold tenements...in the several parishes of Hitchin, Ippollitts and Kings Walden (Herts) unto my said son, William Swain.’ in his will - probate granted in 1794.

A copy of John Swain’s will is at Appendix A: Pages 1 & 2

Reference: The will of John Swain (1794): 20 HR 306 Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), Hertford.