



Devizes Assizes Court, Northgate Street designed in 1885

## General Quarter Sessions of The Peace

### At Devizes 3rd May 1603

Item. We present Roger Flower of the Devizes, that he on the 30th day of October made three clothes fine white brode (Broadcloth). Listed which being then and there well scored, fulled and fully dried and dyed containing in length 31 yards contrary to the statute every one of them.  
Searchers Richard Russell, George Watkins and Edward Webbe

#### OPC Notes

Broadcloth is a dense, plain-woven cloth, historically made of wool. The defining characteristic of broadcloth is not its finished width but the fact that it was woven much wider (typically 50 to 75% wider than its finished width) and then heavily milled (traditionally the cloth was worked by heavy wooden trip hammers in hot soapy water) in order to shrink it to the required width. The effect of the milling process is to draw the yarns much closer together than could be achieved in the loom and allow the individual fibres of the wool to bind together in a felting process, which results in a dense, blind face cloth with a stiff drape which is highly weather-resistant, hard wearing and capable of taking a cut edge without the need for being hemmed.

It was made in several parts of England at the end of the medieval period. The raw material was short staple wool, carded and spun into yarn and then woven on a broad loom to produce cloth 1.75 yards wide. It was then fulled, usually in a fulling mill. When fulled, the fibres of the cloth would felt together, resulting in a smooth surface.